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While these studies do not cover the entire Asian experience with regard to globalization and other influences, they nevertheless give interested readers the specific experience in selected Asian countries like the Philippines, Korea and East Timor while providing a general context of Asian media and culture.

Editor's Introduction

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Whose Stories Do We Listen To? World-System and the Pattern of International News Flow

Seung Joon Jun and Ju-Yong Ha

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Ju-Yong Ha and Joel David

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Doobo Shim and Joseph Sung-Yul Park

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Shirley Palileo-Evidente

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in Timor Leste, Media and Culture/s in a Newly Independent Nation

Jacqueline Aquino Siapno

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Media and Culture in Asia

global makeover

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Edited by
Danilo Araña Arao

CULTURE IN ASIA



global makeover

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Table of Contents

GLOBAL MAKEOVER
Media and Culture in Asia

Edited by
Danilo Araña Arao

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V Introduction

**1 Regional Contexts of Media Cooperation
and Artistic Collaboration in East Asia**
Caroline S. Hau

**12 Whose Stories Do We Listen To?
World-System and the Pattern
of International News Flow**
Seung Joon Jun and Ju-Yong Ha

35 A Yearning for Tenderness in Korean Cinema
Ju-Yong Ha and Joel David

**55 Cultural Proximity and Cultural Distance:
The Reception of Korean Films in China
Through the Case of *My Sassy Girl* in the Early 2000s**
Ying Huang and Kwang Woo Noh

71 The ‘English Fever’ in Korea
Doobo Shim and Joseph Sung-Yul Park

**91 The New Fantasy-Adventure Film
as Contemporary Epic, 2000-2007**
Patrick F. Campos

**119 The Alternative Metaphor in Metaphors:
Discursive ‘Readings’ on Language, Symbols
and Enculturation in Philippine Cinema
and Other Media**

Shirley Palileo-Evidente

139 Orientalism and Classical Film Practice
Joel David

**155 The Grassroots Approach to Communication:
How Participatory Is Participatory Communication
in the Philippines?**

Randy Jay C. Solis

**181 Cross-Cultural Experience and Media Use:
OFWs in Korea and Their Acculturation**

Fernando A. Austria, Jr.

**197 ‘Their History Is To Have None’:
Between Clandestine Practices and *Facebook*
in Timor Leste, Media and Culture/s
in a Newly Independent Nation**

Jacqueline Aquino Siapno

215 The Contributors

218 About the Editor

Introduction

As a journalist who is used to writing concisely and directly, I promise to keep this introduction short. The analyses that matter most in this book, after all, are the authors’, not mine.

Globalization is a sensitive issue in Asia given the wide development gap among its countries. And even within a country, the income disparity among peoples exists, making it hard for the so-called have-nots to appreciate the supposed gains of the globalist thrusts of liberalization, deregulation and privatization.

Just like in other parts of the world, globalization has its supporters and detractors in Asia. Free competition among foreign and local corporations and the free flow of trade in goods and services indeed have varying impacts depending on the level of development of a country in general or a community in particular.

The 11 studies in this book show the “makeover” that selected countries in Asia have undergone due to globalization. Clearly, the latter’s effects go beyond economics as Asian politics and culture (including media) tend to evolve due to the changing times.

While these studies do not cover the entire Asian experience with regard to globalization and other influences, they nevertheless give interested readers the specific experience in selected Asian countries like the Philippines, Korea and East Timor while providing a general context of Asian media and culture.

I thank the authors not only for agreeing to publish their works in this book; but also for making the editing process relatively convenient and enlightening. Unlike many academics I know whose writing styles are inscrutable, the authors' are generally understandable. Many of them have actually agreed to condense their studies so that they would become more readable to a wider audience.

I also thank the publishers of this book – the Asian Media and Culture Forum (AMCF) in Korea and the Development Center for Asia Africa Pacific (DCAAP) – for the opportunity to edit this collection, as well as the editorial independence I enjoyed.

In the early stages of producing this book, I asked the help of my wife, Judith L. Balean-Arao, in coming up with a somewhat logical order of presentation of the articles. Even at the risk of sounding biased, I thank her for her excellent work.

Allow me to end this short introduction with a message to the reader (yes, that's you): I hope that you will find this collection worthy of your high standards in research and writing.



Danilo Araña Arao
Editor

6 December 2010
Quezon City, Philippines

Regional Contexts of Media Cooperation and Artistic Collaboration in East Asia

by Caroline S. Hau

The substantial increase in cross-border flows and instances of cooperation and collaboration within Asia underscores the salience and importance of using “region” as a unit of analysis that mediates between “local” and “national,” on the one hand, and “global” on the other hand. This paper provides an overview of the changing regional systems and contexts – geopolitical, economic, cultural, an ideological – within which media cooperation and artistic collaboration, especially in the realm of cinema, are taking place in East Asia. It presents three examples of co-productions by Asian filmmakers that seek, with varying degrees of success, to tap the emerging regional consumer market.

When we think of media cooperation, we envision a number of ways in which such cooperation may take place. Media firms and companies, for example, from Hong Kong, or Taiwan, or Japan, or South Korea may work together to co-produce a film, develop a television program, or release an album of songs. In East Asia, this type of cooperation normally happens at an institutional level through market forces, but not between states. There may also be another way of thinking of cooperation, that is, in artistic terms, for which we often use the word “collaboration” rather than “cooperation,” when we speak, for example, of mainland Chinese or Taiwanese film directors working with Hong Kong, Malaysian Chinese, Thai, Korean, or Singaporean talent.

What is noteworthy about these cooperative and collaborative ventures is that: 1) these forms of intra-Asian networking and working together appear to be occurring more and more frequently at least over the past two decades; 2) they involve cross-border flows and cross-cultural exchanges that go beyond a single nation-state; and 3) the regional scope and limits of these cross-border and cross-cultural flows suggest that

theoretical frameworks such as the “global,” “national” and “local” are no longer adequate to our understanding of what is happening at the ground level (see the critique by Otmazgin 2007).

In other words, when we look at media cooperation and artistic collaboration across “Asia,” the theme posed by this conference, we find ourselves confronting a number of questions that have to do with the specific densities and patterns of these cross-border interactions, connections, exchanges and receptions. Why are the talent inflows into and cooperative ventures in Hong Kong cinema almost overwhelmingly from Taiwan, Japan, Southeast Asia and Korea, with China as a latecomer but an increasingly important one? Why is the impact of the Korean wave mostly concentrated in East Asia, and not so much in South Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Africa? Why are Japanese *anime* or *manga* popular in Southeast Asia but Southeast Asian cultural products such as TV dramas are not visible at all in Japan? Why are Latin American telenovelas popular in the Philippines and Indonesia, while Filipino mini-series are able to find an audience in Indonesia and Malaysia, but not Latin America?

Answering these questions forces us to pay closer attention to the convenient but at the same time problematic use of the term “Asia.” Unfortunately, the field of media studies has not caught up with this reality of the increasing importance of “a world of regions” (to use a term by Peter Katzenstein [2005]). Theoretical focus has remained fixated on global, national and local contexts while overlooking the critical importance of the region as a category that mediates between the global and the local.

What does it mean to treat “region” seriously as a unit of analysis? We need to look at “Asia” not as a coherent cultural zone in which commonalities are responsible for knitting heterogeneous communities into a homogeneous whole. Rather, we need to understand the region as a spatio-temporally defined political and economic system and construct, characterized by uneven patterns and densities of flows and exchanges. As an analytical unit, “region” does not deny the salience of “global” and “local” perspectives. Its value lies in its ability to specify the field of uneven flows and connections through a unit of analysis that is smaller than “world” but larger than “local” (and in the postwar era, “national”).

More important, this field which mediates between the global and local is not some randomly chosen cartographic designation, because the delineation of this field itself has a history, and is subject to change

over time. Regional designations such as “Asia,” “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” “East Asia,” “Southeast Asia,” “Asia Pacific,” and “East Asia Community” (Northeast and Southeast Asia) often do not have fixed boundaries, since the referential field they encompass can only be specified by the way in which the regional system and its power relations are organized at specific times and under specific circumstances, and by the various intellectual, ideological, artistic, economic, political and institutional projects undertaken in the name of these regional designations. In effect, what I am arguing is that the question of membership – or who counts as Asian – is not the principal criterion for defining Asia as a region, because the boundaries of this region have been historically constructed, and are therefore malleable and fluid.

The prewar notion of region, for example, which involved activists from Japan, China, Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines and Siam, was underpinned by “myriad” (as Takeuchi Yoshimi famously put it in 1998, 293-94) political and ideational projects in the name of “Asia” and “Asianism.” In its late nineteenth century version, pan-Asianism was an intellectual and political response to the threat posed by competitive colonial empires in the “East”/“Orient.” Its attempt to imagine and create an “Asia-centric” order of independent states drew on both a civilizational discourse that took modern Europe as a coherent whole and a critique of the “double standards” by which Europeans claimed the universality of their enlightenment ideals while upholding an exclusionary Eurocentric order in practice. Asianism also called for solidarity of the peoples and countries of “Asia” in anti-colonial and anti-imperialist endeavors against the Eurocentric and European-dominated international order.

The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere that Japan attempted to create toward the end of the 1930s was the most devastating variant of political Asianism, one that envisioned a region that was to be organized hierarchically with Japan as the hegemon and a region that explicitly denied if not repudiated the preeminence of the “West.” This putative Asian order was destroyed by Japan’s defeat in 1945.

The U.S.-centered order that emerged after the dismantling of the Co-Prosperity Sphere and during the Cold War – along with the more recent U.S.-centered world order that took shape following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the transformation of Communist China – was built on a different set of imperatives. In the early days of the Cold War, the United



States had two major strategic objectives: one was to counter the threat of international Communism and to contain China (and of course the Soviet Union) and the other was the issue of how to realize Japan's economic recovery and turn it into a US ally, while ensuring that it would never again pose a threat to the United States. As its answers to these two questions, the United States put together a "hub and spokes" system of bilateral security pacts and bases agreements with countries like Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, while simultaneously constructing a triangular trade system among Japan, the United States, and Southeast Asia (i.e., the five original member countries of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore), together with South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, for the economic development of so-called "Free [i.e., Free of Communism, Capitalist] Asia" (see Shiraishi 1997 and Shiraishi 2000). Culturally speaking, we see distinctive patterns of hybridization: in the early twentieth century, alongside attempts at nationalizing the populations, there was a parallel process of Japanization in the cases of China, and colonial Taiwan and Korea, alongside a distinctive process of Anglo-Americanization in the case of urban middle and upper classes in Malaya, the Dutch Indies, Siam and the Philippines. This pattern has become one of predominant Americanization of the elites and middle classes after Japan's defeat in 1945 and in the context of the ensuing American-led regional system. China, a latecomer in the regional system, is now seeing its elites undergo the same kind of Anglo-Sinicization that has characterized that of the so-called Chinese in Southeast Asia alongside the Americanization of their Southeast Asian counterparts.

The structural features of the current East Asian regional system can be brought into sharper relief if they are compared with those of the regional development that prevailed in Western Europe. While the United States confronted similar strategic issues of containing the Soviet Union and Communism in Europe and rebuilding (West) Germany, it came up with answers that were different in Western Europe than in East Asia. In Western Europe, it constructed a collective security system in the form of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In the economic sphere, it encouraged economic community-building, which evolved from the Steel and Coal Community to the European Economic Community to the European Community and to the European Union, often with Germany and France as the twin engines. The United States' different strategies for building the regional systems in East Asia and Western Europe resulted in decisive

differences in the structure of the systems in these two regions. In Western Europe the building of the regional system was powered by regionalism ("Europeanism"); the aim was to build a community based on a sense of common identity as "Europeans." The process was thus accompanied by the building of a new European identity through the selective remembering and forgetting of European history. In Asia, by contrast, nationalism drew power from liberation and decolonization movements, and so there was no political will to build a regional community, nor was there a project of regionalism aiming to build a common identity as Asians. East Asian countries which were part of America's "Free [Capitalist] Asia" accepted the regional security and trade systems built under US hegemony, pursuing a "flying geese" pattern of economic development with Japan in the lead, and through this state-mediated and market-powered development achieved a certain degree of economic coherence in the years. The 1985 Plaza accord led to the substantial appreciation of the Japanese yen, enabling Japanese companies, along with their counterparts in Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Southeast Asia, to boost their direct investment and extended their business presence throughout East Asia in the effort to remain competitive in the global market. By the end of the 1980s these waves of cross-border investment had led to the expansion and deepening of production and business networks. Economic integration by no means implies a homogenizing process. These regional networks are largely an outcome of myriads of micro-economic decisions built on the logic of fragmentation of production that seeks to exploit the uneven regional/national distribution of productive resources, whether in the form of land, capital, and labor. Regional integration by definition is highly uneven, with some companies and countries, usually the richer, urban ones, benefiting while others do not.

The *de facto* integration of the economies of Japan, South Korea, the coastal regions of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, as well as those of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, was responsible for effecting a semantic shift in the meaning of "East Asia." Before the mid 1980s, the term "East Asia" referred to so-called "Confucian" Asia encompassing China, Korea, Japan, and to some extent Vietnam. But by the second half of the 1980s, people started to redefine the term to refer to the region extending from Japan and South Korea to China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, to Southeast Asia (with India as a very recent addition). Moreover, until the late 1990s, it was market forces – the broadening and deepening

of regional networks of industry, and crossborder movements of people, whether as tourists or as students or workers across East Asia – that were responsible for propelling integration in this region.

The building of an East Asian community only emerged as a political project over the past decade or so. There are two reasons for this. One is the East Asian economic crisis of 1997-98. Starting in the 1950s in Japan, in the 1960s and 1970s in places like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and in the 1980s in China, what we may (following Maier 1978, 23) call a “politics of productivity” has become the ideological mainstay of the political system. The politics of productivity seeks to create a national consensus to pursue economic growth as the answer to the rivalry for the allocation of resources driven by divisions among classes, regions, ethnic groups, and religions. The basis for this shift is the idea that economic growth will raise people’s living standards, allowing most people to have hope for the future and, over the long term, bringing about national welfare, political stability, and social harmony. It is this “politics of productivity” – rather than an Asianism based on a common “Asian” identity or values – that constitutes the most crucial ideational underpinning of the current East Asian regional system and community-building project (see Shiraishi and Hau 2009, 37). But this politics of productivity (which is basically a politics of economic growth) stopped working at the time of the 1997-98 crisis and deepened the social crises in many countries and threatened their political stability. How to overcome the crises and restore stability became a pressing, region-wide question. One answer was the building of a regional system to cope with market failures and make the region more attractive for investment.

The second reason is the rise of China. During the 1980s and 1990s the driving force behind regional integration in East Asia was the flying-geese pattern of economic development with Japan, the newly industrializing economies of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in tandem. But following the economic crisis in 1997, a lately integrated China replaced Japan, the Newly Industrialized Economies of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea, and ASEAN as the locomotive of regional economic development, while remaining outside the security system organized with the US as the hub. As result, the question of how to integrate China into the East Asian regional system has become a matter of crucial importance for the region’s future.

The economic miracle that made East Asia the leading growth center that it is today has one important implication, which is that increasing urbanization and the emergence of middle classes in East Asia have given birth to a consumer market that is already larger than any single national market, whether China or Japan. A variety of cultural products targeted at this market are already being produced, marketed, and consumed. These efforts at capturing a pan-Asian market have had varying results. A brief discussion of three examples of cultural entrepreneurship suffices to pinpoint the collaborative and money-making possibilities and limits of the “pan-Asian” regional market.

Taiwanese director Ang Lee’s *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, released in 2000, was a Taiwan-Hong Kong-U.S. co-production that relied on the formulas of the mythical/historical martial arts genre generally favored by pan-Asian productions nowadays. The screenplay itself is a study in translanguaging practice: James Schamus wrote the script in English, which was then translated into Chinese and revised by Wang Hui Ling (of *Eat Drink Man Woman* fame) and Tsai Kuo Jung, and then translated from Chinese back into English for James Schamus to work on before being translated back into Chinese. Audience reception was mixed: although the film did well in the South Korean, Taiwanese, Thai, and Singaporean markets, mainland Chinese audiences “found the performance less than impressive, especially the Cantonese-accented Mandarin spoken by its lead actor and actress – [Hong Kong’s] Chow [Yun-fat] and [Malaysian Chinese Michelle] Yeoh” and “judged the story too slow and boring, and the special effects too familiar” (Kwok 2007). Believing that the film would not do well in the North American market, Taiwanese producer Hsu Li-Kong and Hong Kong’s William Kong sold the film to Sony Pictures Classic for a pittance flat rate of USD 15 million, and consequently made no money when the film broke box-office records and grossed USD 128 million in the U.S. The worldwide gross was USD 213 million. In this case, a film that performed unevenly in the Asian regional market wowed American and European audiences, thus proving that what intrigues one regional audience may not necessarily please another.

My second example is *The Eye* (2002), which rode the crest of the Asian horror-film wave generated by the Japan’s top-grossing *Ring* (1998) and did well in the Asian market, spawning two sequels and two remakes (in India and America). The film was produced by Hong Kong’s Applause

Pictures (a film house that specializes in making and distributing pan-Asian films, including 2001's *Jan Dara* and *One Fine Spring Day*) in collaboration with the Singapore-based MediaCorp's film-making arm, Raintree Pictures. The directors, Hong Kong-born twins Danny and Oxide Pang assembled a roster of talents that include Malaysian actress Angelica Lee, Chinese-Canadian singer Lawrence Chou, Thai actress Chutcha Rujinanon, and Singaporean artists Edmund Chen and Pierre Png, with cinematography by Thailand's Decha Srimantra. Raintree provided 30 per cent of the capital, as well as feedback on scripting and casting, and monitoring of the production. Raintree worked on this co-production despite the fact that its previous collaborations with Hong Kong counterparts – *The Truth about Jane and Sam* (1999) and *2000 AD* (2000) – were box-office disappointments. Chief Executive Producer Daniel Yun stated that Raintree has learned from experience not to impinge on the “creative dynamics of the collaborative film too much” after its insistence on having part of *2000 AD* shot in Singapore had resulted in a film product that “looked forced” (Ho 2002).

My third example, the most atypical but also the most visionary and suggestive of the three cases discussed, is Wong Kar-wai's critically acclaimed but commercially unsuccessful informal trilogy, *Days of Being Wild* (1991), *In the Mood for Love* (2000), and *2046* (2004). At least five languages/topolects (Cantonese, Tagalog, Tamil, English, Shanghaiese) can be heard in *Days of Being Wild*, which was partly shot in the Philippines. *In the Mood for Love* was shot in Bangkok and Siem Reap, with music by Michael Galasso and Umebayashi Shigeru, while *2046* featured Hong Kong's Tony Leung Chiu-wai, China-born Faye Wong, Zhang Ziyi, and Gong Li, Japanese singer-actor Kimura Takuya, and Thai singer Thongchai “Bird” McIntyre. The geographical references in the films also cover a regional area that includes Hong Kong, Macau, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Singapore.

Wong Kar-wai is well-known for shooting his films without a finished script, “drawing inspiration from the music, the setting, working conditions, and actors (Stokes and Hoover 1999, 270). This method “makes room for collaboration, improvisation, and chance to become feature elements in his movies, allowing him to play along as well as disregard and eliminate preconceptions of the story” (ibid.) Wong's “process-oriented” collaborative approach to *2046* has enabled Wong to embark on a series of experiments in crafting the film. An interesting innovation of the movie is Wong's decision to let his characters speak to each other in the language that they

are most comfortable with, even though in real life, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Japanese are mutually unintelligible. The lingua franca is not found in the movie, but rather *on* the movie, in the form of subtitles, the language of which varies from one market or set of audiences to another. In this way, the movie evades the politically charged hierarchy of languages based on the assumed standard set by Mandarin or Putonghua that is audibly rendered in such films as Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Wong also engages with regional politics in his film. Set in the “Oriental Hotel” in Hong Kong, where Tony Leung's character Chow Mo-wan is writing a novel about a future in which nothing changes, *2046* tells of the writer's growing attraction to the daughter of the hotel proprietor. Although his novel speaks of a future in which nothing happens, things do happen in real time as his landlord's daughter falls in love with a Japanese man and eventually goes to Japan. Here the language of Sino-Japanese relations is dramatically transformed from the language of fraught national memories (and amnesia) about the history of war into the language of family and love.

These three examples tell us about the hit and miss nature of the current experiments in media cooperation and artistic collaboration in East Asia. The drive to create products that will sell in this market is in some cases leading to attempts to get people to identify themselves as “Asians,” as evident in Hong Kong director-producer Peter Chan's call for an “Asian Cinema.” But it is important to note that while the rhetoric may be nominally Asianist, what is actually involved here is *identification*, which is not the same thing as *identity* (this formulation draws on Butler 1990). People who talk about an “Asian identity” are quick to say that it must be based on the commonalities shared by “Asians” and the ties of geographical and cultural proximity. But in the case of identification, the requirement is minimal: all that is required is that people encounter something, anything, and see similarities or differences between it and themselves. The dynamics of regional identification (and dis-identification) that are enabled by pan-Asian media cooperation and collaboration are not based on cultural commonalities or geographical proximity per se, but rather, on a contingent, complex (and sometimes fraught) interplay between commonalities and differences, proximity and distantiation; in effect, the “community of consumers” of East Asian popular cultural products is a provisionally- and context-bound “occasioned” and “occasional community” (Chua 2008, 88) rather than one whose sense of community derives its impetus from fixed, stable notions of “Asianness” and

“Asian” identity. This amplifies the fact that the current East Asian regional system is not primarily organized nor underpinned by an Asianist ideology, but is, rather, a product of history, geopolitics and market forces. Studies of media industries for the most part lack a critical perspective that is cognizant of the ways in which the evolving regional system has shaped the patterns and densities of flows, movements, and interactions of talents, industries, and enterprises across time and space. It is high time that we catch up with reality by undertaking more nuanced studies that will address this question, and it is my sincere hope that this conference will take us one step closer in this exciting intellectual journey.

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Whose Stories Do We Listen To? World-System and the Pattern of International News Flow

by Seung Joon Jun and Ju-Yong Ha

This study examined the network of international news contents based on world-system theory. Using social network methods, this study attempted to identify the structure of international news and its embeddedness in socio-economic environments of the world-system. It confirmed that the structure pattern of international news is similar to what the dependency and world-system theorists have argued. It also determined that the pattern of international news has been stable for the past 15 years, and no symptom of drastic change in the pattern was detected. QAP regression analysis showed that the structure of the world news is strongly embedded in international economic, military, and cultural contexts.

Why certain regions and countries in the world dominate information and media markets and contents is a long-standing issue in communication study. It was a central research question especially during the 1970s and the 1980s when the world was caught in the “New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)” controversy (Cioffi-Revilla and Merritt 1982). Since then, the inequality and imbalance of international news flow (Charles, Shore, and Todd 1979; Hester 1973; Matta 1979; Weaver and Wilhoit 1981; Wilhoit and Weaver 1983) and the distortion and unequal representation of the world image in Western news contents (Hester 1973; Hicks and Gordon 1974; Hur 1984) were extensively studied subjects in international communication study (Rouch 1990). Especially, a large number of international communication studies were conducted on international news media and wire services. As a window of the world for most people in the world, how news media and wire services connect and represent the world has been a central question of international communication studies.

A research method that had gained prominence in international news studies was structural approach. While early communication scholars

attributed global communication inequality to the internal problems of individual countries, communication scholars in the dependency perspective shifted their viewpoints to the broader historical and social contexts of individual countries. Drawing upon neo-Marxist dependency theories communication scholars approached to international communication system as a part of a bigger global system. Communication scholars in this paradigm viewed the global information and communication system as a consequence of Western colonization. The international communication system was seen as an important cultural and political subsystem, which reproduces and reinforces unequal structure of the world (Gunaratne 2002).

Since the end of the Cold War during the 1990s, however, the structural view of the modern world has been challenged by post-structural theories. Since the breakdown of the Communist bloc and along with the rise of new information and communication technologies, many communication theorists have attacked the economy-oriented worldview in the dependency paradigm. In advocating globalization, critics have argued that transportation, information, and communication technologies gave rise to a new social force to transform the spatial and temporal organization of the world. In this line of thought, the new world system would be fundamentally different from previous ones (Castells 1996; Giddens 1990; Harvey 1990). While the world was a single space and time of the social system in the dependency perspective, globalization is characterized by the rise of multiple spaces and times. Economically, globalization is the end of the world domination of industrial capitalism and the rise of new information and cultural system. The advocates of globalization are optimistic about global culture. They argue that the old North-South industrial axis is no more a central spatial grid in the world map. The spatial and temporal transformations observed in globalization are decentralization in the world hierarchy (Hardt and Negre 2004; Lash 2002). These enormous historical transformations were led by the rapidly increasing cross-border flows of information and culture (Giddens 1990; Robertson 1995; Tomlinson 1999).

While such global-scale transformations have been argued, little empirical research has been conducted on the change of international information flows. Until recently, international news studies had mainly focus on selected news media in a few countries (Chang et al. 1987; Chase-Dunn 1989; Gunaratne 2002; Wallerstein 1979). Only a few studies have attempted to examine global information and the communication system

holistically (Kim and Barnett 1996). In this circumstance, this article seeks to answers to the following questions: How does the international newspaper trade network shape and what factors affect the international newspaper trade? To understand the spatial pattern of international news flow as a whole, this study examines the global pattern of international news flow and its determinants based on bilateral newspaper trades among 64 countries.

International News Studies

Despite recently increasing optimism on new media and information technology, the issue of inequality in communication has repeatedly arisen. The persistence of inequality and imbalance concern in global communication has induced a large amount of research.

International news studies generally fall into two broad categories: event-oriented approach and context-oriented approach (Chang et al. 1987; Galtung and Vincent 1992; Hester 1973; Ostgaard 1965; Rosengren 1974; Zipf 1946). The event-oriented approach focuses on what kinds of foreign events are selected to be published as news. This approach generally emphasizes international news as information and cultural products under the psychological influence of news professionals involved in news production processes. An important concept proposed to measure internal influences in news production is “newsworthiness.” A large number of factors affecting the newsworthiness of an international event were examined. For example, Galtung and Ruge (1965) examined 12 factors: frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, conformity, composition, relevance to elite nations, elite persons, personalization, and negativity. Chang et al. (1987) added the three dimensions of “deviance” and four dimensions of “social significance” as indicators to extend the concept of newsworthiness. These show the extent to which an event would threaten the status quo or break social norms and how a news event is regarded as important.

Another approach in international news studies is the structural approach, which looks for the potential influence of macro social environments on international news flow. This approach examines “extra-media” contextual factors, such as international relations, which affect the volume and direction of news. Since Rosengren (1974) criticized psychological biases and conceptual subjectivity in event-oriented research,

communication researchers have looked for various structural or contextual conditions which affect the pattern, volume, and direction of international news. A general rationale in this line of research is that the international media and information system is a part of the bigger system of the modern world. In his seminal model, Hester (1973) proposed four contextual determinants of international information and media flows: position in world hierarchy, cultural affinities, economic association, and information conflict.

Researchers found more solid theoretical grounds for international news determinant analysis. Two grand theories most cited in structural research on international news flow are Galtung's (1971) structural theory of imperialism and Wallerstein's (1974) world-system theory (Chang et al. 1987; Kim and Barnett 1996). Despite significant differences between these two theories, both constituted the first theoretical efforts to identify the spatial organization and structure of the world as whole. Both belong to the dependency paradigm, which views the core/periphery relation between developed and developing countries as a central organizational feature of the modern world. As alternatives to modernization theories, these structural theories gained prominence since the 1960s and produced a large amount of empirical efforts on the structures of world economy, politics, and culture and their determinants (Barnett et al. 1999; Barnett and Choi 1995; Kariel and Rosenvall 1984; Kick and Davis 2001; Kim and Barnett 1996; Rossem 1996).

Galtung (1971) was one of the first scholars who proposed a general theory of the modern world as a single system in multiple conflicting relations. For him the modern world is a new form of empire in which a group of countries collectively dominates the rest of the world. According to him, this new imperial system of the modern world "splits up collectivities and relates some of the parts to each other in relations of harmony of interest, and other parts in relations of disharmony of interest, or conflict of interest" (Galtung 1971, 81). As a consequence, the modern world is structured on a dominant/dependent relationship between two groups of countries. According to Galtung, most communication flows and cultural relations in the world likewise follow the center/periphery pattern of unequal power relationship. Particularly, he points out news flows as a special combination of communication and cultural exchange.

While Galtung identified the structural multiplicity of the world organization, Emmanuel Wallerstein (1974 and 1979) delved into the

epistemological and ontological foundations of the world. As many dependency theorists argued, he also defined dominant/dependent or core/peripheral relations as a general structural feature of the modern world. He characterized the spatial and temporal organization of the modern world with two central organizing processes. The first is the expansion of capitalist economies and the second is the expansion of interstate system. These two processes are inherently in conflict, but are nonetheless integrated in a world class-like structure (Chase-Dunn 1989). Compared to earlier world systems characterized with expanding single political, economic, and cultural boundaries, the spatial organization of the modern world-system is marked by an increasing separation between economy and polity.

While the political grid of the modern world-system is an interstate system consisting of unequally powerful nation-states competing for multiple power resources (Chase-Dunn 1989), the modern world-system is highly integrated, centering on the economic organization – international division of labor. Although Wallerstein's modern world-system is "a set of nested and overlapping interaction networks that link all units of social analysis" (Chase-Dunn and Grimes 1995, 388), its structure was represented by a single hierarchy of core/semi-peripheral/peripheral relations.

Methodologically, for world-system theorists, the proper unit of analysis of social research is the world as a whole (Goldfrank 2000; Sklair 1999; Chase-Dunn 1989). Defined as a single network space on multiple connections, the world as a whole is not the sum of individual countries. As Wallerstein (1979) stipulated, the most ideal central organizing unit of the whole is the nation-state.

Despite different foci and interests in their theories, Galtung and Wallerstein have many things in common about the spatial organization of the world. First, for both the world is a single space of hierarchy characterized by two or three unequally connected regions. Both locate a few Western countries at the center of the world. Second, while the center/periphery structure is a central spatial feature of the world, both explicitly or implicitly emphasized the interstate system as a political basis of the modern world. Third, both identified the United States as the center of the center of the world. Last, but not least, while different in emphasis, both paid attention to East Asian countries as a region with potential power to change the current order of the world.

Factors Affecting International News Flow

In general previous international news studies examined the four types of international contexts as potential factors to determine the direction and volume of news flow: geographical, economic, political, and cultural contexts. These four groups of determinants were tested in many studies of international relations in various ways. Based on these findings, what was queried in this study is not a group of individual countries but the geographic, economic, and political patterns of the world as a whole.

Geographic Location

Since Galtung and Ruge's study (1965) on the contents of six Scandinavian newspapers, geographical proximity has been a major variable in empirical studies in both the event- and context-oriented research lines. However, the theoretical rationale used in examining the effect of geographical proximity was not consistent. Galtung and Ruge (1965) took geographical proximity to mean different degrees of interest in events that other countries involved. However, in later studies, researchers drew more organizational meanings out of geographical variables. For example, Haynes (1984), Nnaemeka and Richstad (1980), and Skurnik (1981) used the continental location of countries to indicate cultural closeness to one another. In this way, the geographical location of countries more or less bore a distinctive cultural identity. Similarly, Barnett and his colleagues used latitudes and longitudes of countries as indices of cultural closeness to one another (Barnett and Choi 1995; Kim and Barnett 1996). However, the empirical results were mixed.

This study tried to test the association of the pattern of geographical proximity with the pattern of international newspaper trade. Geographic relations among countries were measured by two matrices: (1) physical distance and (2) border contiguity. Physical distance between two countries was measured by distance between two cities with the largest population.

Economic Relationship

The magnitude of economic interaction has been found to be one of the most conductive factors in increasing the volume and content of news flow between countries. Previous studies have examined economic relationships

by referring to the level of economic development (e.g., GDP or GDP per capita), the size of the population, and the volume of economic trade. In many of these studies the magnitude of economic interaction among countries was found to be significantly correlated with the volume and contents of news coverage (e.g., Ahern 1984; Charles et al. 1979; de Verneil 1977; Dupree 1971; Kariel and Rosenvall 1984; Wu 2000). However, according to Robinson, and Sparkes (1976) and Wu (2000), international trade is a significant factor that explains foreign coverage in some countries, but not in the U.S. Despite mixed results from national-level studies, Kim and Barnett (1996) discovered in a network analysis of global news trade that the countries' level of GDP is significantly correlated with the hierarchy of global news trade. In this study, economic interaction was defined as the volume of trade in manufacturing goods and tested if the pattern of manufacturing trade was positively associated with the pattern of international newspaper trade when holding other variables constant.

Political Relationship

Previous studies defined and tested the effect of political relationship on international news flow in various ways. In most studies political relations constituted a positive predictor of international news flow. A common way to define the political relationships between two countries was to classify countries based on ideological and political affiliations. Ahern (1984), Haynes (1984), and Westerstahl and Johansson (1994) discovered that political affiliation was a positive predictor of international news coverage. In these studies, political affiliation was defined based on whether a country belongs to the Communist or the capitalist bloc. This classification is no more meaningful but also crude. In this study, political affiliation is defined by a direct connection of formal diplomatic exchange between two countries. A binary network of diplomatic ties was constructed based on data from Bayers (2006) and tested if the pattern of diplomatic ties among 64 countries is positively associated with the pattern of international newspaper trade.

Cultural Similarity

Whether the sharing of common historical experiences, linguistic links, or ethnic bonds among countries explains the pattern of international news

flow was an important research hypothesis tested in many international news studies. Cultural similarity was frequently operationalized in terms of the use of common languages, religions, and colonial experience under the same empire. Kim and Barnett (1996), Chang and his colleagues (1998 and 1987), Johnson (1997), and Kariel and Rosenvall (1983) tested the impact of cultural similarity on the volume and content of news. The examination of cultural determinants on the global scale was conducted in network studies by Barnett and his colleagues. They discovered a few languages with big populations, especially English, as significant determinants of global, cultural, and informational networks. However, their findings were based on aggregated language population. Their methods consisted of the usual multiple regression techniques. In this study, Anthon Eff's (2004a and 2004b) autocorrelation networks were used in the QAP multiple regression analysis. Based on distances between pairs of languages in phylogenetic language graphs traced by mathematical anthropologists (Burton and White 1991; Dow et al. 1984), Eff (2004a) defined linguistic proximity as the length of the longest path in an undirected graph connecting two languages. By weighting the percentages of language populations in two countries to linguistic similarity between two languages, he calculated a pair language similarity between two countries. This process was applied to all languages shared by two countries and summed up. Similarly, religious proximities between two countries were calculated based on countries' composition of religious populations. Using two cultural proximity networks, the following two hypotheses were included in QAP multiple regression analysis: tested if the patterns of religious similarity and linguistic similarity among 64 countries are positively associated with the pattern of international newspaper trade when holding the other variables constant.

Network Analysis Method

Social Network Analysis

The aim of the present study is to examine the pattern of international news flow as a whole by using the network analysis technique. Providing tools to formally describe and test complex systems of social relations as a whole (Smith and White 1992), social network analysis method has been said to be well-suited to the study of international economy and communications

(Barnett and Choi 1995; Chang et al. 1987; Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Gunaratne 2002; Wu 2000; Wasserman and Faust 1992). From the social network perspective, actors or entities are defined as interdependent and interconnected in diverse relations, and thus a whole social network should be the proper unit of analysis in social research. To examine the world international news flows as a whole, this study uses social network techniques.

Network Data Set

The basic network data set is a square matrix S , where n equals the number of nodes in the network. In each cell, s_{ij} indicates the strength of the relation among nodes i and j . In the data set, nations are the nodes, and the relationships are the amounts of international newspaper trade and the degrees (or strengths) of international proximity or similarities. In order to examine international newspaper trade as a whole, the bilateral volume of newspaper trade among 64 countries was combined in a 64×64 square matrix. Six dependent variables for economic, political, and cultural connections among the countries were also constructed in a 64×64 network form.

First, in the analyses, the global structure of the world news flow was examined in a qualitative way by mapping the connections among central nodes. Second, actors' power positions in a network were measured by an individual-level descriptive analysis. In order to examine the distribution of structural power, two centrality measures namely "out-degree centrality" and "in-degree centrality" (Wasserman and Faust 1994) were calculated. Finally, the determinants of the international news were examined in a network model of "Quadratic Assignment Procedures" (QAP) multiple regression analysis.

QAP Analysis

It has been a common practice in previous studies to use traditional statistical methods such as Pearson correlations and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) techniques to find structural factors of international news flow. However, it has long been recognized that using traditional statistical methods to study social relations can produce spurious outcomes. This is because traditional

statistical methods were developed based on an assumption that individual observations under study are independent from one another, and their distributions are homogeneous (Kenneth 2001). Social network analysis approaches individual actors and entities from the opposite direction. Social network analytics assume that individual subjects in a group or society are connected to one another in multiple ways (Hubert and Schulz 1976; Krackhardt 1987, 1988; Wasserman and Faust 1994). Therefore, traditional statistical measures cannot be directly applied in the analysis of social network data (Hubert and Schulz 1976; Krackhardt 1987 and 1988).

One technical solution to utilize traditional statistical techniques for social network analysis is to use “Quadratic Assignment Procedures,” which was first proposed by Mantel (1967) and later developed by Hubert and Schulz (1976) and Krackhardt (1987 and 1988). The QAP is a non-parametric solution developed to test the null hypothesis that two network variables are uncorrelated (Mantel 1967; Hubert and Schulz 1976; Krackhardt 1987, 1988; Smouse, Long, and Sokal 1986).

Basically, what this process does is compare two matrices by randomly switching rows and columns of one of two matrices and measuring correlations between two matrices. By repeating this process, the distribution of all possible correlations given the structures of the two matrices can be determined (Krackhardt 1988; Smouse, Long, and Sokal 1986). Therefore, the QAP avoids violating unit independency and normal distribution assumptions in estimating similarity between two matrices as a whole (Krackhardt 1988, 1987; Smouse, Long, and Sokal 1986). Based on a large number of estimates from repeated permutations, it can determine how accurate the estimated similarity between two matrices is.

The QAP technique was, also, extended to the network model of multiple regression analysis (Krackhardt 1987 and 1988; Hubert and Schulz 1976). The algorithm proceeds in two steps. It performs a standard multiple regression across corresponding cells of the dependent and independent matrices. Then it randomly permutes rows and columns of either dependent matrix or all independent matrices, and recomputes the regression, keeping values of R-square and all coefficients. The second step is repeated hundreds of times to estimate standard errors for regression coefficients of interest (Borgatti et al. 2002).

Since Hubert and Schulz’s (1976) proposal, the idea of the QAP has been implemented in different statistical methods. Until recently, most

network researchers used a QAP technique that permutes the dependent-variable matrix (Y-permutation method), which was proposed by Smouse et al. (1986). However, a number of methodological examinations found that the Y-permutation method can have downward biases in measuring standard errors of coefficients because permuting the dependent network does not fully account for the differences between the association of a dependent network with an independent network and its association with other control-variable networks. To avoid this problem, “Double-Semi-Partialing QAP” (DSPQAP) was developed. This method uses residual matrices after regressing predictor matrices on control matrices, and uses them to estimate regression coefficients by permuting independent-variable matrices (X-permutation). Unlike the Y-permutation method, the DSPQAP method is robust to possible biases from multiple associations among dependent, predictor, and control variables (Dekker, Krackhardt, and Snijders 2007). This study uses this procedure to estimate the size of effects of economic, political, and cultural relations on global information and cultural flows. The model proposed in this study was constructed by simply transforming a usual multiple regression model to a network form:

$$NEWS_{ij} = a + b_1 PHYSIC_{ij} + b_2 BORDER_{ij} + b_3 TRADE_{ij} + b_4 DIPLO_{ij} + b_5 LANGU_{ij} + b_6 RELIG_{ij} + b$$

where $NEWS_{ij}$ is international newspaper trade in a form of 64 x 64 square matrix. $PHYSIC_{ij}$, $BORDER_{ij}$, $TRADE_{ij}$, $DIPLO_{ij}$, $LANGU_{ij}$, $RELIG_{ij}$ are independent network variables which respectively represent physical distance, boarder closeness, trade volume, diplomatic relation and two cultural proximity measures (linguistic similarities and religious similarities) among countries in the matrix. Each i and j indicates countries’ nodes from 1 to 64.

Measurement

Newspaper trade. Global newspaper trade data were gathered from the UN Commodity Trade Statistics Database. The export and import of newspapers, journals, and periodicals issued more than three times a week during the year 2004 were considered as newspaper trade. To minimize inconsistencies between export and import data, each country’s export and import volumes

were averaged, as Kim and Barnett (1996) did in their study. After dropping three categories for unknown regions and countries with populations of less than one million, the study examined the bidirectional newspaper trade of 64 countries with international news trade of more than one million U.S. dollars in 2004. Belgium and Luxembourg were treated as one region to keep data consistent.

Physical distance. Data for geographic proximity among 64 countries were borrowed from Anthon Eff (2004a and 2004b). Based on longitudes and latitudes of the largest cities of 64 countries, he calculated physical distances among countries for the study of autocorrelation in international datasets.¹ In testing the existence of autocorrelation, he transformed the distance matrix to a proximity matrix by dividing all cells by the biggest distance in the matrix. Geographic proximities among 64 countries in this study were extracted from Eff's geographic proximity autocorrelation matrix.

Border closeness. To examine the effect of geographical locations on newspaper trade boarder closeness between two countries were included in the network regression analysis. The Correlate of War (COW) project (Bayer 2006) provided data for all direct contiguity relationships between countries. The classification system for contiguous dyads comprised five categories, one for land contiguity and four for water contiguity. Land contiguity was defined as the intersection of homeland territory of two countries. Water contiguity was divided into four categories based on distances of 12, 24, 150, and 400 miles. In this study, border contiguity was rescaled into an ordinal scale with five integer values from five to one. Land contiguity was coded as five, and water contiguity was recoded from four to one as the distances between countries become smaller from 12 to 400 miles.

Trade volume. Trade data for manufacturing goods in 2004 were also collected from the UN Commodity Statistic Database. Manufacturing goods trade was defined by countries' economic exchange in 28 manufacturing sectors corresponding to the three-digit level International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), Revision 2.

Diplomatic relation. The COW project (Bayer 2006) provided the data set for all diplomatic exchanges among 64 countries in 2005. Diplomatic representation was used as an indicator of the presence of diplomatic ties between countries. Diplomatic representation was assigned a value of 1 if country *i* had an embassy or high commissariat in country *j* and otherwise a

value of 0. The number of embassies in a country indicates the importance of that country in the global political system.

Cultural proximity. Cultural proximity matrices were also constructed based on Eff's two autocorrelation matrices measured based on similarities in language and religious population compositions among countries. He measured linguistic similarities (LANGU) among countries based on the composition of populations using different languages and similarities among languages.² Religious similarities (RELIG) among countries were also measured based on similarities in religious population composition among countries.³ From Eff's autocorrelation matrices, two 64 x 64 matrices were constructed for linguistic and religious connection patterns among countries. The basic descriptive statistics of all networks are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Network Summary Statistics

	Mean	STD	Sum	Min	Max
NEWS	95,634	1,157,321	85,594,880	0.000	5,120,076
PHYSIC	0.003	0.034	13.317	0.000	1.000
BORDER	0.112	0.683	451.0	0.000	5.000
TRADE (mil)	1,290	7,313	5,203,398	0.000	198,674
DIPLO	0.061	0.238	244.0	0.000	1.000
LANGU	0.085	0.179	342.2	0.000	0.985
RELIG	0.401	0.291	1,616.8	0.172	1.000

Note: STD= standard deviation, Min=Minimum, and Max=Maximum

Results

The Spatial Pattern of International Newspaper Trade

The underlying structure of the 2004 network was presented by cutting off nodes with trade volumes of less than one million dollars (see Figure 1). It shows that Western European countries formed a cluster at the center. Germany, UK, France, Italy, Netherlands, and Spain are the major countries with strong connections in the center cluster. Among them, three big central countries – UK, Germany, and France – are competing at the center. While the UK is the most central, Germany and France seem to be connecting more countries outside Western Europe. Germany is a major bridging node between Northern and Eastern Europe and Western Europe. France is a

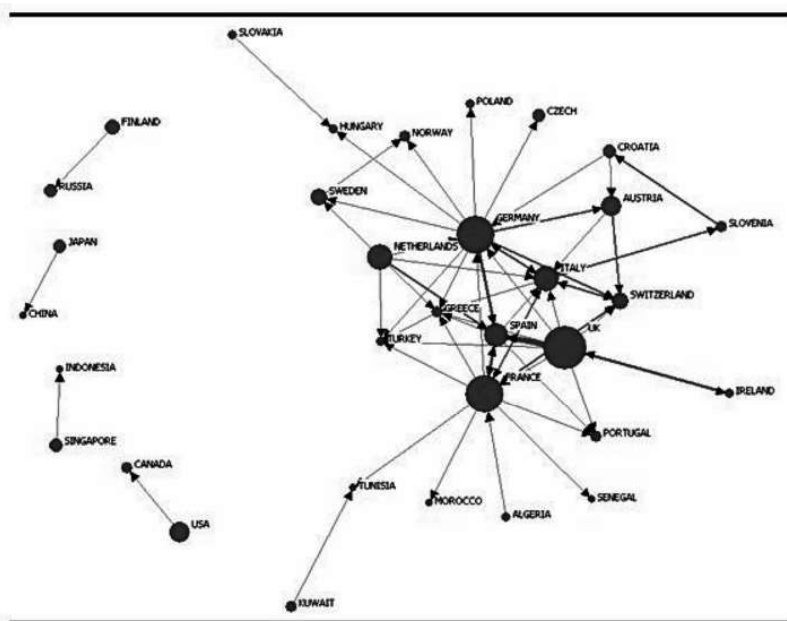


bridge to African countries. Among Western European countries, Italy and Spain mediate these central countries.

Outside the center, four small clusters are visible. Russia and Finland, Japan and China, Indonesia and Singapore, and the United States and Canada are strongly connected to each other. A notable thing is that the U.S. is not as central as expected in many international communication literatures. While the U.S. is a strong actor, it does not have a strong connection with Europe.

The network is heavily dependent on European countries. Most active actors in the network are countries in Western, Southern, Northern and Eastern Europe. While some former French colonies in Africa are visible in the periphery, a large number of African countries are disconnected. Only four Asian countries – Japan, China, Singapore, and Indonesia – are visible, but outside the center cluster. There are no countries in Latin America and Australia in this network. Kuwait is only one country in the Middle East which maintains a connection to the center cluster indirectly through Tunisia (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Newspaper Trade Network in 2004



Note: Nodes with less than one million were cut off.

Network Centralities

According to countries' centralities (see Table 2), UK, Germany, and France are very central in terms of selling power, but Spain, Switzerland, and Italy are stronger in buying power than these countries. The high-ranking countries in both supply and demand sides are European. These countries are strongly connected to one another. However there is strong asymmetry among them.

As presented in network description, the power of the United States is much weak. The U.S. ranked eleventh in exporting newspapers. However, the import of the U.S. is not even within the ranking 20s. For both export and import, the U.S. is in fact less active than Slovenia.

Table 2. Network Centralities of Top 20 Countries

Rank	Country	Out-degree	Rank	Country	In-degree
1	UK	96,950,944	1	Spain	95,504,960
2	Germany	78,042,600	2	Switzerland	45,984,620
3	France	51,955,908	3	Italy	36,711,388
4	Italy	31,522,488	4	UK	21,450,306
5	Netherlands	20,295,060	5	Ireland	21,026,052
6	Ireland	20,115,728	6	Austria	19,116,718
7	Spain	15,014,431	7	Germany	17,410,000
8	Austria	11,562,314	8	France	15,223,440
9	Switzerland	8,807,870	9	Greece	14,616,103
10	Slovenia	7,685,997	10	Turkey	12,681,663
11	USA	4,735,279	11	Portugal	10,031,380
12	Croatia	4,707,460	12	Slovenia	7,849,016
13	Singapore	3,927,101	13	Croatia	7,758,427
14	Sweden	3,792,897	14	Tunisia	7,228,542
15	Finland	3,506,539	15	Sweden	5,835,521
16	Japan	2,685,628	16	Norway	4,862,499
17	Kuwait	1,933,305	17	Czech	3,566,419
18	Greece	1,622,057	18	Hungary	3,488,000
19	Slovakia	1,568,000	19	Oman	3,160,132
20	Russia	1,490,325	20	Morocco	2,951,978

QAP Correlations

QAP correlations among variables show that all network spaces are coupled with one another (see Table 3). Significantly, two cultural spaces are highly correlated with each other. Correlation between linguistic and religious

similarity patterns amounts to 0.41. This shows that countries using similar languages are also religiously close to each other. A high QAP correlation indicates that the patterns of these two cultural proximities are very similar. These two cultural variables are correlated with all network spaces at the level of correlation higher than 0.1.

Structural similarity between BORDER and PHYSIC is also high with a 0.22 QAP correlation. The newspaper trade is correlated with all network variables except for the network DIPLO. The most strongly associated with newspaper trade (NEWS) is the manufacturing trade (TRADE). Correlation between TRADE and NEWS amounts to 0.2. Border contiguity also shows a high correlation (0.16) with the newspaper trade. Following TRADE and BORDER, two cultural networks are showing a moderate size of correlation with the newspaper trade. The binary network of diplomatic ties shows weakest correlations with all variables, implying a weak measure for global political space.

Table 3. QAP Correlations

	NEWS	PHYSIC	BORDER	TRADE	DIPLO	LANGU	RELIG
NEWS	1.00 [*]						
PHYSIC	0.05 [*]	1.00 [*]					
BORDER	0.16 [*]	0.22 [*]	1.00 [*]				
TRADE	0.21 [*]	0.03 ^{**}	0.18 [*]	1.00 [*]			
DIPLO	-0.02 ^{***}	-0.02 [*]	-0.01 ^{***}	0.09 [*]	1.00 [*]		
LANGU	0.12 [*]	0.15 [*]	0.19 [*]	0.14 [*]	0.11 [*]	1.00 [*]	
RELIG	0.12 [*]	0.11 [*]	0.14 [*]	0.15 [*]	0.15 [*]	0.41 [*]	1.00 [*]

Note: *: p-value<0.05, **: p-value<0.10, and ***: p-value>0.10

Among six variables tested in the final model, the pattern of international trade (TRADE) is the most strongly associated with the pattern of international newspaper trade (see Table 4). When one standard deviation of TRADE (about 7,313 million dollars) increases, a 0.182 standard deviation (219,631 dollars=0.182 * 1,157,321) of newspaper trade also increases between two countries. Considering that TRADE is the total volume of manufacturing trade, a strong association exists between the newspaper and manufacturing trades.

Following TRADE, the variable showing a strong association with NEWS is that of border contiguity (BORDER). When one standard deviation (0.68 point) of border contiguity increases, it shows about a 116,000-dollar increase in newspaper trade between two countries.

Two cultural networks are also significant determinants of the pattern of international newspaper trade. One standard increase in cultural proximity increases newspaper trade by about 70,000 dollars (0.06 x 1,157,321) a year. Despite a high correlation (0.41) between the two variables, both are strongly significant determinants of the newspaper trade. However, a diplomatic connection between countries was not a meaningful variable to explain the pattern of global newspaper trade.

Table 4. Stepwise QAP Multiple Regression

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Intercept	0.000 (0.999)	0.000 (1.000)	0.000 (0.996)	0.000 (0.999)	0.000 (0.000)
PHYSIC	0.014 (0.054)	0.017 (0.042)	0.016 (0.045)	0.007 (0.074)	0.005 (0.105)
BORDER	0.155 (0.000)	0.120 (0.000)	0.119 (0.001)	0.109 (0.000)	0.106 (0.001)
TRADE		0.191 (0.002)	0.194 (0.003)	0.187 (0.001)	0.182 (0.004)
DIPLO			-0.03 (0.000)	-0.041 (0.000)	-0.046 (0.000)
LANGU				0.072 (0.009)	0.050 (0.031)
RELIG					0.061 (0.024)
Adj R ²	0.061 (0.003)	0.060 (0.002)	0.061 (0.003)	0.066 (0.002)	0.068 (0.003)

Note: All coefficients are standardized and p-values are in parentheses

Discussion

Overall, the structure of international newspaper trade is very similar to Galtung and Wallerstein's structural presentation of the world. The volume of international newspaper trade is concentrated on a few countries in Western Europe. While newspaper trade flows from core to peripheral countries, horizontal connections among peripheral countries are virtually

non-existent. The pattern of international newspaper trade is very similar to the core/periphery structure predicted in Galtung's (1971) structural theory of imperialism. Countries at the center of the network are generally strong in economic and political power, as Wallerstein (1974) predicted. As found in the determinant analysis, the pattern of international newspaper trade is positively related to the pattern of economic relationship. As Kim and Barnett (1996) found in a multiple regression analysis with aggregate data, the pattern of international newspaper trade is also explained by the pattern of geographic, religious, and linguistic connection among countries. As Barnett and Choi (1995) in their social network analysis found, the geographic connections among countries are very strongly associated with the pattern of international newspaper flow. Both religious and linguistic connections among countries are significant determinants of the structure of international newspaper trade.

However, there are many things unexplained by neo-Marxist dependency theories. First, while there is a clear asymmetry in power relation between core and peripheral countries, the memberships of core and periphery found in this study is very different from ones found by previous studies (Arrighi and Drangel 1986). Especially, the core of the world in terms of newspaper trade is much smaller than ones found in previous studies on global political economy.

Second, unlike many dependency theorists argued, the United States locates the outside of the center in the newspaper network. This is congruent to what Kim and Barnett (1996) found. For a long time in international studies the peerless position of the United States in world hierarchy has been a central subject of criticism. Many critical scholars described as American empire. For Wallerstein (1974 and 1979), the global hegemony of the United States is a historical consequence that characterizes the recent historical phase of the modern world. The position of the United States in the newspaper trade hierarchy is much lower than expected by Wallerstein.

Third, a buffer zone between the core and peripheral zones is not clearly visible in this study. Although Wallerstein argued the existence of the semi-peripheral zone, this study could not find a distinctive zone between the core and peripheral zones in the newspaper trade network. Although the rise of East Asian power was a common observation in many international studies, furthermore, the rise of East Asian countries was not visible in the newspaper trade network.

Fourth, many dependency theorists including Wallerstein and his followers have emphasized the institutional priority of economy in the organization of the world. This economy-centered view of neo-Marxist dependency theorists is often called economy-deterministic in many criticisms. While economic connection (TRADE) among countries turned out to be the strongest determinant, however, other contextual factors are also strong determinants to explain the pattern of international newspaper trade. For example, the results of the QAP multiple regression analysis show that the geographic proximity (PHYSIC) and the border contiguity (BORDER) explain a large variance of international newspaper trade. When including cultural factors, non-economic and non-political factors as a whole are stronger correlates than economic and political factors in explanation of newspaper trade. As many previous empirical studies pointed out, Galtung and Wallerstein did not provide a proper amount of attention to the cultural foundation of the world (Barnett and Choi 1995; Kim and Barnett 1996; Gunaratne 2002).

Despite apparent theoretical limitations, the general organizational view of dependency theories is still useful to predict the pattern of international information and media flows. While the pattern of international newspaper trade was not exactly the same with what Galtung and Wallerstein predicted, this study found an apparent concentration of power on Western countries and a clear asymmetry between the developed and developing countries. As seen in the determinant analysis, economic connection among countries is a very important factor for understanding the pattern of international news flow. The results of this study also confirm that the interstate system model is still a valid organizational view to understand the modern world. As seen from the results of this study, the world is more like a single space consisted of unequally powered countries through multiple relations. The global patterns of these inter-state relations are highly overlapped with each other. As many communication scholars predicted, this spatial couplings of the world organization explains a great deal of spatial pattern in international news flow.

Notes

- 1 Eff (2004b) calculated distance between each pair of centroids of largest cities in countries in kilometer as follows:

$$d_{ij} = 6371.1 * ar \cos[\sin(y_i) * \sin(y_j) * \cos(x_i) * \cos(x_j) * \cos(x_i - x_j)]$$

where y_i is the latitude in radians for country i, x_i is the longitude in radians for country i, and subscript j refers to the same measures for country j.

He converted distance to proximity using the following formula:

$$w_{ij} = (1 + 0.001 * d_{ij})^{-2}$$

- 2 Eff (2004b) defined linguistic proximity as the length of the longest path in the undirected graph connecting two languages.

$$S_{rk} = \frac{\delta_x - \delta_{rk} + 1}{\delta_x + 1}$$

where S_{rk} is the similarity between language r and language k, and δ_x is the length of the longest path in the language family (i.e., the length of the longest path to the common ancestor of the entire family).

By weighting the percentages of language populations in two countries to linguistic similarity between two languages (S_{rk}), he calculated a pair language similarity between two countries. This process was applied to all languages shared by two countries and summed.

where p_{ik} is the percentage of the population in country i speaking language k, p_{jr} is the percentage of the population in country j speaking language r, and S_{rk} is the similarity measure between language r and language k.

$$w_{ij} = \sum_r \sum_k p_{ik} p_{jr} S_{rk}$$

- 3 Eff (2004b) included seven religious categories included in the calculation: (1) Western Christian, (2) Hindu, (3) Buddhist, (4) Orthodox Christian, (5) Muslim, (6) Jewish, and (7) Indigenous. He calculated the religious proximity as follows:

$$d_{ij} = \sqrt{\sum_k (p_{ik} - p_{jk})^2}$$

The proximity of country i and j is calculated as follows:

$$w_{ij} = (1 + d_{ij})^{-2} \text{ and } w_{ii} = 0$$

where p_{ik} is the percentage of country i's population adhering to religion k and p_{jk} is the percentage of country j's population adhering to religion k.

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A Yearning for Tenderness in Korean Cinema

by Ju-Yong Ha and Joel David

A number of reasons have been made to explain the emergence and current dominance of the Korean Wave in film. Most of these accounts are tied in with attempts to understand other national cinemas in Asia in terms of their respective countries' encounters with modernization. This paper will attempt to provide a historically grounded perspective on why and how film is currently being used in Korea as a means of recapturing and reevaluating traumatic experiences on the part of both filmmakers and audiences.

In an assessment of the 60th anniversary of the Korean War undertaken in 2010 as a joint project with the Korea Institute of Public Administration, the *Korea Times* ascribed the emergence of the Korean popular-culture wave, or *Hallyu*, to the country's decision to move away from the "absolute primacy on economic growth" enforced by authoritarian regimes both within and outside Korea, to a new development paradigm (Salmon 2010, n.p.). The shift was articulated as a critique of the "Asian values" framework propounded by such rulers as Lee Kuan-yew of Singapore and Mohamed Mahathir of Malaysia, which in turn was a tactic that was regarded as a coded justification for anti-Western authoritarianism. The increasing numbers of Koreans exposed to Western countries, along with the opportunity for new corporate players and renewed interest in the content industry as one of the reactions to the economic upheavals of the late 1990s, made possible the production of popular cultural material that "combined slick production with professional marketing, underpinned by a key local ingredient – the raw emotion Koreans express so passionately" (Salmon 2002, n.p.). By looking at the specific medium of film within the context of this pop-culture

wave, this paper will aim to provide a closer understanding of the historical origins of the aforementioned “key local ingredient” as well as an explication of how it had been internalized and expressed in the cinematic component of *Hallyu*.

The attempt to explicate a complex socio-aesthetic phenomenon is always a tricky undertaking – not so much because social phenomena are inevitably overdetermined, but mainly because people will always rely on a handle, a means, by which they can understand whatever is happening to them at any given moment. In general academic practice, European modernity would be the umbrella category by which popular media in Asia are elucidated, inasmuch as both media and modernity are Western-sourced phenomena. (A recent example that demonstrates this principle would be the 2002 anthology edited by Jenny Kwok Wah Lau, fully titled *Multiple Modernities: Cinemas and Popular Media in Transcultural East Asia*.)

When the current film wave in Korea attracted the attention of international observers, one of the first responses of Koreans themselves was wonderment. What was so special about their current film output, when their country had been producing films for as far back in the past as anyone could remember? Casual observers of global trends may have felt that it was probably the Koreans’ turn to be fetishized for their pop culture, after Westerners presumably grew tired of their fascination with things Japanese, Indian, and Chinese. The regard for Korean film culture as an object of fetishization, immediately succeeding Hong Kong cinema’s previous domination, is foregrounded as early as the subtitle, *The New Hong Kong*, of Anthony C. Y. Leong’s best-selling fans-oriented volume *Korean Cinema* (2002). Leong’s position is further reflected and amplified through an acknowledgment of generational innovation in the introductory essays in the collection edited by Justin Bowyer and Jinhee Choi, titled *The Cinema of Japan and Korea* (2004).

That early response, a combination of unease and bemusement, is evident once more in the response of residents of Chuncheon city in Gangwon Province to the influx of foreign tourists eager to stage a pilgrimage, as it were, to the locations of one of their favorite televised drama series, Hyeong-min Lee and Seok-ho Yun’s *Winter Sonata* (2002). The phenomenon of foreigners traveling all the way to Korea to visit the setting of their preferred series has since been replicated on Jeju Island, location of Byeong-hoon Lee’s *Dae Jang-gum* (2003); and on Sugi Beach on Si-do (Si Island), Incheon, site of Min-

soo Pyo’s *Full House* (2004). In fact the Korea Broadcasting System recently opened its studio locale in Suwon, Gyeonggi Province, to visitors interested in visiting sets and viewing location shoots of its TV dramas (Gyeong-Gi Do n.d., n.p.).

On the question of the current creative burst in Korean cinema, which we shall provisionally term the Korean New Wave, a few frameworks have been proffered. Some of the better-known English-language approaches deal separately with issues of North-South reunification (cf. Hyangjin Lee’s *Contemporary Korean Cinema* [2000]) as well as gender roles (cf. Kyung Hyun Kim’s *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema* [2004]). Additionally, a recent study by Kwang Woo Noh (2009) claims that contemporary trends in Korean cinema derive from a “motivation to re-examine the past,” as evidenced in titles that focus on historical and political events as well as personal stories from the period of robust economic growth (1960s to the 1990s) that provide “not only retrospection of the rapid transformation but also nostalgia for the past” (Noh 2009, i-ii).

It is not the intention of this paper to contest these viewpoints, inasmuch as they have proved workable for their respective volumes. In fact it may even be possible to arrive at a perspective wide enough to accommodate existing frameworks and useful enough to account for the existence of the Korean New Wave and suggest its future shapes and directions. This can be done by the relatively simple procedure of first looking at which film samples and practitioners constitute the said wave, then focusing attention on the range of material covered by the films and the manner in which the materials are handled. This paper will therefore proceed contemplatively, in the sense that relevant cultural studies texts will be raised alongside a consideration of the condition of contemporary Korean film texts. The deconstructive critical method will also be deployed in instances when textual and historical aporia are encountered, in order to arrive at possible useful scenarios for the future.

History as Determinant

In considering a viable context for the study of the Korean New Wave, the history of film in Korea would constitute an appropriate and useful starting point, inasmuch as a nation’s cinema has the ability to embody its culture’s prevalent ways of thinking and structures of feeling. Such an assumption

underlies the writing of Gilles Deleuze's twin volumes on film (1986 and 1989), where he concludes: "[We] must no longer ask ourselves, 'What is cinema?' but 'What is philosophy?' Cinema itself is a new practice of images and signs, whose theory philosophy must produce as conceptual practice. For no technical determination, whether applied...or reflexive, is sufficient to constitute the concepts of cinema itself" (1989, 280).

What may be termed a standard version, part of the Korean Studies Series, is aptly enough titled *The History of Korean Cinema* (Lee and Choe 1988). The book's authors maintain that, because of its technology-dependent and capital-intensive qualities, film in Korea has been more marked than other cultural forms by the various socio-historical upheavals in the past century. One could take any such period and draw a direct correlation with developments in local cinema, such as, for example, the popularity of nationalist-themed films during the Japanese occupation or the rise of documentary and war-film production during the Korean War. The book also helps explain certain stylistic qualities that continue to characterize Korean films, notably the insistence on a dramatic realism that directly, and rarely ironically, acknowledges the audience: what may well be the first major Korean blockbuster, Woon-kyu Na's *Arirang* (1926), functioned as a metaphor against Japanese colonization and made effective use of direct address during its climactic moment (Lee and Choe 1988, 42-43).

Although *The History of Korean Cinema* ends right before the 1990s, on the eve of the transition to a democratic dispensation, the observations it made regarding the stylistic tendencies and thematic concerns of pre-democratic Korean cinema appear to have persisted to the present, with several of its observations confirmed, upheld, or modified by an anthology sponsored by the Korean Film Council titled *Korean Cinema: From Origins to Renaissance* (Kim 2006). In fact, in a short but cogent summation of the *Hallyu* phenomenon, Doobo Shim implicitly acknowledged such distinctive and exceptional cultural qualities – possibly relatable to the native concept of *han*, an ultimately untranslatable quality roughly referring to sorrow or resentment derived from suffering or injustice (Bannon 2008, n.p.). In recognition of the need to bridge several periods marked by extreme variations in sociopolitical systems (colonization, war, dictatorship, democracy), Shim recommended the use of an analytical approach that "comprises discourses that identify cultural hybridity and investigate power relations between periphery and center from the perspective of postcolonial

criticism," premised on the paradox that "globalization encourages local peoples to rediscover the 'local' that they have neglected or forgotten in their drive towards Western-imposed modernization" (2006, 27).

How all these developments relate to the present may be the key to understanding what is going on at the moment in Korean films. From 1910 to 1987, the country had been continually wracked by diverse forms of violence visited on it by sources both outside and within the nation. Historians have duly taken note of the overt, physical, often fatal sufferings of the population during the protracted militarized periods, whether the troops involved were foreign or local.¹ Less visibly dramatic but still distressing in its own way were the periods of apparent quietude, when the quest for sovereignty and self-determination during the Japanese and American occupations as well as the pursuit of developmental goals during the military dictatorships resulted in a largely unreflective willingness on the part of Koreans to submit themselves to arbitrary and punitive disciplinary measures such as curfews and rules delimiting maximum hair and minimum skirt length. The paradoxical relationship between repression and development was reflected even in film-related laws, as summarized in Sang-hyeok Im's account of film censorship in Korea:

For a long time, the public was deprived of any opportunity to even discuss freedom of expression and films under colonial rule and military governments. Films were reduced to a means for the government's promotion of ideology and preservation of order. Yet, the film-related laws evolved in a legitimate way through the rulings of the Constitutional Court. (Im 2006, 101)

For now one can surmise that the population acceded to these intrusions on individual preferences for a complex of reasons, each one inadequate in explaining a compliance that might seem unusually and possibly pathologically uncritical to today's generation of young Koreans: first, any previous period of brutalization may have inured the citizens to less physical demonstrations of authority by whatever regime happened to be in power; second, people may have willingly accepted controls on their freedom as a way of hopefully forestalling future disasters by their display of good behavior (regarding which, cf. the later discussion of the concept of behavioral self-blame); and third, in line with Foucauldian precepts, the

regimes themselves held forth claims to long-term benevolence in the form of economic prosperity through modernization.

Regarding the third cause, wherein the powers-that-be would promise development in exchange for the surrender of certain basic freedoms, conventional wisdom accepts that each patriarchal order – the Japanese, then the American, occupational forces, as well as the local military dictators – during the past century was at least earnest about making such a claim, with the local militarists actually succeeding in ushering the nation through its still-enduring period of industrial prosperity. From this perspective, even both sides of the protagonists during the Korean War (Communist North as well as free-market South) can be regarded as competing as to which of their governmental and economic models would be more beneficial to the already sundered nation.

Discontinuities

Within such a dominant and now admittedly facile framework, the presence of the New Wave of Korean filmmaking suggests ruptures in the historical fabric. For if the narrative logic of the Euro-American model of advanced industrial development were to be observed, then the Republic of Korea has finally achieved its happy ending and would now be entitled to the proverbial sleep of the weary. If we look at the experience of some of the once-prominent national cinemas in Asia, and read up on the discourses on their film-texts vis-à-vis their respective projects of nationalist development, we could arguably state that film served the function of articulating its viewers' desires and anxieties during the unavoidably long-drawn-out industrialization process. If we draw from the experience of Japan, whose cinematic vibrancy was at its peak a few decades ago,² such a thesis would allow us to similarly remark that the glory years of Korean cinema should have coincided with the periods of military dictatorship, from the 1960s through the late '80s, when the contradiction between economic growth and individual freedom was at its most intense.

So the question would be not only *Why the Korean New Wave?* but also *Why only now?* A clue may lie in the self-understanding of Koreans themselves. A relatively recent empirical study of the population describes the respondents as engaged in a "dichotomized mode of social relations," with members of the oppressed class finding comfort in all types of religion

that "are essentially this-worldly in orientation," thereby throwing into doubt the spiritual claims of local religious practice (Kim 1999, 214-15).

What this suggests is similar to Sigmund Freud's classic description of a reality principle, where the subject's originally all-inclusive ego eventually "separates off an external world from itself." Freud (1961, 15) concludes his discussion of the distinctions between pleasure and reality principles also with an acknowledgment that "oceanic" feelings, which seek the "restoration of limitless narcissism" traceable to "infantile helplessness," became regarded as the source of "the religious attitude" (1961, 19). In developing further this concept, Freud advances an intriguing analogy, one that might be unexpectedly useful to the present discussion: he describes the maturation of consciousness as similar to the evolution of a once-ancient city, so that the challenge for the psychoanalyst is to visualize in the present the structures that might have once been there in the past but are now no longer visible (Freud 1961, 16-18).

In considering then the question of why an urgent and vital national discourse is ongoing in Korean cinema, we get to understand, first and foremost, that this discourse could not be conducted in the past both because, as we generally accept, critical thinking was prohibited, and also because the (sometimes monstrous) enormity of social suffering precluded any attempt at reflection and resolution. The severity of successive traumas that accompanied the Korean experience of modernization could help suggest why the nation has turned to a Western-sourced and technology-based medium to articulate issues in its past. The tension between non-Western nationalism and Western-style modernity is articulated in relation to film practice in Ian Jarvie's "National Cinema" essay. In contrast with the Korean response, which was to engage with cinema as a means of discourse articulation, Jarvie points out how some elements in other parts of the world "have in the past called for the prohibition of movies altogether" (2000, 83). Since the nation wrested for itself a crucial amount of democratic space with the onset of the 1990s, one might be able to provisionally say that its current use of film as repository of traumatic discourses indicates that it accepts the fruits of development as much as it desires to question the price it had to pay for it.

Again a startling insight from Freud suggests this much, when he avers that the most perfect response to the regard for "reality as the sole enemy and as the source of all suffering" is to do one better than the hermit, who "turns

his back on the world,” by “[re-creating] the world, [building] up in its stead another world” (Freud 1961, 28). Although Freud ultimately recommends the rejection of this option as belonging to the province of madness, we can realize how a project that consists of externalizing one’s trauma, by inscribing it onto a medium, upon which it can be shared discursively with others marked by the same set of experiences, could promise some therapeutic relief. As to whether this relief will have the capacity to fully exorcise the painful memories of the historical past, only the future will be able to tell.

Korean New Wave and Its Discontents

Originally referring to “the internally visualized fantasy in sleep” and related to the proto-Arabic root source for “dream” and the later Greek “drama,” the term *trauma* underwent an intermediate transformation in Middle High German as a reference to a tale of fantasy, then a brainwave, then (through its association with mechanics) a loom shuttle, and finally (through a combination of mechanics and temporal unfolding) a modern street light rail car, the tram (Wilson n.d.). This wide-ranging combination of connotative references would best embody the usage of trauma that we would like to pursue in this paper, rather than the admittedly and exclusively grim associations with inexplicable tragedies such as the Holocaust or September 11, 2001 attacks made in Western literature.³

As mentioned earlier, the self-repression imposed on earlier Korean generations underwent an internalization brought about by the bludgeoning effects of overt, or macro, violence, reinforced by the punitive disciplinarian exercises, this time a form of micro violence, enforced by authoritarian systems of government. Only with the lifting of controls on freedom of expression did it become possible for people to speak out; and since the advent of free expression coincided with the country’s attainment of economic prosperity, one might be allowed a fairly reductive materialist explanation to account for the emergence of the New Wave: Leong, for example, ascribes the phenomenon to a combination of “relaxed government censorship, investments in infrastructure, entrepreneurial zeal, and an iconoclastic attitude” (2002, 10). Not surprisingly, most popular accounts available to Western readers seem to agree that the movement started after 1995 (Leong 2002, 11; see also Paquet n.d.).

While the concept of trauma may still prove insufficient enough to accommodate some exceptions, we can see at this point how it could encompass all the major recurrent themes that typify the Korean New Wave: the North-South division and the ambivalent attitude toward socialism; the concern for workers’ welfare and the right of labor to unionize; the heroism of participants in the student movement in the struggle against militarist dictatorships; the excesses of the rich and influential, including past government and military officials, and their resort to repressive measures against popular uprisings such as that of Gwangju in 1980; and the disaffected and sometimes violent handling of personal relationships, often extending to familial affairs and sexual liaisons. This calls to mind the insight formulated by Jean Laplanche (Caruth 2001, par. 49), in discussing the relations that bind trauma, sexuality, and narcissism, to explain Freud’s observation that traumas develop sexual excitement as a way of allowing the subject to cope with the experience of suffering.

In this wise, most of the major Korean New Wave films can be categorized according to their functions within specific forms of violence. A sampling of films that exemplify politically inflected concerns would include, in chronological order, Kwang-su Park’s *A Single Spark* (1995); Sun-woo Jang’s *A Petal* (1996); Je-gyu Kang’s *Swiri* (1999); Chang-dong Lee’s *Peppermint Candy* (2000); Chan-wook Park’s *Joint Security Area* (2000); Woo-suk Kang’s *Silmido* (2003); and Je-gyu Kang’s *Taegukgi* (2004). The relatively more internalized forms of violence may be apprehended in films such as Sang-soo Hong’s *The Day a Pig Fell into the Well* (1996); Neung-han Song’s *No. 3* (1997); Chang-dong Lee’s *Green Fish* (1997); Kyung-taek Kwak’s *Friend* (2001); Joon-Hwan Jang’s *Save the Green Planet!* (2003); Joon-ho Bong’s *Memories of Murder* (2003); and Ha Yu’s *Once upon a Time in High School* (2004). Aimlessness compounds the main character’s or characters’ disaffection, a form of inwardly directed violence, manifested by characters in Cheol-su Park’s *301, 302* (1995); Je-yong Lee’s *An Affair* (1998); Sang-soo Hong’s *The Power of Gangwon Province* (1998), *Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors* (2002), and *On the Occasion of Remembering the Turning Gate* (2002); Sun-woo Jang’s *Lies* (2000); and Chan-wook Park’s *Oldboy* (2003).

Differences

The Korean New Wave shares with the Hong Kong New Wave the quality of operating within the parameters of popular film production and reception, if we allow a liberal application of such terms. This contrasts with the avant-gardist aspirations of New Wave practitioners in other national cinemas, including that of Japan (where, as an example, David Desser [1988] had valorized Nagisa Oshima, among other filmmakers, precisely for the latter's avant-gardism). But what distinguishes the New Wave of Korea from those of other countries, including Hong Kong, is a certain hesitation, a respectfulness if you will, toward the depiction of violence, including sexual excess.

This is not to mean that contemporary Korean movies, especially the more generic samples, do not indulge in the commercially dictated staples of scenes of sex and violence. But whether the violence is indulged or restrained, the presentation can be seen as always managing to implicate the film viewer in one way or another, toward the idealized attainment of catharsis: in discussing the role this type of viewer (or listener) plays in allaying the experience of violence, Ellie Ragland refers to trauma specialist Cathy Caruth (1995) in maintaining that “the Other – the social order – must hear what is actually being said... such that a representative listener... believes the truth that seeps through the imaginary dimensions of a narrative” (Ragland 2001, par. 11).

Caruth in fact articulated a workable configuration of trauma as, pace Freud, consistent with the fact that

the wound of the mind – the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world – is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that... is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor.... [Trauma] is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on. (1996, 3-4; emphasis in the original)

In “The Aftermath of Victimization,” Ronnie Janoff-Bulman (1985, 16-17) further described how the manner in which the traumatic event returns can be distinguished from other forms of recurrence (i.e., normative accounts of memory), in that the visitations of the original event, usually in the form of dreams, are attended by a reduction in the victim's responsiveness to current reality (1985, 29-30); the historically significant qualifier in this instance is that among various possible origins of trauma, those induced by other humans is far more psychologically distressing than all other sources (1985, 20).

An even more practicable aspect is a specific coping strategy, what Janoff-Bulman terms “behavioral self-blame,” wherein the victim blames her or his own behavior as a way of dealing with the stressful re-living of the traumatic memory. One paradox of behavioral self-blame, which can also be seen in the way the Korean cinema's primary audience (synonymous, in this instance, with the Korean people) opts to accept historical traumas as owing to its own error, thus providing the aforementioned cultural peculiarity of *han*; the other paradox, of course, is that “victims are generally not to blame for their victimization” (Janoff-Bulman 1985, 30). Nevertheless, the adaptive potential of self-blame, the reason why it is considered “a predictor of good coping” (Janoff-Bulman 1985, 29), is that the victim becomes capable of resolving to take charge of her or his own fate, and in doing so she or he convinces the self of the value of strategizing in order to develop her or his invulnerability, provide meaning to a previously irrational and unjust existence, and restore enough self-esteem to resume a productive life and subsequently, possibly avoid future instances of trauma.

Interpretive Principle

Within the terms of the reality that the depiction of historical suffering in Korean films had been experienced by its filmmakers and audiences (occasionally literally), we can herewith maintain that Korean cinema's contribution to film realism lies in its attempt to make sense out of historical traumas by drawing from collective experiences rather than fabricating new ones or adopting foreign accounts. The strategy is in a sense circular, in that this is the means – one might even argue that this is the only means – by which film artists can effectively manage to connect with the local audience.

Through a borrowed medium, history makes its presence felt, sometimes by literalizing itself onscreen, more often by infusing or haunting, as a phantom would, the spectacle that spectators are invited to participate in. Because of its applicability in formal and narratological terms, such a contribution recalls the achievements of earlier global film trends, especially the ones in Third and Third-World cinema (cf. Armes, 1987; and Pines and Willemsen, 1989), and consequently it will arguably have a capacity to endure in spite of the formation of a backlash against *Hallyu*, the larger wave of Korean popular-culture that had made its mark not just in Asia but in the rest of the world.⁴

By asserting the presence of the traumatic in the output of the Korean New Wave, one might be misconstrued as stating that all its products are autobiographical. This line of argument may be redundant in a sense, if we hark back to the *auteurist* dogma that all film products are always-already inscribed by their respective filmmakers' personal narratives. But what might be useful at this moment is the notion that the use of such a popular medium in articulating the discourse of the experience of violence may be akin to seeking what has been called an alternative jurisprudence, where what remains historically unresolved might now have a chance of attaining closure. Leigh Gilmore (2001, 143) ascribes this idea to Michel Foucault's insistence on anonymity in one of his interviews, ironically so that he could be heard once again in the same way before he became famous, in the hope that both subject and reader could "risk transformation."

In extending this argument to film practice, we could say that, because of the "oceanic" or all-enveloping reality effect, authorial anonymity always-already accompanies the viewing experience. Note also another "limit" of trauma discourse in psychoanalysis (which serendipitously fulfills our study of the Korean New Wave) in its association of the production of art with the condition of neurosis (Rose 1987, 2). While it may be too reductive to state that the considerably high concentration of artistic achievement in the New Wave is traceable to the neurosis induced by historical trauma, the obverse argument – that none of the actualizations of Korean film talents and audiences is ascribable to the mechanisms of historical memory – would ring just as false, and therefore the condition of possibility of history impinging on Korean film activity might be more of an always-already present, if not always fully conscious, aspect of everyday cultural reality.

In considering how much farther the Korean New Wave can travel on the fuel-strength of historical trauma as an interpretive principle, we could consider the prescription of Susan Hayward, in her essay "Framing National Cinemas":

This writing of a national cinema is one that refuses to historicize the nation as subject/object in and of itself but makes it a subject and object of knowledge. This (ideal) writing of a national cinema... is one which delves deep into the pathologies of nationalist discourses and exposes the symbolic practices of these forms of enunciation. Finally, this framing of national cinemas is one which perceives cinema as a practice that should not conceal structures of power and knowledge but which should function as a *mise-en-scène* of scattered and dissembling identities as well as fractured subjectivities and fragmented hegemonies. (Hayward 2000, 101)

Here we can see how the "framing" described by Hayward would not have to be a still-to-be-implemented formulary in the case of Korean cinema, since its implicit recognition of the role played by trauma had already been (and is still being) foregrounded in the major output of Korean filmmakers.

In fact a useful starting point for the reevaluation of the experience of trauma in the creation and evaluation by Koreans of their cinema is suggested by Sigmund Freud in his essay "Screen Memories": in a study of grown-ups recollecting childhood images, he concluded that inaccuracies tended to occur because the typical subject failed to realize that, although she or he had been in the center of her or his recollected scenes, she or he was in fact "paying attention not to [herself or] himself, but to the world outside [herself or] himself" (Freud 2003, 20). This emergence "as an object among other objects," Freud continued, "can be taken as proof that the original impression has been edited" (2003, 20). So-called falsified memories could not have been freely invented, but Freud questions the larger possibility – that of

whether we have any conscious memories *from* childhood: perhaps we have only memories of childhood. These show us the first years of our lives not as they were, but as they appeared to us at later periods, when the memories were aroused.... [Hence]

the memories of childhood did not *emerge*,...but were *formed*, and a number of motives that were far removed from the aim of historical fidelity had a hand in influencing both the formation and the selection of the memories. (Freud 2003, 21; emphases in original)

This liberatory qualification, coupled with Hayward's suggestion that a national cinema should in effect deconstruct the foundational assumptions underlying a nation's self-concept, might yet find a fuller realization in the Korean New Wave, given the prospect of greater freedom of expression as well as increasing diversification of topics. It could also be the basis of a future paradox: that the end of this New Wave, at least as we know it, would occasion expressions of mourning from film lovers in Korea and elsewhere, at the same time that it could also indicate that the nation has finally fully sutured the scars of its painful past.

Future Shock

A concrete example of one of many possible challenges facing a fully recuperated and consolidated Korean film industry has been narrated by Bliss Cua Lim in her recent volume, *Translating Time* (2009). Looking at recent cases of remakes of Asian horror films by Hollywood producers, Lim concludes that Western scholars such as Andrew Higson, regarded as a prominent authority on theorizing national cinemas mainly because of his essay "The Concept of National Cinema" (1989), fails to take into account "Hollywood's debts to other national cinemas, its founding reliance on émigré talent, its appropriation of aesthetic hallmarks, its practice of borrowing and remaking, and its eye on foreign markets" (Lim 2009, 230).

As it had done with earlier European film trends, Hollywood's appropriation of narrative and stylistic materials associated with Asian genre films has resulted in a deracination via a "softening of contrast, the quickly accomplished reduction of the distance between generic innovation and generic repetition" (Lim 2009, 223). Lim brought up the case of Ji-woon Kim's *Janghwa, Hongryeon* (2003), a film whose viewing experience she described as one that "slowly unfurls its secrets, yielding narrative clues and formal motifs whose significances are only apprehended on repeated viewing" (Lim 2009, 243). Unfortunately, the remake produced by DreamWorks, titled *The*

Uninvited (Charles and Thomas Guard 2009), was produced "based only upon having watched the trailer – not the entire source film – beforehand" (Lim 2009, 304n). This resulted in divergent second halves between the two versions, with the original director, Ji-woon Kim, repudiating the remake (Lim 2009, 243).

From the foregoing account we can see how the challenge that globalization first posed to the Korean nation, in the form of the late 1990s IMF crisis, and then replicated in the late 2000s global recession, is being configured in popular-culture terms. In both larger challenges, Korea was able to recover – with instances of trauma confined to certain specific corporations, families, and individuals, and with lesser instances during the second crisis. What this indicates is that the country has found its historical footing in a sphere of competition where it has been able to transform a sense of victimhood into reserves of psychic strength and determination. The challenges presented by the intrusions of globalization in popular culture could be regarded as opportunities for the national culture to search for creative solutions, whose lessons could be explored when the next crises inevitably come along.

In this manner, Korea will be able to continue providing a model for nations that share its sense of historical heartbreak – from the injustice of colonization and the brutality of dictatorship – in finding ways to cope with an increasingly interdependent world system while maintaining a level of development acceptable to its people and their leaders. And when one realizes that this type of experience, the trauma of Korea, is shared by all postcolonial countries outside the First World, then the achievement of full recovery from the past attains wider significance, beyond the borders of Korea, to the rest of the developing and still-to-be-developing world.

Notes

- ¹ Two useful English-language references, one macro and the other micro, would be, respectively, Cumings (1997) and the publication of The May 18th History Compilation Committee of Kwangju City (2000).
- ² Japanese film scholar Donald Richie (2002) avers as much in *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, where he laments the decline in quality of contemporary products in relation to post-World War II masters such as the acknowledged trio of Kenji Mizoguchi, Yasujiro Ozu, and Akira Kurosawa. A similar notion – of cinema flourishing during a political

dictatorship – infuses current critical opinion on Philippine cinema during and after the martial-rule regime of Ferdinand E. Marcos (David 1995).

- 3 Some recent representative examples comprise LaCapra (2001), Walker (2005), and Kaplan (2005). Butler (2004, 1-18) similarly ascribes its *raison d'être* to the aftermath of the experience of the 9-11 terrorist attacks.
- 4 The panel titled “Historical Legacies, Mutual Perceptions, and Future Relations” in Korea’s Changing Roles in Southeast Asia: Expanding Influence and Relations, the Asia Foundation’s 2008 Public Policy Forum, presented a couple of papers that acknowledged the impact of *Hallyu* while reporting in detail objections to Koreans’ presence and behavior in Southeast Asia (Chachavalpongpun 2008) and calling for more active intervention on the part of the Korean government to provide a corporate-style set of rationales and plans for the phenomenon and ensure the longevity of its impact outside Korea (Kim 2008).

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Cultural Proximity and Cultural Distance: The Reception of Korean Films in China Through the Case of *My Sassy Girl* in the Early 2000s

by Ying Huang and Kwang Woo Noh

This paper explores the Chinese youth's reception of Korean romantic comedy, My Sassy Girl. The authors attempt to explain the complexity of the popularity of Korean films and other cultural products in China in recent years. By analyzing the outcome of online questionnaires and depth interviews regarding the reception of My Sassy Girl, the authors argue that, although the strong presence of Korean films in China is contributed by the significant growth of the film industry in South Korea since the 1990s, the current conditions of China society and its movie market, the cultural proximity the Chinese youth as movies viewers perceived among these two nations in comparison with Western media products, especially Hollywood movies, facilitates Korean films' popularity at the personal level. The authors also argue that the artistic representation and the themes the Chinese youth found in Korean films are exactly what are missing in Chinese films and their daily reality, which function as a comfortable distance for them to desire.

My Sassy Girl and the Arrival of Hanliu

Popular culture in China has changed since the Cultural Revolution and the initiation of Open-Market policy in the late 1970s. In the 1980s, Hong Kong martial arts film and gangster TV drama, and Taiwanese romantic TV dramas were very popular. A few Japanese TV dramas, such as *Ashin* in the early 1980s, also had an imprint on the memory of millions of Chinese TV viewers. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a Japanese romantic TV drama, *Tokyo Love Story*, was a smash hit.

Since the late 1990s, Korean TV dramas and films are introduced into China market. The importation of Korean media products into China came after Korean and China established diplomatic relationship in 1992.

In 1997, Chinese Central Television (CCTV) for the first time broadcast Korean TV drama, *What is Love?* It has impressed many Chinese audiences through all generation. Soon after that, Korean films and TV drama started landing on China one after another, becoming a strong competitor for films from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan as well as domestically produced films, even though the first two of which share the same language as Mainland China. Korean films arrived at China in conjunction with TV dramas, pop music, fashion and cartoons. The wide spread of Korean popular culture in China is termed as “Hanchao” or “Hanliu,” which literally means “the tide of Korea” or the “Korean trend.” It has become the most frequently appeared term in Chinese media and entertainment industry at the turn of the century (Yao 2002).

Released in 2001, the romantic comedy *My Sassy Girl* was the most popular Korean movie in East Asia and Southeast Asia at that time. Based on the Internet novel of the same title, *My Sassy Girl* tells the love story of a college student, Kyun-woo, and an extremely beautiful and innocent looking but temperamental girl. After Kyun-woo meets the girl on the subway when she was seriously drunk, a series of stories happens between them. Although he suffers physically and mentally from the girl, he believes under her apparently temperamental behavior is a kind heart with sorrow.

The attendance of *My Sassy Girl* in Seoul was 1,761,100 and its box office number ranked the second in Korea in 2001 (KOFIC 2001, 228). In Hong Kong, it was top ranked at box office for two weeks, while normally Hong Kong and Hollywood films dominate the local market (Walsh, 2004). In China, although the box office number is not as stunning as in Hong Kong, the actual viewing rate is high among the urban youth; lots of the young Chinese watched it through DVD and VCD at home or in the dormitory. By the success of this film, Jeon Ji-Hyun, the heroine of this film, became a pan-Asian star. Later Dream Works bought the right of the remake (*Cine21* 2002 [May 13]; Kaufman 2002) and Yann Samuel directed the remake film by casting Elisha Cuthbert and Jesse Bradford (cf. the Internet Movie Database information page at <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0404254/>). After this film, several other nostalgic and sentimental romantic films were made and released in Korea, such as *Lover's Concerto* (2002), *The Classic* (2003), and *A Moment to Remember* (2004).

The Korean counterpart has gone far beyond the influence of the earlier popularity of cultural products from other foreign countries and

regions in the 1980s and early 1990s. Korean dramas and films become the daily gossip of the Chinese youth; photos and biography of Korean movie and film stars appear frequently on the popular Chinese websites; DVDs of Korean dramas and films are available everywhere from big cities to small towns, and easily to be downloaded from personal homepages. There are also different online forums where Korean movie fans share their experiences, such as the Hanliu website (at <http://www.hanliu.org>, currently inactive).

Social Change and the Chinese Movie Market

“Hanliu” took place after the Korean film industry revived in the middle 1990s (Shim 2002), and at the same time, China has stepped on a new stage in its economic reformation. The rapidly improved Korean films and the relatively stagnant Chinese film industry provided the vacancy for Korean films to fill in, especially youth films.

Chinese film industry has long been directly influenced by film policy. Not until 1993 did the idea that movie is commodity and film is an industry come out in the field of film research and production. Only after China joined WTO, Chinese government started to encourage locally produced films for the success at box office. Propaganda films have always been strongly supported by the government, now termed as “main melody,” “new mainstream” films (Rao 2005). They promote grand themes such as loyalty to the nation and party, self-sacrifice and discipline, working as an agent to keep the socialist values and national solidity; besides the mainstream cinema, movies produced by the sixth generation directors are hardly successful in box office because most of them focus the theme on their narrow alternative lives. They care much more about how a film expresses their own feelings and ideas than whether the film will be successful on the market or not. The stagnancy of Chinese movie market is also reflected by the total production. From 2003 to 2004, only more than 100 Chinese domestic films were released in theatre among more than 320 films produced during that time (Rao 2005). Among the small numbers of movies reflecting the lives of ordinary people and youth, the films of high production quality are even fewer.

In the process of transition from planned economy to market economy, the Chinese, especially youth, tend to have more diversified values than before, and thus are eager to consume a larger variety of cultural

products. Being tired of the didactic Chinese films with serious themes and disappointed by the low quality of Chinese romance films, youth was attracted to Korean films, especially romance films.

International Media Flows and Culture Proximity

Most literature dealing with the transnational circulation of cultural products have critically examined the dominance of American culture in developing countries under the thesis of cultural imperialism (Schiller 1991; Mattelart 2000). The main argument of this thesis is that as the Western cultural hegemony is imposed on the non-Western world, the indigenous cultures and belief systems are destroyed.

Going beyond the cultural imperialism thesis, Sinclair et al. forwarded the notion of “geo-linguistic region” (1996, 8) to explain the new patterns of international television flows. Hesmondhalgh defines geo-linguistic regions as groups of countries with “common culture, linguistic and historical connections” (2002, 178). In each geo-linguistic region, there are one or two centers of audiovisual production. Potential regions include Latin America with Brazil and Mexico as the centers, the Chinese speaking countries with Taiwan and Hong Kong as the centers, and Indians in Asia and Africa with India as the center (Sinclair et al. 1996).

Some authors introduced the notion of geo-cultural region, which is similar but different from the concept of geo-linguistic region. Similar cultures and traditions rather than the same language make some countries into a geo-cultural region. In *Recentring Globalization*, Iwabuchi (2002) argues that Japan had been playing an important role in the intra-Asia cultural flows under the general force of globalization. In the 1990s, Japanese idol drama, animation and fashion are endorsed by youth in many East Asian and Southeast Asian countries and regions, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and, to a lesser extent, Mainland China. Iwabuchi also resorts to cultural proximity to explain the reception of these Japanese cultural products. “It explains the audience preference for products from countries with which their consumers allegedly share cultural ties” (Iwabuchi 2002, 30). Similarly, Straubhaar notes that audiences actively choose to watch regional or national television programs rather than international ones, “based on a search for cultural relevance or proximity” (1991, 39).

When examining the flow of cultural products and cultural proximity, most authors focus on the flow of television programs. Following the same fashion, the flow and viewing choice of films may share the same properties as television programs to a great extent. While the mass flow of Hollywood movies into developing countries is still prevailing, one cannot fail to recognize that besides the US, many non-Western countries and regions have significant films industries, such as India, Japan and Hong Kong (Hesmondhalgh 2002). Indian films play an important role in South Asia and among Hindi speaking populations and Indian decedents in Africa. Hong Kong films have been popular among the Chinese speaking population in Greater China. Based on these facts, the popularity of Korean films is not surprising; Korea can be seen as a newly emerged center in a geo-cultural region composed by mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, south East Asia, and South Korea itself.

As have been mentioned earlier in this paper, Korean movies have filled in the lack of romantic comedy as a genre and taken the advantage of the relatively immature film market in China. However, the themes and quality of Korean films cannot completely explain their popularity. Different genres of Hollywood movies have had a long existence in China; romantic films with good quality are not scarce. Although China imports only 20 foreign movies in total each year before the entry of WTO, all kinds of Hollywood movies and movies from other parts of the world are available in video stores due to piracy. It is the interest of this paper to investigate how the role of cultural proximity plays in the coexistence of both Korean movies and movies from the West.

The Study of Media Audience

Early studies on audience evolve under the umbrella of media effects studies and resort on quantitative method, such as survey design, multivariate statistical methods and other new techniques (Lowery & DeFleur 1995). Recent audience studies derive their root from cultural studies, whose most important contribution to audience studies is the encoding-decoding model developed by Hall (1981). The increasing legitimacy of qualitative audience studies is attributed to the development of reception analysis, termed as the “ethnographic term” (Hagen & Wasko 2000, 5). Hagen defines reception

analysis as “studies that focus on the meaning, production, and experiences of audiences in their interaction with media texts” (2000, 8).

Historically, studies on different types of media have different orientations. Television criticism distinguishes itself from literature and film criticism in its interest in audiences, so it is not surprising that most studies on audiences target at television audiences (Hay, Grossberg, & Wartella 1996). However, what applies to the studies of television audience is also valid for the studies of movie viewers (Hagen & Wasko, 2000). As an effort to examine how Chinese youth receive Korean movies through the lens of *My Sassy Girl*, this paper can contribute to the lack of study on movie audiences.

Ang argues that “studying media audiences is not interesting or meaningful in its own right, but becomes so only when it points towards a broader critical understanding of the peculiarities of contemporary culture” (1996a, 4). Following her point of view, the study on the Chinese Korean movie viewers is by no means limited in the viewers alone, but contextualizes them in contemporary popular culture in China, and the larger social and economical changes in recent years.

Research Method

To understand the Chinese youth’s reception of Korean pop culture, researchers draw on qualitative research methods, especially depth interview and online questionnaires. As Ang points out, “Ethnographically oriented research is considered the most suitable to unravel the minutiae of difference and variation as they manifest themselves in concrete, everyday instances of media consumption” (1996b, 251).

The subjects of this research are all Chinese youth (from 20 to 40 years old), including Chinese in China and Chinese in the US who came to the US no more than three years ago. Their vocations include university students who study chemistry, accounting, economics and communications university teacher, media professionals and white-collar workers.

We have a total number of ten interviews and ten questionnaires. Depth interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via telephone, while the questionnaires are delivered to the Chinese youth through emails. The subjects are recruited through snowball sampling methods. Most of them are a researcher’s friends and acquaintance.

At the early stage of the study, we tried to recruit a balanced number of female and male audiences. However, we found that among the Chinese youth we intended to interview who favor Korean movies and other Korean cultural products are predominately female. Most of the male Chinese youth that we interviewed hardly watched other Korean movies except *My Sassy Girl*, nor did they claim that they were interested in Korean films as a whole. In contrast, female audiences were much more enthusiastic and informative. As a result, most of the interviews and questionnaires were from female viewers.

Major questions asked in interviews and questions include: Did you see other Korean films before you saw *My Sassy Girl*? Over what period did you see *My Sassy Girl*? Did you see it with friends or alone? Before you saw *My Sassy Girl*, how much did you know about Korea and Korean culture? What did you enjoy most in *My Sassy Girl*? What else do you like in Korean movies (cinematography, sound, music, acting, storyline, etc.)? What you do not like in Korean films? Do you have difficulty understanding Korean films and TV dramas? Why? Did your understanding of Korea and Koreans change after you saw *My Sassy Girl*? What values does *My Sassy Girl* present to you personally? How about other Korean films? Are these values different or similar to your values as a Chinese? What do you think is the closest feature of *My Sassy Girl* to Chinese film and culture? What do you think is the most different aspect of *My Sassy Girl* from Chinese film and culture? Do you enjoy any other country’s films, such as Hollywood films or Hong Kong films? Why? How, from your perspective, can we explain the widespread of *My Sassy Girl* and other Korean cultural products? You can add anything else that you want to say about Korean cinema if you think that there is something missing in these questions. Due to the open-ended nature of depth interview, questions asked in individual interviews vary and may not limited to the questions listed above, depending each interviewee’s response.

Results

Movie Watching as Fun

The respondents all watched *My Sassy Girl* two or three years ago, when the impact of “Hanliu” started picking up speed in China. Some of them

watched it more than once. Most of them recalled that *My Sassy Girl* is the first Korean movie they watched, and triggered their later search for similar products and interest in Korean culture, although some of them heard or have watched some Korean TV dramas, such as *What is Love?* and *See and See Again*, which had been shown on CCTV (China Central Television Station). One respondent in his late twenties said, “Before I watched *My Sassy Girl*, I actually knew nothing about Korea, except for some electronics, such as Samsung.” Another respondent observed that although she watched the Korean TV drama, *Model*, before she watched *My Sassy Girl*, it is not so impressive as the latter. “*My Sassy Girl* is so refreshing and after that, I just want to watch more Korean movies.”

My Sassy Girl came as a surprise to Chinese young movie viewers in various ways. They formerly thought of South Korea as a very traditional and conservative country, if they had thought about it, which has a lot of customs and rules that restrict social behaviors of people, especially the young and the female. In this movie, the nameless girl dares to dehumanize the boy in public, and the boy accepts whatever the girl brings to him. The funny plots and the deployment of the story are also very fresh to them, as one female respondent said, “I have never seen a romantic love story as funny as this. The plots are so craft.” The role the female character plays in this movie broke the stereotype in idol dramas, in which a girl friend is typically acquiescent and graceful. In sharp contrast, the nameless girl is temperamental and sassy.

Aestheticism and Romanticism

Besides making them laugh, the respondents are impressed by the aestheticism and romanticism represented in *My Sassy Girl*, which they also found in most Korean films or dramas they viewed. Aestheticism is defined here by them as the emphasis on the pure beauty of the pictures over the tempo. Sometimes the movie is a little too slow, but this is when a series of nice pictures evolve. For the respondents, the nicely constructed pictures of the movie, the match of the background music with the plots, together with the physical beauty of the actors and actresses contribute to the beauty of *My Sassy Girl*, and have a romanticizing effect on the movie. The romance in *My Sassy Girl* is perceived as “uncontaminated” and “idealistic,” as most of the respondents commented. Although they know it is hard to find this kind of love in the real life, they appreciate its way of storytelling and do not criticize

the unrealistic nature of the movie. For the respondents, to watch movie is to entertain themselves, not to evaluate how realist they are. Comparing *My Sassy Girl* with American movies, they think the former emphasizes on the delicacy of the storytelling, which can be comprehended easily by Chinese, while the stories of Hollywood movies evolve at a fast space and succeed in its special effects. “I like Hollywood movies because of their visual impact.” This comment represents the view of many respondents.

The Ideal of Love: Predestined Affinity and Being Persistent in Love

Compared with some of the Hollywood romantic movies, some said *My Sassy Girl* looks more appealing to them because the idea of love fits more of their belief, that is predestined affinity and persistence in love, while the Hollywood blockbuster movies always embed love stories in a grand historical background, centralizing heroes not heroines; some other romantic comedy such as *American Pie*, as one of the female respondent commented, seem to “too liberal in sex but nothing serious in the pursuit of love.”

When we asked how they perceived the values presented in *My Sassy Girl*, some of them said they had never thought about it, while others mentioned “predestined affinity” and “being persistent in love.” In *My Sassy Girl*, the nameless girl and the boy (Kyun-woo) were supposed to meet each other by family arrangement at the beginning of the movie. However, Kyun-woo did not go to his aunt’s home to meet the girl as his mother told him to, but accidentally met the girl when she was heavily drunk on the subway. After a series of unintended events, they came to like each other more and more. After several years of loss of contact, the hero and heroine again met by accident as the story goes. For most people, the final reunification of them is not likely to happen out of daily routines. Therefore, some respondents see this as an implication of predestined affinity.

In explaining “being persistent in love,” one respondent said,

In *My Sassy Girl*, the nameless girl did not choose to be together with Kyun-woo till the end of the movie because she could not forget her ex-boyfriend, who died in an accident, before she met Kyun-woo. Kyun-woo did not give up her, but waited for her for

several years. This echoes the belief that one should be persistent in true love, which can endure time and space.

The respondents also easily find these values pertaining to love in other Korean movies, such as *The Classic* (translated in Chinese as *If Love has God's Will*), *Windstruck* and *Love Letter*. When comparing young people in China with Korean youth and youth in Western countries (actually the latter too in the movies because she has never been abroad), another respondent in her middle twentieth remarked, "Koreans are like Chinese in terms of love, ..." "They are both conservative, not like young people in Western countries. They care passion more than responsibility."

Korean Fashion and Campus Life

More than half the respondents, especially female viewers, mentioned that the reason why they like *My Sassy Girl* is that they like the fashion embodied in it. This also applies to other Korean movies. One respondent commented, "The dressing of the actresses and actors are fashionable, old or young. Even if the movie tells a story that happened several decades ago, what people dress is still pleasing eyes in the movies." A lot of Korean actresses have become the idol for a lot of young female viewers. Some of them even watch movies by a particular actress who has similar stature as her. For example, one respondent in her early twentieth said, "I like watching Song Hea-Kyo's films and TV dramas because I am not slim, just as she is. I think I can borrow some ideas of how to dress from her."

In *My Sassy Girl*, there are several scenes on the campus where Kyun-woo studies. The campus life is attractive to some of the respondents as well. On the one hand, the campus has a lot of rules and disciplines as Chinese campuses, such as showing respect to professors and being one time in class. However, college students in *My Sassy Girl* have much more fun than Chinese students. "We spend most of our time on studying in universities, while Korean students play a lot. Besides this, Korean students have more modern and youthful clothes than Chinese." The respondents view the campus life in *My Sassy Girl* as desirable, which is a stage for the youth to have fun show their youthful natures, whereas in a typical Chinese campus, students have a heavy load of course work.

Family Values and Responsibility

When asking what values they think *My Sassy Girl* and other Korean movies represent to them, some of the respondents mentioned family values and responsibilities besides the ideals of love discussed early in this paper. When Kyun-woo and the nameless girl met for the first time, she called Kyun-woo "darling" by mistake before passed out due to intoxication. Because of this, under the pressure of the other people on the subway, who thought Kyun-woo was her actual boyfriend, Kyun-woo had to take care of her and carried her away.

One respondent who had been in the US for one year said, "In *My Sassy Girl* and other Korean movies, parents and the old always have the authorities, even though sometimes challenged. When Kyun-woo came back home after he stayed out overnight in a hotel, his mother beat him with a besom. I think this is common in a lot of Asian countries. But I cannot imagine it in the US. It would be a kind of family abuse, if taken seriously." Another respondent mentioned that a lot of Korean movies are family-centered.

Historical Proximity

The responses from the subjects easily go beyond the movie *My Sassy Girl* alone. When they see Korean films as a whole, two respondents found some similarity in the history between China and Korea represented in Korean movies. As one respondent said:

I can always compare Korea with China when I watch movies and TV dramas in terms of history. In Korean movies which base the story in dynasties, I find that the costumes, the bureaucracy and customs are very similar to those of ancient China. Even in their writing, they use a lot of Chinese characters. Until I watched *Chihwaseon* [Painted Fire], I knew that Korean painting was influenced by Chinese painting so much. In Korean movies which tell stories in the sixties or seventies, I see a much less developed Korea. China had similar situation at that time. In *The President's Barber*, there is even a kind of leftist (oppressive) trend in politics in South Korea, which I have never thought of before. I thought that it was only the case of China before 1980s.

Similarly, another respondent expressed that when they saw *My Sassy Girl*, she was surprised that Korean culture is so close to Chinese culture. She recalled one scene in *My Sassy Girl* when the nameless girl imagined that she turned to be a warrior in ancient times in her novel, “the acting and settings are so much like a Chinese martial arts movie, but the costume is Korean style, though close to the costume of ancient China.”

The Korean Language and Sense of Modernity

Some respondents pointed out that they preferred to watch Korean films that are not dubbed because it made the movies more authentic of Korea. When a movie was dubbed in Chinese, it lost some attraction. Most of them perceived Korea as more modern than China, especially from the fashion and background settings shown in the movies. One respondent in her late twentieth said, “Koreans are very fashionable... Most Chinese films that reflect the lives of young people are unpleasant to look at because the actors and actresses look so native, their clothing, their hairstyles and behaviors. There is no beautification in the movies. They cannot get out of the context of China.” Another respondent commented that one of the reasons why she does not watch Chinese idol movies is that the Chinese actors and actresses always act characters that are much younger than their actual ages.

In the 1990s, Taiwanese romantic dramas were very popular in China, but now their heat has given to Korean dramas and films. In answering how they perceive the difference between them and Korean films, some respondents remarked that the romantic dramas from Taiwan mostly tell stories happened in early days (before 1980s or in ancient times) and they are too long (too many episodes). They are also too far away from their daily lives. The recent Taiwanese romantic TV drama *F4* was a hit, but some respondents think the tempo is still too slow and somehow imitative of Korean dramas. One respondent said, “The female character in *My Sassy Girl* is bolder than Chinese girls in many ways besides not being kind or gentle. Other Korean films also show a lot of distinctive females. They are more modern. They have a lot of new ideas.” Another respondent commented, “I feel so happy when I saw that the girl beat Kyun-woo. Girls should have more power like her. I wish I had this kind of boyfriend to abuse. It’s fun.” In a word, while both Taiwanese and Korean romantic films or dramas share

something in common with Mainland Chinese culture, Korean ones outwit Taiwanese ones in their more modern features.

Based on these responses, we grouped the themes into two categories in the table of cultural proximity and cultural distance. In this table, cultural proximity is what respondents can find in their own media texts and daily life while cultural distance is what respondents find missing in Chinese media texts and everyday life.

Table 1. Cultural Distance and Cultural Proximity

	Proximity	Distance
Campus Life	Professor-student relations	More enjoyable
	Rules and disciplines	
Fashion	Physical similarities	More fashionable
Language	Chinese character	Korean spoken language
	Ideal of love	High production quality
	Family value	Modernity
	Responsibility	Aestheticism and romanticism
	Historical experience	
	Traditional art	

Conclusion

Since the research question was why the Korean romantic comedy *My Sassy Girl* and other Korean films were popular in China in recent years, the respondents were Chinese who claimed themselves to be interested in Korean films and had enjoyed watching *My Sassy Girl*. Therefore, the responses received were mostly positive comments. However, we cannot ignore the fact that negative observations on *My Sassy Girl* and other Korean films do exist. For example, some respondents mentioned that the acting of some Korean actors and actresses are exaggerated, so to enjoy the product does not equal to embracing Korean films without any criticism.

Cultural proximity perceived by the respondents has added a lot of charm to Korean films, whether consciously or unconsciously identified. This has helped them to comprehend *My Sassy Girl* and other Korean films.

Most of them mentioned that the Korean culture represented in *My Sassy Girl* is similar to that of China in various ways. In terms of the belief in love, both Korean and Chinese believe or accept the idea of predestined affinity, of fate bringing people together, which takes its root from Chinese Buddhism and has been shared by Chinese people ever since ancient time. They also noticed that Korean films and TV drama are strongly family oriented or emphasize on family values, which is consistent with the dominant values in China. This is a common feature across most Asian countries where collectivism is valued over individualism. In terms of the way of storytelling, Korean films normally evolve at a relatively slow pace, highlighting the delicacy and details, leave a large space for audience to reflect, which can be hardly seen in Hollywood movies. The reason why Chinese youth appreciate the former can be explained by the fact that Chinese and Korean societies are high-context culture societies, where what is said and what is not said are both important.

Korean fashion is a big selling point of Korean films, especially for female viewers. Besides watching the movies, most of the female respondents actively observe what kind of clothes the actors and actresses wear, how they combine different colors together, their hairstyles and so on. In contrast, they did not refer any American movie for clothing or make-up. This is not surprising because that Chinese and Koreans are racially similar. Regarding fashion, what applies to Koreans also applies to Chinese; it is irrelevant to borrow fashion styles from people who have different facial structure, skin and hair color.

The respondents also perceive the similar customs between these two countries. Although scholars have different views in terms of to what extent China has influenced Korea, being a close neighbor of China, it is relatively obvious that Korea borrowed from China at least in the style of painting, calligraphy and language, which is also reflected in some Korean contemporary films.

Besides similarity, the respondents also appreciate unfamiliar elements in the movies. They are eye-catching because they bring a different society, and different in a good way via screen. The fashion is definitely more up to date, at least compared with what the Chinese youth wear in Chinese movies. The more developed film industry and cinematography also signify a more modern society. Besides, the different settings and sceneries, and

speaking another language all function as something desirable but with a distance from the respondents' reality and daily routines.

Although both cultural similarity and cultural distance facilitate the popularity of Korean films and other cultural products in China, other factors on the macro level are also important. They include the stagnancy of Chinese movie market, the lack of local romance films, the increasing need of the urban youth for diversified media products and the growing up of Korean film industry. It cannot be concluded that Korean films are more popular in China than Hollywood and Hong Kong movies, although "Hanliu" is by now a distinguishing phenomenon in current China media landscape. In fact, responses from the respondents indicate that they watch movies with different origin for different purpose: Hollywood movies for special effects, Hong Kong movies for martial arts and Korean movies for romance.

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The 'English Fever' in Korea¹

by Doobo Shim and Joseph Sung-Yul Park

While it has become trite to comment on the forces of global change, globalization is not simply about economy, technology or culture. When Appadurai defines globalization as a "tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization," we can easily supplant "cultural" for "linguistic." Today, English is increasingly established as a global lingua franca, and nonnative English speakers such as Koreans are preoccupied with the English learning fever. The main claim of the paper is that the English fever should be seen neither as blind desire towards the glorious commodity of English nor as cheerful appropriation that nativizes the language of the Other. Instead, it is a phenomenon that is firmly grounded in local sociopolitical contexts, yet extends the global hegemony of English onto Korean society. Relevant to our account is the framework of postcolonialism. This paper shall examine the English fever in Korea as well as revisit the hegemony of English in the world.

The Korean term *yeongeol yeolpung* ("English fever") means the strong desire to acquire English competence and heavy investments made to ensure that one's children acquire it successfully, a prominent trend in Korean society today.² One phenomenon that bluntly illustrates this is increasingly common *jogi yuhak* ("early overseas education"), in which many parents send children to English-speaking countries so that they can gain native speaker-like fluency in the language. Even though this results in the separation of families, not to mention a great financial burden for the parents, such costs are often seen as necessary investments for the child's future; according to some statistics the number of primary or secondary school students studying abroad has increased more than tenfold over the past ten years (Heo 2006).³ The title of an article in the *Washington Post* summarizes the phenomenon aptly: "English is the golden tongue for S. Koreans: Parents pay a fortune so children can learn." This article illustrates the point made in the title by reporting a case

of a mother who spent \$210,000 a year for the overseas education of her two sons (Cho 2007). According to the *Chosun Ilbo*, 18,119 students in primary and secondary level left Korea on *jogi yuhak* in 2009 (Oh 2010).

Another reflection of the English fever can be found in the recent boom in the construction of *yeongeo maeul* ("English villages"). English villages simulate an English-speaking society complete with shops, restaurants, police stations, banks, hospitals, and even "immigration offices," where the vendors or workers are native speakers, and which are established so that students (children and adults alike) can learn and practice English in an immersion environment without leaving the country. Constructed and operated by city or province governments, there were at least 8 English villages in operation as of 2006 (Kim and Hwang 2006). As so many such English villages have since been built, it is not easy to count the whole number of English villages.

The recent English fever in Korean society may appear incongruent with the image of the country that is well-known for its strong sense of national and ethnic pride. At the same time, however, it may appear to be a direct reflection of the recent trend of globalization, in which English is increasingly established as a world-wide lingua franca (Crystal 1997). Globalization is not simply about the economy, technology or culture; it inherently has a linguistic aspect. When Appadurai (1990, 295) defines globalization as a "tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization," we can easily supplant "cultural" for "linguistic." In this context, Korea's heavy pursuit of English may appear to be a natural reflection of the global popularity of English. However, such a perspective can be problematic, as it lacks an account of the mechanisms through which such global hegemony of English may become manifest in local social relations and the performative practices of local speakers.

The global spread of English is an important topic that has received much attention recently, and for our purposes in this paper, we may identify three different schools of thought in accounting for global English. The first school views English as a "marvelous tongue" for the global age, a victorious language that conquers the world to take on the role of the standard for international communication. While this view recognizes the importance of local/national languages, it simply recognizes them as playing the limited function--identity marking (Crystal 1997), thus presenting English as the language of the "practical world" that everyone desires. We take this position

to be flawed in that it does not take into account local processes of English adoption, or the "what-is-going-on-here," while simply celebrating the triumph of English (Hanson 1997).

The second school, represented by the "world Englishes" (WE) paradigm, focuses on local appropriations of English and the ways in which different Englishes are created around the world (Kachru 1996). Based on a more linguistic perspective, this school argues how nativization of English and Englishization of local languages may be seen as signs of local creativity, evidence of how English is adopted and adapted to new social and cultural contexts. However, in focusing on the formal aspects of global English and the creativity of new Englishes, this approach pays less attention to the place of English amidst local relationships of power. Canagarajah, for instance, criticizes this school as ignoring the political context of the global spread of English, noting that it urges us "to bury our eyes ostrich-like to the political evils and ideological temptations outside" (1999, 210).

The third school, which may be termed the "critical" school of global spread of English, is most closely related to our perspective in dealing with the English fever in Korea throughout this paper. This school takes a critical stance towards the global hegemony of English, identifying it as an impenetrable imperial power, which threatens the continuity of local languages and cultures (Skutnabb-Kangas 2003). While some theses under this model of linguistic imperialism have been criticized for their deterministic assumptions and conclusions (Phillipson 1992; Pennycook 2000), this school provides an important basis for the awareness that the status of English as an international language is not merely a natural consequence of the hegemony of English-speaking countries, but a social construction that is established and propagated by both native speakers of English and non-native speakers who adopt English locally (Pennycook 2003 and 2007). This perspective is crucial for understanding the Korean situation, we argue, as it points out that the increasing influence of English in Korean society does not simply mirror a global trend; it must be deeply rooted in the question of "how English is taken up, how people use English, why people choose to use English" (Pennycook 2001, 62). That is, an account of the Korean English fever requires an analysis of both the global spread of English and its local situation.

The aims of this paper are to describe, analyze and discuss the phenomenon of English fever in the Korean society. The main claim that

we will make in the paper is that the English fever should be seen neither as a blind desire towards the glorious commodity of English nor as a cheerful appropriation that nativizes the language of the Other. Instead, it is a phenomenon that is firmly grounded in local socio-political context, yet extends the global hegemony of English onto Korean society. In other words, we have to examine the conditions under which English, the lingua franca of the current global society, is actively learned, adopted, desired, modified, and re-signified, by Koreans for their own purposes – and how these conditions link with the persisting conditions of inequality and dominance. From a critical perspective of global politics and culture, this paper shall examine the English fever in Korea as well as revisit the hegemony of English in the world. In the next section, we begin our discussion by observing the phenomenon of the global spread of English, which serves as a backdrop of the Korean English fever.

The Global Spread of English

As noted above, English is commonly associated with western-driven globalization of capitalism, culture and technology. The spread of English started with the influence of the British Empire during the colonial era. After the Second World War, the rise of the United States as a political, economic and cultural power accelerated the status of English as a global lingua franca, as the Empire exercises de-territorialized control through language (Hardt and Negri 2000).

Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas summarize the current situation as follows:

[A]s English is the dominant language of the U.S., the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, many other world policy organizations, and most of the world's big businesses and elites in many countries worldwide, it is the language in which the fate of most of the world's citizens is decided, directly or indirectly. (1996, 441).

Now, English is “a big commodity,” writes Phillipson, “second in importance to the British economy after North Sea oil” (2000, 90). The Blair Initiative,

announced in June 1999, is a clear case of how the United Kingdom makes efforts to increase its share of the international market of foreign students, also taking advantage of the current situation in which the stringent visa requirement of U.S. entry has diverted Asian students to British universities. In 2000, the then British minister for education and employment confirmed the importance of English to British economy and foreign relations by saying that “It makes good economic sense to use English fluency as a platform to underpin our economic competitiveness and to promote our culture overseas” (cited in Phillipson 2002, 12).

But perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the global spread of English has to do with how it is adopted as a local language in contexts where English previously did not have such a status. New varieties of English have already established themselves as a language for local identity in a number of postcolonial contexts such as India, Hong Kong, and Singapore (Platt, Weber, and Ho 1984; Kachru 1986; McArthur 2002; Melchers and Shaw 2003). In addition, an increasing number of speakers are beginning to use English as a second or working language, to the extent that now there are more people in the world who speak English as a second language than as a first language (Crystal 1997).

It must be noted, however, that this does not imply that English is no longer a language of the colonizer, for despite the active adoption of English in local contexts, inequalities still abound in the ways different varieties of English are valued. That is, new varieties of English still suffer from negative stereotypes, as evidenced by the annual Speak Good English Campaign run by the Singaporean government (Rudby 2001). Also, traditional native speakers of English (i.e., mainstream speakers of English in what Kachru [1985] would call “inner circle” countries, primarily U.S.A., U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) are regularly privileged over speakers of new varieties of English or speakers of English as a second language (Widdowson 1994; Brutt-Griffler and Samimy 2001). This suggests that spontaneous local adoption of English should not be seen as implying de-politicization of English; on the contrary, we must seek to understand ways in which local appropriations of English continue to be intertwined with global relations of power, and how the global hegemony of English is sustained and reproduced through such processes. Throughout this paper, we will attempt to describe and discuss this complex dynamics of English in Korean context by providing an outline of the English fever and its concomitant local effects.

National Language Ideologies and the Status of English in Korea

As noted above, the power of global English takes on a particularly strong significance in Korean society because it stands in stark relief to the formidable influence of national language ideologies that have penetrated the nation's modern history. Imagination of Korea as a monolingual nation has played an important part in the building of the modern nation-state (Anderson 1991). Throughout the nation's experiences of colonization and modernization, the construct of *danil minjok* ("unified nation/people") served as a central ideology (Em 1999). The image of the Korean people who are united through, among other things, a common Korean language, is an important element here (Go 1995). The strong monolingualism of Korea is thus both an outcome of this imagining of the nation and a persistent force that reinforces that image.

For this reason, the Korean language is a strong and prominent symbol of national and ethnic pride for Koreans. The language has always played an important part in Korean nationalism, for instance in the resistance towards Japanese colonial rule. Historical events such as the "*Joseoneo Hakhoe* [Korean Language Society] incident," through which Korean linguists who had been working on the standardization of Korean and the publication of a Korean dictionary were arrested and imprisoned by the Japanese colonizers, for example, serve as an important chapter in the lore of independence movement against Japanese rule. Based on these roots, linguistic nationalism is still strong and popular in Korean society, as is often found in various forms of linguistic purism, which condemns excessive loanwords and language mixing originating from influences of other languages (Park 1989; Heo 1994).

Despite the prevalence of such nationalistic language attitudes, however, the importance of English as symbolic capital has been on the rise through Korea's modern history. English has always been considered a means for upward social mobility since the late 19th century when the first schools for English language teaching were opened in Korea. The importance of English became more evident in the period of 1945-1948, during which a transitional military government of U.S. armed forces was established in the southern half of the peninsula after the collapse of Japanese colonial rule. Korean translators with skills in English who could mediate between

American military personnel and the Korean public occupied important positions within this government, to the extent that it was also called *tongyeok jeongbu* ("translation government") by some (Go 1995). It was thus no accident that the native Korean government that was subsequently established maintained a close political and cultural alignment with the United States and its language, English. Korea expert Gregory Henderson notes, for example, that the first Korean president, Syngman Rhee, was clearly aware of the political value of English and the pro-American stance that it indexes, when he points out that Rhee "went to missionary schools like Pai Chai less for their Christianity than to look for political position through English" (1968, 207; cited in Cumings 1997, 157). While some of the regimes that succeeded Rhee's varied slightly in the extent to which they adopted nationalist positions, the influence of the United States on Korean politics, economy, military affairs, and culture essentially remained unchanged. This situation laid a foundation upon which English increasingly became a language of importance, even as Koreans' everyday lives remained strongly monolingual and the Korean language served as a symbol of their national and ethnic identity. The complex relationship between English and Korean, then, has its origins in the symbolic role these languages played in the process of modern nation building.

English in Korea's Globalization Drive

The status of English has received an even stronger boost since the 1980s, when Korea started to make efforts to improve its tainted national images from its long years of dictatorship and establish a competent position within the global market. The Korean government pushed its citizens to be more proficient in English communication. For instance, the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympic Games, two of the major international events hosted by Korea, were presented by the Korean government as calling for citizens with a global mindset, who must be equipped with important characteristics of globality, one of which is the ability to speak English. Thus, Baik comments that a new period of contact between English and Korean was "marked by the declaration that Seoul was to be the host city for the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympic Games. Ordinary Koreans began to feel the imminent need to learn and speak English" (1992, 26). While it would obviously be problematic to attribute the hegemonic status of English to these two sports

events alone, Baik's comment does make an important point: that such international events (and other ones that followed) were clinched by the Korean government as important symbolic resources for the construction of a highly specific connection between globalization, modernization, and English. That is, participation in the global stage was imagined as necessarily mediated by the global language of English, which no doubt served as a crucial ideology for shaping the meaning of the English language in Korean society.

This ideological construction of English was continued in the government's drive for globalization which took place since the mid-1990s. In 1995, the government adopted *seggyehwa* ("globalization") as its slogan, focusing more explicitly on internationalization and making a series of neoliberal reforms geared towards a more open adoption of market principles designed to enhance Korea's global competitiveness (Kim 2000). Under the banner of *seggyehwa*, government officials and businessmen were strongly advised to actively participate in various international organizations and assume key positions there. In addition, the government advised Korean firms to undertake joint projects with the world's leading industries and expand overseas production, in order to keep up with global trends in high-tech development and to increase exports (Yoo 1995). The government's new policy was matched with corporate catchphrases such as *seggye gyeongyeong* ("global management") of Daewoo, one of the major conglomerates, or *chaebol*. In the 2000s, several free economic zones were developed in the areas of Incheon, Busan, and Gwangyang, and a free international city on the southern island of Jeju, in order to establish the country as an economic hub of the East Asian region. To attract foreign investors and capital flow, economic activities in these zones were supported in various ways such as special tax incentives and deregulation of employment and labor laws, as well as development of new airport and seaport facilities (Park 2005).

English again figured prominently in this nationalist-driven globalization or utilitarian nationalism. For example, it was advertised that the local government offices in the free economic zones would accept official documents in English so that foreign companies could conduct their business with Korean governmental offices in English (Son 2001). Plans were drafted to strengthen the English skills of the local residents of the proposed free economic zones as well, including proposals to allow local students to attend international schools or to begin English immersion programs

for non-English subjects (Park 2005; Lee 2005). Such efforts were often characterized as *yeongeo inpeura* ("English infra(structure)"), highlighting the economic value of the English language as having equal status to material facilities that may serve as a basis for economic development (Son 2001). In this context, in 1998 a writer named Bok Geo-il suggested that English should be established as an official language of Korea so that it may eventually replace Korean as a mother tongue (Bok 1998), which caused bitter controversy.

National educational policy is another domain through which ideologies of English are reproduced and circulated. Through the 6th National Curricula, introduced in 1995, a shift in English language teaching was implemented, from the previous emphasis on grammatical knowledge towards communicative fluency (Kwon 2000; Shin Hyunjung 2007). Another change was the introduction of *yeongeo jogi gyoyuk* ("early English education") under the 7th National Curricula. From 1997, English language education was started at an earlier age, at third grade in elementary school, four years earlier than what the previous policy had mandated (Li 2004). These policy changes were all implemented with the explicit goal of preparing citizens who can participate in the global marketplace confidently and increasing the nation's international competitiveness. In April 2007, then President Roh Moo-hyun corroborated the government's view of English by saying, "English is a must in order to catch up with the globalization stream. The biggest competitive edge of Finland and other rapidly-growing advanced countries is English-speaking people" (*Korea Herald* 2007). The successive Lee Myung-bak administration (2008-2013), well-known for its strong neoliberal political stance, continues this trend, pushing for more English classes and English immersion programs at all school levels.

These developments in the context of globalization, which were reported prominently through national media, no doubt contributed to the perception that English has become an important international language more than ever. Such changes were not only actual policies through which the Korean government attempted to adapt to the changing global economy, but also symbolic events that created the image of English as a necessary resource for making Korea accessible to the world.



English in Higher Education and the Job Market

The government's emphasis on English naturally led to and was supported by the growing importance of English in higher education and the job market. For instance, since the late 1990s, certain score or higher on standardized English tests such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) became a requirement for both college entrance and graduation in many universities. Again, these changes reflect an assumption that English has become an indispensable skill for competition in global context. According to once university staff member, "in this age of internationalization and globalization, TOEIC and TOEFL are now more important than any other core courses" (Park 1995).

Many universities also increasingly adopt English as a language of instruction so that students would become more exposed to the language. For example, the prestigious Korea University became well-known for its heavy investments in English, pressuring faculty members to lecture in English. It is reported that the university would increase the ratio of classes taught in English to 50% by 2012. Yonsei University followed suit by announcing that it would push for a plan that 40% of all lectures at the university should be done in English by 2010 (Bak 2006). Sogang University explored ideas such as staffing dormitories with native speakers of English (Cho 2005), as it is believed that this will "force" students to speak and interact in English, making them more skilled in the language.

This is perhaps a consequence of the fact that English competence has become an important criterion for decisions regarding employment or promotion in *chaebol* corporations, where trends of the Korean job market are often formed. For instance, TOEIC has been used widely by such corporations as a measure of an applicant's English language skills since the mid-1990s when they started to pursue more active global expansion. Further, since the early 2000s, companies have begun to adopt a wider range of means to evaluate job seekers' English communicative competence such as oral interviews or group discussions conducted in English, for after years of emphasizing the importance of TOEIC scores many employees have achieved high TOEIC scores, necessitating additional bases for selection (Han 2003, Kim 2005). In addition, major corporations regularly test the English language competence of their employees throughout their career.

Choi (2002) shows that over 90% of workers in large private manufacturing and exporting industries are continuously tested for their English.

This emphasis on English, however, does not necessarily mean that English is being used widely in the workplace. There are numerous studies that have shown that, despite the emphasis on English in business environment, the amount of English actually used in relation to work is still relatively little (McTague 1990; Choi 2002). This suggests that communicative competence in English is not so much an actual resource needed for survival in the global workplace, but an index of an ideal employee in the global economy; regardless of the actual tasks one needs to carry out in the workplace, being able to communicate confidently in English is taken to be a sign that the worker is well-positioned within the modern world and worthy of a company that aspires to expand globally.

This shows that English in the Korean job market is used primarily for gate-keeping purposes. The Korean worker constantly needs to adapt to what is stated by employers as requirements of an ideal employee. As we have noted above, with the standards of competence in English constantly being upgraded, English serves as a mechanism for powerful corporations to control who will have access to opportunities and privileges. These trends pressure university students and white-collar workers to invest an enormous amount of financial and material resources and time into studying English. Students' anxiety about securing employment in an extremely competitive job market leads them to place greater importance on studying English than their subject of major. Also, according to one newspaper report, nearly 70% of office workers spend their time after work in further self-development, most of whom are studying English (Lim 2006). Of course, through such investments in English Korean workers do gain greater access to the symbolic resource of English. However, it should be noted that such an access is still constrained by ideologies constructed through the discourses of the government and major corporations.

The Fever of Extracurricular English Learning

The ultimate domain in which the English fever is thrown into starkest relief is the area of English learning for children. As in other East Asian countries, education of children is seen as a matter of paramount importance, since it is believed by parents to be a real basis upon which their children can secure

the prestige and resources required for making a good living as adults. For this reason, many parents go to great lengths to provide their children with the “right” educational opportunities (Seth 2002). This zeal of parents, coupled with the strong perception that good competence in English is of utmost importance for a successful life, leads to a heated pursuit of English that lies at the heart of the English fever.

Perhaps the most extreme and perverted example of this is the tongue surgery that some parents have their children undergo (Demick 2002). The purported efficacy of this surgery, which is supposed to lengthen the child’s tongue by cutting away a thin band of tissue, thereby enabling the child to pronounce the rhotic sound of English with ease, of course has absolutely no scientific basis, and for this reason some critics see it as a serious violation of children’s human rights (National Human Rights Commission of Korea 2003).

While tongue surgery may still be a very rare and extreme example, there are plenty of other aspects of the education market that demonstrate the English fever. As TOEFL score is required for admission at some universities and high schools, many Korean students are taking the test, leading to the fact that Koreans occupy 20% of whole TOEFL examinees in the world. In particular, middle and high school students occupy 70-80% of about 130,000 Korean TOEFL examinees in 2006 (Won 2007). The general distrust against the public education system and the need to outdo others have also produced a huge private education market which caters to a large number of curricular and extra-curricular subjects in various modes, and English is the single most important area within this market. According to a report by the Samsung Economic Research Institute, Korean families spent \$15.6 billion on English-language tutoring in 2006 alone (Cho 2007). Here, the options for after-school English instruction include *hakseupji* (“worksheet”) programs (which consist of working on practice questions on worksheets supplemented with regular guidance by a worksheet teacher), private English institutes, and individual or group tutoring (Park and Abelmann 2004). With the introduction of English as an elementary school subject in 1997, *yeongeo yuchiweon* (“English-only kindergartens”) with native-speaker staff are thriving as well, despite the fact that they are often twice or three times more expensive than regular kindergartens.

Another prominent option is to send children overseas. In addition to *eohakyeonsu* (“short-term English study abroad”), *jogiyuhak* (“early overseas

education”) is worthy of attention, as noted above. For parents who feel that competence in English is a crucial basis for future opportunities, separation of families and the great financial cost may be seen as an acceptable burden. In fact, sending children overseas is often considered to be the most desirable option for children’s English learning for the following reasons. Firstly, many Koreans hold the belief that the best way a Korean can learn to speak English fluently is to be immersed in an English-only environment, where they can be in contact with native speakers of English, who are imagined to be ideal model speakers for “good English.” For this reason, leaving the monolingual environment of Korean and moving to English-speaking countries is seen as an ideal option. And secondly, the experience of studying abroad supposedly inculcates in the child a sense of cosmopolitanism as well as a certain image of prestige, for the fact that the child’s family could afford to send him or her overseas already indicates a privileged background. Indeed, affluent members of Korean society have more resources and connections to send their children to costly English kindergartens or abroad, which in turn may provide them with a better chance at securing better jobs, thus reproducing and reinforcing class difference (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Koreans are generally well aware of this inequality, and for this reason, efforts such as *jogi yuhak* are often criticized on the grounds that they contribute to the reproduction of class relations and social inequalities as well as dollar drain (KBS 2008).

One area in which this class anxiety is manifest politically is the construction boom of English villages discussed above. English villages were political projects rather than linguistic ones from its inception, as they were designed to specifically deal with the dilemma faced by parents who could not afford to send their children overseas due to financial reasons. Many English villages are designed to be a perfect replica of a (Western) English-speaking society located at citizens’ doorsteps, and were purported to provide everyone with easy access to quality English learning. They were first proposed during the 2002 nation-wide election of city and province officials by two prominent candidates, who recognized the importance of appealing to the desire of parents to secure effective and affordable English learning opportunities. Their campaigns explicitly aimed at voters who may have felt disgruntled that they were not able to provide adequately for their children by sending them overseas. For instance, on June 3, 2002, Son Hak-gyu, one of the candidates for the governor’s seat of Gyeonggi province, ran

an advertisement on the first page of major newspapers, directly addressing parents who were worried about their children's English learning. The advertisement claimed that Son understood how "sending your child overseas is too costly, and not sending your child breaks your heart," and then promised to "build an English village where one can live with foreigners speaking only English, so that your children can receive English education that is as practical as sending them overseas" (Son 2002; Kim 2002). In the following years, the idea of English villages became so popular that more than 10 candidates proposed new English villages in the following 2006 election (Kim and Hwang 2006). As a result, as of 2010 there are numerous English villages that are in operation in Seoul, Gyeonggi, Incheon, and other places, with more soon to follow.

However, the operation of English villages faces many problems. The two villages run by Gyeonggi province, for example, had a deficit of \$22 million in 2006, mainly because of the exorbitant cost of construction and maintenance, but also because of low usage by citizens (Hong 2007); it is reported that only 3.6% of the elementary and middle school students in Gyeonggi province had attended one of the villages during the period between August 2004 and August 2006 (Hong 2006). This brings into question whether the idea of English villages truly connects with the real concerns and situations of ordinary Koreans. Rather, this episode underscores that what Koreans are really seeking through learning English is not linguistic competence per se, but the social and economic advantages that can be gained through the symbolic capital of English. Therefore, English villages, which do not carry the prestige of studying overseas, may never be seen as a viable alternative to *jogi yuhak*.

This is also the case with other efforts purported to fill the class divide in English learning, such as the establishment (in April 2007) of EBS English that focuses on English language teaching, as the third channel of the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS). In December 2008, the government-run Traffic Broadcasting System (TBS) launched the TBS eFM as the English-only radio station, the first of its kind in the Korean broadcasting history. While even the former president Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008) expressed hope that the launch of the channel would help deal with the problem of unequal access to resources for language learning (Shin Jongsu 2007), this again misses the class implication that underlies the dissatisfaction of Koreans. In Korean context, competence in English is

sought less as a linguistic skill, but more as a form of distinction (Bourdieu 1986). For this reason, populist alternatives to the English learning aimed at addressing the class divide cannot resolve the problem of inequality, because ironically, they in fact reproduce that divide by marking their users as lacking access to more prestigious opportunities for learning English.

Conclusion: English and the Structure of Global and Local Inequalities

The discussion above shows how the Korean English fever must be seen as a phenomenon that is deeply embedded within local structures of social power. For instance, the place of English within the educational market connects in many ways to the unique role that systems of educational qualifications have played in the nation's modernization process. The Korean zeal for education has contributed enormously to the country's social development and economic growth. It created a more equitable society and was a driving force for the country's emergence out of poverty to become an industrialized country. However, it is derived from a traditional value system that equates social status with one's educational degree earned and the reputation of the schools that one attended. In this situation, an enormous percentage of family income is being spent on education, therefore ultimately contributing to class structure and inequalities. English, as we have seen above, is a new addition to this equation; as the English learning has become a centerpiece of government policy, corporate strategy, and the education system, it also comes to function as a crucial link in the reproduction of such local relations of power and inequality.

But another important aspect of English is that its local meaning is mediated by its status as a global language and the global-level relationships that it marks. In the Korean case, English is inextricably tied with the hegemony of the U.S.A. and the global economy which is imagined to operate through English. That is, the local meaning of English is not only constructed locally, but builds upon the global meaning of English and reproduces it locally at the same time. In other words, through English, what is reproduced is not only local class relationships, but the privileges of native speakers of English over non-native speakers such as Koreans, the power of the U.S.A. over Korea, and the dominance of the neoliberal order of the global economy. While the privileged few are able to justify their

positions by aligning themselves with these global sources of hegemony, the majority of Koreans without such privilege (and Korea as a whole) can only be subordinated within a hierarchy of power – not only locally but globally as well. This, we argue, is precisely a way through which global structures of power come to be reproduced on a local level, not through active imposition by the Center, but through local practices of dealing with English. In this sense, the English fever in Korea cannot be simply understood as a direct reflection of the global hegemony of English, but its local manifestation which is mediated by local social relations and structural constraints.

While we took a highly critical stance towards global English above, we also acknowledge the importance of English learning for its utility in international trade, international exchanges, and its role as a vehicle for the circulation of new ideas, cultures, forms of knowledge and senses. In this sense, we do not intend to dismiss the Korean English fever as an ignorant, self-destructive act. For individual Koreans, efforts to learn English is ultimately about appropriating the indexical value of English in the modern world, and in so far as they make such agentive choices they should not be seen as “dupes” that collude in their own subordination. But it must also be recognized that this appropriation is not of the kind that instantly liberates the speaker, for their efforts to secure English is constrained by material forces that define who has access to better channels for learning English. Therefore, we claim that the Korean English fever can only aggravate the class divide between the “English-rich” and “English-poor” (Choi 2007) and reinforce the global inequalities that Korea as a nation faces. In this context, we conclude that the Korean English fever is best understood as a local-level projection of global-level inequalities; and that such inequalities are an outcome of working relations of class and power.

Notes

- ¹ A previous version of this chapter appeared in 2008 as “The Language Politics of ‘English Fever’ in South Korea” in *Korea Journal* 48.2 (Summer): 136-59. We thank the journal for its permission to publish its paper in a different form.
- ² In this paper, “Korea” refers to South Korea or the Republic of Korea.
- ³ Primary or secondary school students studying abroad numbered 10,498 in 2003. While this number reached 29,511 in 2006, it dropped to 18,119 in 2009, according to a National Assembly record (Oh 2010).

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The New Fantasy-Adventure Film as Contemporary Epic, 2000-2007¹

by Patrick F. Campos

The paper aims to make a comparative analysis of the narrative form and themes of the folk epic (as typified by the Panay Islands’ epic of Labaw Donggon) and the contemporary fantasy-adventure film (as typified by the Enteng Kabisote films), here considered as analogues. Furthermore, the paper also seeks to evaluate the latter in light of the former, in terms of their respective narrative social contexts and social function and according to the agendas of Philippine folklorists and nationalist film critics. As narrative forms, the ethnoepic and the fantasy-adventure film are comparable. However, the fantasy-adventure film perpetuates a narrow sense of nation. Instead of expanding the centrality of the family in the ethnoepic, the fantasy-adventure film has remained fixated on this theme and has neither widened, deepened, nor problematized it.

Written discourses about the national cinema of the Philippines have been delineated in two critical modes – film as art (art cinema) and film as social practice (popular cinema). The terms, as far as actual film artists and film texts are concerned, are not mutually exclusive. Art cinema, canonized in the annals of cultural institutions and critical writings, is held up as a model. Popular cinema, canonized in movie magazines, press releases, and television promotions, is appraised as a yardstick of popular culture and as continuations of folklore.

It is with the latter that this paper is concerned.² The fundamental assumption of this critical mode is that mass audiences patronize popular films, because they are configured like folk narratives, typifying a people’s beliefs and values. Popular films – generally generic films – are assumed to reflect *and* reinforce social trends and norms, through their networks of character relationships and narrative resolutions. It is at this point where the interests of the film critic and the folklorist intersect.

Specifically, the paper aims to make a comparative analysis of the narrative form and themes of the folk epic (as typified by *Labaw Donggon*) and the contemporary fantasy-adventure film (as typified by the *Enteng Kabisote* films), here considered as analogues of each others. Furthermore, the paper also seeks to evaluate the latter in light of the former, in terms of their respective narrative social contexts and social function.

In a relevant study by Graeme Turner on national fictions, he argues, based on the works of Vladimir Propp and Claude Levi-Strauss, that “narrative [is] a culture’s way of making sense of itself” (Turner 1986, 18). That is, narratives produced by a native culture serve a reflexive role in understanding this same culture’s own signification. Echoing Levi-Strauss, he argues that narratives probably appear in a more or less limited, universal form in *all* cultures, but that specificity is determined by a given indigenous culture’s articulations – and, one may assert by extension, its articulations at a specific juncture in history. In this regard, while it is true that key film genres have been perfected and made widespread by Hollywood hegemony, they are particularized, embellished, undermined, within a particular indigenous culture and actuated by particular indigenous praxes.

In speaking of popular cinema, certain film genres emerge as dominant in a particular nation, because of sociocultural and historical circumstances. In the Philippines, the dominant film genres since the 1950s up to the turn of the century have been comedy, melodrama, and action. Relatively, other genres, like horror and fantasy, may be considered as fluctuating or limited in their popularity.

The Rise of the Fantasy-Adventure Film in Popular Cinema (2000-2007)

Considered in this context, one would notice significant changes in the landscape of the national cinema in recent years. The turn of the century has seen the rise of popularity of the fantasy-adventure (FA) film in the Philippines, marking the genre as dominant in terms of capital investment and increase in production. In the last eight years since 2000, the film industry has produced around 25 big-budgeted fantasy films,³ many of which have figured on the top five of box office receipts in the year or at the time of their release, and have had a separate, probably bigger, market on video.

In 2002, the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) featured four FA films – *Ang Agimat: Anting-anting ni Lolo* (Augusto Salvador), *Ang Alamat ng Lawin* (Ronwaldo Reyes a.k.a. Fernando Poe Jr. a.k.a. FPJ), *Spirit Warriors: The Shortcut* (Chito S. Roño), and *Lastikman* (Tony Y. Reyes). The last emerged as the second highest grossing movie of the year (Flores 24). Two other firsts happened in 2003: the MMFF was held nationwide, and three superhero FA films were exhibited – *Captain Barbell* (Mac C. Alejandre), *Gagamboy* (Erik Matti), and *Fantastic Man* (Tony Y. Reyes). The last was the highest grossing film of the festival (‘Fantastic Man’ n.p.). Every succeeding year since then, three up to five FA films have been screened in the annual MMFF.

In 2004, *Enteng Kabisote: Okay Ka, Fairy Ko ... The Legend* (Tony Y. Reyes) held the record as the highest grossing Filipino film of all time (Lauzon 181). *Enteng Kabisote 2: Okay Ka, Fairy Ko... The Legend Continues* (Tony Y. Reyes), *Exodus: Tales from the Enchanted Kingdom* (Erik Matti), and *Mulawin: The Movie* (Dominic Zapata & Mark A. Reyes), emerged as the top three highest grossing films of the 2005 MMFF, collectively earning about P240 million (Lo 2008, n.p.).

In 2006, a controversy erupted when *Enteng Kabisote 3: Okay Ka, Fairy Ko... The Legend Goes On and On and On* (Tony Y. Reyes) won the Best Picture award in the MMFF, being the top grosser of the festival at the time of the awards night, eventually placing second with box office sales of P128 million. Together with *Super Noypi* (Quark Henares) and *Zsa Zsa Zaturannah* (Joel Lamangan), the three fantasy films of that year grossed roughly P158 million (Torre 2007, n.p.).

In 2007, *Resiklo* (Mark A. Reyes) won the Best Picture award in the MMFF, and together with the second highest grossing film of the festival, *Enteng Kabisote 4: Okay Ka, Fairy Ko... The Beginning of the Legend* (Tony Y. Reyes), earned more than P126 million (San Diego 2008, n.p.).

Though the actual profit in relation to the high production costs of the FA films are uneven and the gross earnings have been on the decline, the figures are significant, because these are upturns in relation to the steady and dramatic decline of cinema attendance and mainstream film production as the new century opened – with 103 films produced in 2001; 94 in 2002; 80 in 2003; 55 in 2004; 50 in 2005; and only 48 in 2006⁴ – further underscored by the circulating belief that “the Philippine film industry is dead.”⁵ The figures are significant also, because, while there has been a decline in general

production, there has inversely been an increase in the production of fantasy films, indicating a seven-year trend of marketable films, which commercial producers have aimed to cash in upon.

In this regard, it can be reasonably accepted that trends in Hollywood have influenced this increased production of FA films in an attempt to salvage the dying industry.⁶ However, as Turner asserts of indigenous cultural narratives, it cannot be said that the local FA films are merely copies.⁷

Significantly, the popularity of recent FA films succeeds the “wake” held over the local action film, or the *bakbakan*. For several decades, the *bakbakan* has been one of the most popular and productive local genres, even paving the way for its icons to hold high offices in government – most notably Joseph Estrada and son Jinggoy Estrada, Ramon Revilla and son Ramon “Bong” Revilla Jr., and Lito Lapid.

Beginning around 2002, however, action film releases have steadily dwindled to as low as four or less in a year. In 2004, only one film outing may be properly labeled “action,” *Mano Mano: Arnis, The Lost Art*. Action stars have begun to venture into romance or romantic comedy (e.g., Robin Padilla in *Till I Met You* [2006]), comedy (e.g., Bong Revilla in *Kapag Tumibok ang Puso... Not Once But Twice* [2006]), or action-comedy (e.g., FPJ in *Pakners* [2003]). Action film entries in the MMFF, like *Terrorist Hunter* (2005) starring action stars Eddie Garcia, Dennis Roldan, and Ronald Gan, and the comeback film of Lito Lapid, *Tatlong Baraha* (2006), grossed lowest in their respective festivals. Significantly, the foremost action icon in the Philippines, FPJ, died in 2004.

Scholars from various disciplines are agreed that the *bakbakan*-as-genre is indicative of popular cultural consciousness,⁸ connected intimately with other contemporary popular media (e.g., *komiks*, radio, TV), anchored on dramatic traditions (e.g., the *komedya*, most especially), the nineteenth century *awit* and *korido*, and, ultimately, springing forth from folk literature. While Agustin Sotto begins his historical sketch of the *bakbakan* from the *komedya* (Sotto 2001, 96), Zeus Salazar goes even farther, and, concluding his analysis of the narratives of 14 action films, writes,

Ekspresyon silang lahat ng diwang bayan at, samakatuwid, ang kanilang mga istorya ay naglalaman ng mga pinakmahalagang elemento ng kulturang bayan. Ito ang dahilan kung bakit popular ang pelikulang bakbakan, kasing popular ng mga epikong etniko sa mga

pamayanang etnolingwistiko ngayon at lahat ng mga Pilipino noon (Salazar 1989, 11).

While the one-to-one correspondence that Salazar is asserting cannot be unquestionably determined without qualifications, one will not be off the mark to surmise that there is indeed an affinity between popular culture and folk culture, to say the least. Following Salazar’s analogy, one must turn to the current FA films, since the *bakbakan* has apparently fallen out of popularity, while the epic impulse in film has not disappeared.

In terms of narrative form, the movement from *bakbakan*-as-epic to FA-as-epic is a returning and a flight, from the worldly to the otherworldly, from the bleak landscape of crime and injustice to the wondrous realms of magic and utopia. What remains of the *bakbakan* in the FA film is the excitement of combat, the exhilaration of manipulated time (acceleration and protraction), and the visceral evocation of movement. The FA film accommodates these, but in a much more spectacular depiction.

The FA, as the term suggests, emphasizes the visual spectacle of the fantastic, in terms of cinematic spaces, costumes, and magic. Furthermore, it cues the spectator to the conventions of the adventure narrative, by following the hero(es), either on a quest into otherworlds, unknown lands, faraway exotic places, or on struggles in a familiar setting transformed into an adventure space. The spectator presumably recognizes the elements of the journey, the vanquishing of villains, and the overcoming of obstacles with thrilling narrow escapes, as indicative of adventure.

If indeed there is a demonstrable continuity between the folk epic and the FA film of the new century, as entertainment and locus of folk values, in spite or because of the intervening rise and decline of the *bakbakan*, then it would be instructive to draw out the salient characteristics and social function of the ethnoepic and the FA film.

Ethnoepics: The Example of *Labaw Donggon*

Returning once again to Turner’s arguments along the lines of Propp and Levi-Strauss, one may regard the folk epic (and the epic impulse) found in innumerable tribes across cultures and across history as universal; while in its specificity, each epic narrative can be perceived as a reflection of an indigenous culture.

Philippine ethnoepics, thus regarded, exhibit patterns that may be found in the epics of other non-Filipino cultures, like the strange genesis of the hero; his incredible fighting prowess; his magical weapons; his otherworldly travels, high and low; and his death and resurrection (Meñez 1996, 15). However, as E. Arsenio Manuel contends, Philippine ethnoepics are native and of pre-Spanish vintage, and that its heroes are local and are neither derived nor identifiable from contaminating cultures (1963, 62); hence, there is specificity in their narrative themes, contexts, and function.

The example of *Labaw Donggon*, an epic from the Sulod society of Central Panay,⁹ may be taken here as representative of the ethnoepics, for a number of practical and instructive reasons. *Labaw Donggon* possesses all of the universally decipherable elements of the epic narrative, but is, at the same time, unmistakably indigenous. It is also both an epic of romance and of valor, and both religious and social in nature. Finally, it is also conventionally considered as being part of a larger epic, highlighting the nature of an epic cycle.

Synopsis

Labaw Donggon is the eldest son of Buyung Paubari and Abyang Alunsina. The epic begins with Labaw Donggon's birth, miraculous growth, and immediate journeying to the mouth of Handog, by the river Halawud, to ask for the hand of the beautiful well-kept maiden (*binukot*), Abyang Ginbitinan. Labaw Donggon wins the hand of Abyang Ginbitinan, by pleasing the maiden's father and killing a great monster, as part of the young man's dowry.¹⁰

As Labaw Donggon travels home with his new bride, they meet a group of young men who are on their way to Tarambang Burok to win the hand of Abyang Doronoon, whose beauty is legendary; she is the sister of Sumpoy, the lord of the underworld. The moment they arrive home, Labaw Donggon embarks on a quest to win the hand of Abyang Doronoon. Before he reaches his destination, he combats a giant ridge-guardian with a hundred hands. The adversary is no match against Labaw Donggon's fighting prowess, so the giant allows the hero to pass. Labaw Donggon wins the hand of Abyang Doronoon.

Before long, he journeys again using his magical boat to woo Malitong Yawa Sinagmaling Diwata, the young bride of Buyung Saragnayan,

lord of darkness. Buyung Saragnayan challenges Labaw Donggon to a duel. The two have a protracted fight, but Labaw Donggon could not surpass the powers of Buyung Saragnayan's amulet; the hero is imprisoned under his opponent's house.

Meanwhile, Abyang Ginbitinan and Abyang Doronoon give birth to sons separately, Asu Mangga and Baranugun respectively. The two sons undergo a miraculous growth and immediately set out to rescue their father. They meet along the way and join forces.

The neighbors of Buyung Saragnayan come to his aid against Labaw Donggon's sons. Abyang Alunsina, mother of Labaw Donggon, reveals to her grandchildren that the strength of Buyung Saragnayan resides in the heart of a wild boar. This knowledge enables the two to triumph. However, Labaw Donggon goes in hiding out of disillusionment.

Meanwhile, hearing of Labaw Donggon's defeat, his brothers, Humadapnon and Dumaladap, search for their lost brother. They find him and bring him back home to his wives. Labaw Donggon's wives weep, because their husband has lost his sense of hearing and his firmness of mind, but they believe that their husband deserves his defeat for his covetousness. The wives are jealous of Malitong Yawa Sinagmaling Diwata, but Labaw Donggon assures them that he will treat them equally. The two wives perform a ritual that aids their husband's convalescence.

Narrative Form and Social Context of Performance

Labaw Donggon combines the narrative and the dramatic in poetry. As an ethnoepic, it is characterized by "a certain seriousness" (Manuel 1963, 69) and is "less humorous, loftier...than the folk tale" (Lumbera et al. 1994, 29). This seriousness is partly derived from its use of poetic language and its length.

On the one hand, the poetic language of *Labaw Donggon* and its characteristic chanting are rooted in the religion and rituals of the society in which it is chanted (Jocano 1965, 20-21, 42; 1968, 88). Its most striking quality is its use of repetition, rhyme, and rhythm (1965, 21). The repetition of words or whole lines typically occurs in the most thrilling scenes, such as in courtship or the climax of the story, underscoring repetition as a technique for keeping listeners excited. *Labaw Donggon* is also visual. There are scenes of elaborate detail, like ritual preparations before battles. The battle scenes

themselves are prolonged and fantastic. The profuse use of metaphors and similes, along with meaningful pauses, regulate the imagery and movement of the poem (Jocano 1965, 23).

On the other hand, *Labaw Donggon* is also very long that it takes several evenings to finish its chanting (Magos 1996, 127). It is episodic, as can be observed in the synopsis; portions of the epic may be lifted and appropriated for some social or religious ceremony.

Furthermore, not only is *Labaw Donggon* episodic, which is a characteristic of most ethnoepics, but it is also conventionally regarded as only one cycle of a longer and more coherent epic called *Hinilawod* (Jocano 1965, 24).¹¹ Being oral literature, a set of events or episodes, or details and characters thereof, is added to an epic in some instances of performance (Castro 1983, 4), eventually forming distinct cycles. The *Hinilawod*, in this sense, is a macroepic, consisting of microepics with differing structures (Manuel 1963, 60).

Being oral literature, also, the poetic enunciation of this lengthy epic is focused more on the context of performance than on any fixed structure; the manner of chanting changes as soon as the context of the narration changes (Jocano 1965, 20-22). *Labaw Donggon* is chanted in various occasions, such as wedding rites and feasts, wakes, harvest time, rituals of magic and religion, or even in informal gatherings of family and neighbors after meals or before sleeping (Jocano 1965, 19-21; cf. Magos 1996, 127-28). The aesthetic of *Labaw Donggon*, therefore, lies in its mixing of the secular and the sacred, alternating in consideration of the context of individual performance and the reactions of listeners (Jocano 1965, 22-23).

Jocano recounts that when the *babaylan* chants *Labaw Donggon*, he takes liberties in omitting portions of the narrative when he notices that the listeners are no longer enthralled (1965, 23). Jocano observes that “the audience reacts to portions of the epic which reflect the familiar behavior or patterns or certain observable features of their society” (e.g., philandering; references to *aswangs*) (1965, 24).

Social Functions and Themes of the Narrative

The ethnoepics, as illustrated in the foregoing discussion of *Labaw Donggon*'s synopsis, structure, and setting, are 1) always permeated with the presence of the marvelous and the fantastic, and portrays otherworldly deeds,

extraordinary display of strength and endurance, and the active presence of supernatural beings; 2) filled with magnified and protracted combat between brave and strong warriors; and 3) generally meant to be performed before a watching audience in a specific social setting (Castro 1983, 3; cf. Manuel 1963, 3; 50-51). “[These] characteristics,” Jovita Ventura Castro writes, “confirm a theory that the epics were *used for entertainment* in a society that had neither radio nor television nor film superheroes like Superman, Wonder Woman, or James Bond” (1983, 4; italics added).

However, beyond being mere entertainment, the ethnoepics are reflective of the society from where they originate, and *serve as vehicles for preserving and passing on tribal wisdom and specific customs* (Manuel 1963, 53-7; cf. Castro 1983, 4). Jocano explains how the *Hinilawod* embodies the Sulod society's worldview; tells its origins; contains ceremonial prayers; provides mythical characters for religious, political, and social norms; defines kinship structure; expresses feelings; and vouchsafes empirical judgments (qtd. in Manuel 1963, 56). In other words, as Manuel writes, “the epics find their justification in the deep-seated life-ways and values of the people” (1963, 53).

The Centrality of the Family

A significant portion of the narrative of *Labaw Donggon* deals with marriage. Finding a mate and marrying is the primary preoccupation of Labaw Donggon and the main animating conflict of the plot. The whole narrative centers in this institution, and the love and affection that is and should be present in it. Labaw Donggon does not take any action without consulting with his wives, and it is his wives' acceptance of him that restores him into health and the extended family social unit into equilibrium.

Aside from the relationship between husband and wife, the relationship between generations, between parents and children, is also a key theme in *Labaw Donggon*. In the narrative, it is Labaw Donggon who courts his wives, but it is he and his parents who ask for the woman's hand. Moreover, parents are expected to fulfill their duties toward their children, and vice versa, as exhibited in the intervention of Labaw Donggon's mother, and the attempt of Labaw Donggon's two children, who are half-brothers, to save him.

A strong sibling relationship is also portrayed as ideal. Siblings act as a unit in an endeavor, as evidenced by the setting out of Humadapnon and Dumalapid to avenge the name of their brother, Labaw Donggon, when he was defeated. It is Humadapnon who convinces his brother's two wives to accept Labaw Donggon's third wife and to perform the ritual to resuscitate Labaw Donggon.

Separate Tribes and Supernatural Worlds

The ethnoepics depict the world as separate communities, and one sees in them tribal heroes and families, marrying or battling people from other such separate communities. When Buyung Saragnayan is challenged by Labaw Donggon and faced with impending danger, he calls upon the members of the community to help him. At once the young men from all over the Land of the Dawning Sun gather and rally on his behalf. In the face of crisis, the whole community acts as a unit.

Although narrow in the sense of referring to separate and defined communities, the narrative setting of *Labaw Donggon* is enlarged by otherworldly journeys. The hero woos his first wife in Handog, the earthworld; the second wife in the underworld; and the third wife, a diwata, "in a place where the brilliant light of the sun starts," or in the eastern sky. In this sense, the tribe of Labaw Donggon is expanded vastly.

A further enlargement of narrative setting happens, when supernatural forces take interest in the action and intervene in the affairs of the characters. The mother of Labaw Donggon, a diwata, actively takes part in the action of the epic and tells the sons of Labaw Donggon how to defeat the adversary. This intervention determines the outcome of the plot. It is implied that knowledge that comes supernaturally is indispensable in overcoming problems, since this event of intervention occurs at the crucial and climactic portion of the narrative. The wisdom conveyed is that the natural lives of people are impossible to divorce from their supernatural lives; life has two realms, and the wise, prosperous, and peaceful life is in the balance of these two realms (Jocano 1965, 42; Campos 1990, 232).

The Audacious Hero

The epic heroes – Labaw Donggon, his brothers, his sons, and the heroes of other ethnoepics – are strong and brave, of great fighting prowess, and are possessed of an adventurous spirit, great determination, and endurance (Eugenio 2001, xvii-xviii). They are endowed with supernatural powers and possess magic objects and spirit friends (xxi). Labaw Donggon is of such striking appearance that his mere presence produces a strong impact on his opponent Buyung Saragnayan. The latter is impressed at the sight of him and says, "He looks like a god; he appears like a deity, a deity from the sky" (xviii).

Such a characterization of the hero is understandable if one remembers, being anchored upon the social function of the epic, that the hero is at the center of an embodied worldview, and his quests, downfalls, and victories are projections of the tribal society's collective desires, fears, and value-system. Understood in this way, the hero's actions and decisions are underscored by the network of his relationships (i.e., hero as husband, son, brother, enemy) and his community.

For instance, while polygamy is allowed in the tribal society from which *Labaw Donggon* originates, the narrative implies that covetousness and killing are not permitted by this same society. The result of this covetousness is Labaw Donggon's humiliating defeat in the hands of Buyung Saragnayan. Labaw Donggon's defeat and misery also result from his refusal to heed not only the advice of his wives, but also his parents. The turn of events validate parental authority and provide cues for kinship behaviors.

The Fantasy-Adventure as Contemporary Epic: The Example of *Enteng Kabisote*

In what follows, the salient characteristics of FA films, here regarded as contemporary epics, are discussed in relation to its convergences and divergences with the ethnoepics. Such an analysis, echoing Turner, attempts to determine a popular narrative form's signification of popular culture *at present*, at the same time, this signification's rootedness *and* departure in folk narrative form and culture.

The example of *Enteng Kabisote (EK)*, a series of four financially successful FA films, is here taken as representative of the FA films of recent

years. The *EK* series – whose producers, filmmakers, and stars have also made the financially successful *Fantastic Man* and *Lastikman* – have been the most popular FA films of late, exhibiting explicit imitations and profound differences from the Hollywood model. Taken together, the films' narrative form, themes, and social context and function may be generalized as applicable to most, if not all, of the other FA films of the turn of the century, and may thus be most illuminating.

Synopses

Enteng Kabisote:

Okay Ka, Fairy Ko...The Legend (EK 1)

Enteng Kabisote is a *tagalupa* (mere earthling) married to Faye, a fairy and the only daughter of Ina Magenta, Queen of Engkantasya, the kingdom of fairies. They have two kids, Aiza (adopted) and Benok. The family is a picture of harmony.

Amidst the peace, Satana, the Queen of *Kadiliman* (Darkness), covets the power of Ina Magenta and longs to rule the world. She wreaks havoc on earth by bidding her minions to poison the drinking water of humans, but the wards of Engkantasya foil the attempt. Failing at this, she sends the horse Itim (literally, black) to spy on and break the Kabisote family. The family, however, shows goodness to Itim, and, having felt love for the first time, the horse defects from Satana.

Satana, then, transforms herself into a beautiful girl to seduce Benok. Benok falls for her, and the boy begins to disrespect his sister and father. Just when Satana is about to possess Benok, Enteng thwarts her. Enteng realizes that the disrespect that he shows his mother-in-law, Ina Magenta, may have also influenced Benok. Father and son both admit to their mistakes.

Meanwhile, Satana kidnaps Faye and demands that Ina Magenta surrender all of her powers to her. Enteng, the ever loving husband, begs Ina Magenta to send him to the other realm to save his wife. Ina Magenta agrees and equips the *tagalupa*, together with Benok and Itim (now transformed into a white, talking and flying horse) to battle Satana. After a numerous adventures and comic fights, the father and son team rescues Faye. The family celebrates in Engkantasya.

Enteng Kabisote 2:

Okay Ka, Fairy Ko ... The Legend Continues (EK 2)

Engkantasya and the Kabisote household welcome Ada, Enteng and Faye's new daughter (hatched from an egg). Amidst the happiness, *Kadiliman* is brooding. Satana is reborn, through the blood of human traitors, and shakes up Engkantasya, the sea world, and the forests.

Ina Magenta is debilitated. Faye, only daughter of the Queen, is now responsible to find three missing amulets in order to save Engkantasya.

With the help of Alyssa (Ada's godmother) and her mother, Ina Azul, sister of Ina Magenta and Queen of Engkantasya Azul (sea); Verdana/Jose, battered husband and sidekick of Enteng turned female ogre; Ina Verde, another sister of Ina Magenta and Queen of Engkantasya Verde (forest); Enteng and his family travel through Satana's kingdom; battle dragons, sea creatures, and the sword-wielding minions of Satana; and recover the amulets.

Satana is revealed to be Amorillo, the prodigal sister of the queens of Engkantasya. Ina Azul and Ina Verde, who had conflicts rooted in envy, are reconciled. Enteng intervenes and provides the final blow against Satana. In the world of humans, Jose is also reconciled with his wife. The family celebrates in Engkantasya.

Enteng Kabisote 3:

Okay Ka, Fairy Ko ... The Legend Goes On and On and On (EK 3)

Enteng's business is thriving, because he has begun to swindle others. He has also begun flirting with other women. Aiza drifts away from Enteng, because he has become too selfish to listen to her. She runs away. Faye becomes unhappy with the changes in Enteng's character and sends him away.

Enteng becomes remorseful, but before he could return home, he (with Jose) is swallowed by the ground and brought into another realm. Enteng escapes incredible dangers, monstrous creatures, and cannibals and, in the process, fulfills a messianic prophecy of heroism by saving a whole tribe from its enemies in this otherworldly realm.

Meanwhile, Ina Magenta faces a cosmetic disaster (her face becomes masculine), because of her vanity, and this has affected Engkantasya and the powers of all fairies.

Satana sees all these conflicts as the opportunity for revenge and to gain power. She sends a shape-shifting cowardly alien-lizard to the Kabisote household to pose as Enteng. Enteng (with Jose) is able to return home and defeats the lizard. Enteng's family and Ina Magenta finally face Satana and her minions. Good triumphs over evil. The family celebrates in Engkantasya.

Enteng Kabisote 4:

Okay Ka, Fairy Ko ... The Beginning of the Legend (EK 4)

A magical Mirror of Time transports Enteng and Ada to the Spanish colonial times. Enteng saves Rizal from supernatural beings, who are trying to kill Rizal, because these beings hate "Filipino heroes." Enteng and Ada are chased by Spaniards and are forced to flee into the present time through the Mirror. Unknown to them, evil enters the human world through the same Mirror as well.

The Kabisote family – minus Aiza who has run away and Benok who is now an undercover policeman battling syndicates – goes on an outing. On the beach, Faye is visited by an old man, who is actually her old fairy lover-turned-evil, Prinsipe Inok.

Afterwards, Inok meets Dark Angel. They make a deal: Dark Angel is to help Inok win back Clorotheam (Faye's fairy name), and Inok is to surrender his power to Dark Angel.

Meanwhile, *Aswangs* attack the Kabisotes on the beach; Enteng defeats them with a magical whip, which Faye provides him.

The Kabisotes return to Manila. Enteng is kidnapped by the minions of Dark Angel and Inok, brainwashed, and pawned into crime. Enteng is saved by Benok, but Enteng cannot remember anything. Ina Magenta brings Enteng to the Time Lord, who shows Enteng images of his bachelor days and how he had met, fallen in love with, and married Clorotheam/Faye; Enteng recovers his memory; Inok, despondent as he realizes the greatness of Clorotheam's love for the *tagalupa*, disappears.

Enteng, Benok, and the police now turn to face Dark Angel and his horde (crooks-turned-drones). The Kabisotes triumph. At narrative's end, Aiza comes home, and the family celebrates beneath the statue of Rizal in Luneta.

Narrative Form and Social Context of Production

The *EK* films, as in most contemporary FA films, have been exhibited in the context of the annual MMFF, held from Christmas Day to the first week of January, when people are generally on holiday vacation and have thirteenth month pays or bonuses. In the year *EK 1* was released, the MMFF was already being held simultaneously in all the cinemas of the Philippines. In the duration of the festival, only Filipino films selected for competition/exhibition by the MMFF committee/jurors are shown; no foreign films may be shown across the country. Given the nature of the MMFF, major mainstream film production outfits have tended to capitalize on big-budgeted and/or General Patronage (i.e., wholesome, family-oriented) films, with an eye for return on investment, profit, and prestige.

Produced in such a context, *EK* is decidedly commercial and popular. Like most other recent FA films, *EK* exploits the popularity of generic comedy as denoted by its tone, premise, and featured stars (who are also mainstays of the longest running noontime comedy show, *Eat Bulaga!*), Michael V., Jose Manalo, Allan K., Ruby Rodriguez, Joey De Leon, Tito Sotto, and Vic Sotto. This is a significant departure from the aforementioned serious tone of the epic.

The comedic tone of the films is also occasioned by the films' self-consciousness about the fantastic (e.g., magic spells go wrong; characters and circumstances encountered in otherworlds are ridiculous), and manifested in the tongue-in-cheek treatment of popular generic conventions and images (e.g., playful titles; wisecracks about elaborate costumes, magical tools, and stock characters, like the princess or the aswang; verbal references to pop culture, like *Marimar*), calling attention to the film imagery's and premise's artificiality.

For instance, *EK* draws heavily and self-reflexively on the popular images of Hollywood sci-fi and fantasy films. *EK 1* refers to *Blade's* sleek vampires; *EK 2* to *Shrek's* Princess Fiona; *EK 3* to *Star Wars'* light sabers, laser guns, and the Ewoks; and *EK 4* to the flying machine of Green Goblin in *Spiderman*; among others. Generally, the films also refer to *The Matrix* trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and the *Harry Potter* series. Hollywood images are, however, lifted, not for characterization and plot development, but only as formally excessive references to the popular.

EK, as in other FA films, also exploits the generic conventions of the *bakbakan*. Apart from the climactic and comedic battles near the end of the films, *EK* presents “serious” action sequences not directly related to the plot and not featuring Vic Sotto.¹² These action sequences are reminiscent of the fist- and gun-fights of the *bakbakan* films, laced with Hollywood-styled spectacle.

As is already obvious in the foregoing discussion and the synopses, the *EK* films, like the ethnoepics, are episodic. The ethnoepic narratives are not always coherent in the sense that one set of events (e.g., birth, courtship, combat, death, or resurrection) does not necessarily result from or to another, in a cause-and-effect sequence. The FA films, as illustrated by *EK*, share this form: episodes loosely connected and not always related by cause-and-effect; adventurous detours; and skirmishes forestalling a final battle.

Furthermore, like the ethnoepics, the contemporary FA film is also cyclical. For instance, because of the enormous commercial success of *EK*, each film always ends with the possibility, if not the overt mention, of a sequel. Moreover, even before the *EK* series was made between 2004 and 2007, Enteng Kabisote already existed as a character in the long-running TV sitcom, *Okay Ka, Fairy Ko!*, which began in 1987; the TV sitcom has also had two financially successful movie spin-offs in the early 1990s. In fact, *EK 4* harks back to the beginning of the story, to characters/stars now gone (i.e., Bayani Casimiro, Charito Solis), to actual scenes from the TV series, in order to refresh Enteng’s and, by extension, the viewer’s memories of the origins of the story. Taken together, these repetitions and recreations, novel retellings, sequels and prequels, and the addition of new episodes and characters, constitute cycles.

Social Functions and Themes of the Narrative

While the ethnoepic and the contemporary FA film take for granted the fantastic and the supernatural, they differ in reason and degrees. Both narratives are populated with folkloric creatures, elementals, magic objects, spirit friends, and the like. However, the ethnoepics are founded in an actual, unwavering, and religious belief in them (Jocano 1965, 18), while the contemporary FA contains them primarily as necessary formal elements of the fantasy genre.¹³

While the ethnoepic and the FA film both function as entertainment in their respective social contexts, the latter is completely devoid of any religious, sacred, or literal ritual function and is thoroughly motivated by commercial reasons. As entertainment, both draw on the thrilling qualities of the fantastic and the spectacle of combat and of otherworlds. The contemporary FA film, however, is not necessarily accepted as valid metaphysical and empirical explanations of the world anymore, even if the narratives of widely popular films, like *EK*, reaffirm established values, about kinship behavior for example, validated by the people’s patronage of the films. In other words, while key social values are maintained, the truth-values about the natural and supernatural worlds supposedly contained in epics are no longer maintained.

The Centrality of the Family

A remarkable thematic convergence between the ethnoepic and the FA film is their stress on the centrality of the family, on the conviction that the family is the most important social unit which wields a perfect influence on every aspect of the characters’ lives. In *EK*, the character motivations of heroes and villains, the configuration of their heroics and villainy, such as desire for revenge or power, the propensity for quests, or even their selfishness and nobility, are almost always family-related. Saving his spouse’s or child’s life is always a motivation for Enteng to embark on a perilous quest or to engage in battle.

In the whole *EK* series, the premise of the narratives hinge on familial responsibility and the necessity of harmony and cooperation between husband and wife, between parents and children, and between siblings. In *EK 1*, the primary motivation for the heroic quest is to save Faye, Enteng’s wife, and in the process to save Engkantasya and the world. In *EK 2*, the equality-in-battle between Enteng and Faye is the key to their winning in combat, constantly saving each other from sure peril. And in *EK 4*, the narrative is anchored on the need to remember the undying love that has sprung between a fairy princess and a mere earthling.

In each film in the series, Enteng and his mother-in-law, Ina Magenta, always come through for each other, for the sake of the family and, consequently, the world; for as long there is tension between them, the salvation of the Kabisote family and the world are always at risk. Enteng’s

conflicts with his children Benok (*EK 1*) and Aiza (*EK 3*) also do not only imperil the family, but also make the whole human race susceptible to evil.

In *EK 2*, it is revealed that Satana is Amorillo, the sister of the rulers of the three kingdoms of Engkantasya: Ina Magenta, Ina Azul, and Ina Verde. Amorillo defects, because she wants all of the kingdoms for herself. The three sisters cooperate and set aside conflicts between them to try to bring Amorillo back into the fold; and, with her refusal, to combine their powers to destroy her.

The Filipino family, in both the ethnoepic and the FA film, acts reciprocally and cooperatively during crises as well as celebrations. The role of the family in the survival of the race is illustrated in the FA film, where family solidarity triumphs over the threat of outside, almost invincible, forces. And as soon as harmony in the home is regained, the family celebrates the victory together.

Ambivalent Settings, Incompatible Motivations, and Flight to Otherworlds

The narrative setting of the ethnoepic is narrow, precisely because of its provenance. Its listeners, while transported into otherworlds, do not mistake the narrative to be referring to the “nation,” which is absent as a geopolitical concept. In this light, one will notice the ambivalent presentation of narrative setting in the FA film.

In *EK*, the world is divided into *lupa* (earth), Engkantasya, with its constituent Magenta Kingdom (heavens), Azul Kingdom (seas), and Verde Kingdom (forests), and other unnamed and geographically undefined realms. The battle between good and evil never literally happens *for* the real world of present time. The spectator is never presented with a worldly, literal space, by which to understand the meaning of defeat or victory.

The point, it seems on the surface, is not the preservation and passing on of customs or the expansion of any knowable community, but the depiction of a symbolic order in two-dimensional abstraction. Whereas a “villain” (if one can properly label him thus) like Buyung Saragnayan, in *Labaw Donggon*, has precise motivations for antagonizing the hero, the villain in *EK*, Satana, does not desire the domination of any territory or the possession of any person per se, but is instead motivated by greed for power or a fundamental evil. Satana demands that her rival fairies, especially Ina

Magenta, turn over all power and dominion to her; and her reason, simply, is to wreak havoc on the world (“*upang maghasik ng lagim sa mundo*”).

But alongside the ambivalent narrative settings and two-dimensional character motivations, *EK*, like many FA films and unlike the ethnoepics, allude to an idea of “nation.” This repeated allusion to an undefined nation, impressed in the FA’s premise, dialogue, or theme songs, results in an incompatibility with the mono-mythic posturing of the narratives.

The *EK* films presume that Enteng sacrifices and wages battles for his family and, *therefore* (even without any visual signification), the nation. In the conclusion of *EK 3*, for instance, after waging the perennial battle between good and evil in a magical world, faraway from earth, the Queen of Engkantasya thanks the *tagalupa* for his help and praises his fortitude, his overcoming of temptations, and, significantly, *his fighting in the name of justice for and faithfulness to the nation*. The reference to the nation, of course, is totally baseless.

A notable, but quite problematic, exception is *EK 4*. Here, the idea of the nation is visually signified. Enteng is magically brought to Spanish colonial times. He saves Rizal from supernatural beings, who are forcing Rizal to recant his beliefs, because they hate Filipino heroes (“*ayaw nila ang mga bayaning Pilipino*”). Enteng reveals to Rizal that while the latter’s life was spared from these evil beings, Rizal will still be executed and later become a national hero. Rizal asks if his death for the nation will not be for nothing, but Enteng is chased by the Spaniards before he could respond.

The evil beings, it is revealed, are minions of Dark Angel, the chief hater of Filipino heroes and of noble men. Unlike Satana, whose motivation is an abstraction, Dark Angel’s goal in the beginning seems tangible: strip Rizal, literally, of his heroism – a bold inflection toward the literal and specific. But by the middle of the film, Dark Angel’s pronouncements become mere platitudes, for in fact his goal is as much an abstraction as Satana’s. He terrorizes and brainwashes men into becoming hero-haters, so as to establish himself as a *Bayani ng Kasamaan* (Evil Hero). For what reason, who he is, and where he comes from are also abstractions.

After the Kabisotes defeat Dark Angel, the whole family offers a flower to the Rizal Shrine, and for the first time, the Kabisote family celebrates not in the otherworld of Engkantasya, but in Luneta. The ideas of nation and patriotism are dealt with in the beginning and the end, but they are subordinated in the main plot to the themes of domestic love and

sentimental romance. The “nation” that the film introduces in the plot is not taken up in the second act, and Rizal, it turns out, is once again – as in the familiar images lifted from Hollywood – a mere formal reference to the popular.

Another notable similarity between the epic and the contemporary FA’s constitution of narrative setting is the recurring motif of travel and flight, conquests and explorations, and encounters with magical creatures abroad, suggesting a love for enterprise and novelty.

Travel and flight in the ethnoepics bespeak the peoples’ experience of mobility and migration. For example, strangely enough, a people who live in the mountains chant the *Hinilawod* epic (literally sound [“hini”] of the sea [“lawod”]), a story of a people who live by the sea. Jocano believes that these mountain folks “own” *Hinilawod*, because they used to live by the sea, but were forced, through a series of migrations, upward (Jocano 1968, 27; cf. Magos 1996, 121-29).

The viewers of contemporary FA have also experienced or are affected by a more widespread migration farther. The trajectory from the *bakbakan*’s down-to-earth spaces to the FA’s faraway, exotic spaces also parallels the nation’s situation in a globalizing, modernizing world. The FA film embodies – contrary to the ethnoepics’ confident portrayal of expansion – the people’s anxiety in coming to terms with a world that is virtually becoming smaller and smaller, but whose horizon is getting too wide for comfort. The trajectory connotes that battles can no longer be fought convincingly in some narrow and localized landscape, but must be waged in some otherworld, far enough to be unreal but near enough to be Filipino, difficult but bridgeable. Witnessing the spectacle of battles fought in unfamiliar worlds gives the illusion of fighting and triumphing over foes in great frontiers, which Filipinos, through the films, have already conquered.

The Clown as Hero

The epic heroes are striking figures, always seeking adventures or insurmountable obstacles. In their exploits, they prove themselves skillful and strong warriors, persevering, brave, and marked by a deep sense of affection for family and a keen sense of duty to the clan. In this aspect is the *bakbakan* most undeniably like a modern epic, for its heroes always possess some or all of these heroic characteristics.

On the other hand, the contemporary FA film has shifted significantly away from the model of the ethnoepic and the *bakbakan* in its portrayal of heroes. While the FA heroes are also family-centered, dutiful, and persevering, many of these heroes are reluctant, unworthy, weak, and/or stupid.¹⁴

The unlikely clown as hero, in a comedic narrative of epic proportions, is a very important characteristic of many of the FA films of the new century. Enteng Kabisote, as his name suggests, is a prime example of this hero-type: “Enteng” sounds like *tingting* (a thin stick) and is suggestive of the hero’s skinny frame; “Kabisote” means mentally dull. He is gangly and blundering; impulsive; at times cowardly, selfish, and guilty of hubris; unworthy and flawed (*EK 3*); susceptible to others’ control (*EK 4*); always weaker than his opponents and even his wife, possessing no special powers; and a mere earthling. His weaknesses and faults, not to mention his sharp tongue, are the narrative’s source of laughs.

These qualities of the underdog, the clown, feed the spectator’s hunger for entertainment, while alerting him or her simultaneously of the improbabilities of ordinary folks’ heroic potentials and their desire to realize this improbability.

Conclusion

Tribal fealties often persist regardless of extending national borders, and ethnoepics provide graphic characterizations of cultural distinctions that exist in the archipelago continuing up to the present time. Folklorists, such as Manuel and Jocano, champion the studying of folklore and its specific ethnolinguistic communities, in order to strengthen and enrich the idea of the nation (Santos 1993, 57). The growth of research interest and rediscovery of the ethnoepics have served both to highlight the precolonial pride, sense of identity, and local histories of specific communities, at the same time, to discursively unite these communities in the forging of a Filipino nation.

The range of social functions of the ethnoepic is from tribal preservation and perpetuation to expansion and permanence. The trajectory of the study of the ethnoepics is from the recognition of ethnolinguistic communities to the forging of the Filipino nation. In this context, the contemporary FA, as typified here by the *EK* films, has *not* therefore

developed much, if at all, from the ethnoepic. Regarded as analogues of each other, the FA appears to be a digression in certain respects.

On the one hand, surveying the points of convergence between the ethnoepic and the FA film (i.e., the epic as folk/popular entertainment; the folk/popular narrative as episodic and cyclical; the centrality of the family as theme) proves illuminating in delineating *both* the culture's signification of itself and what it values, in the form of popular narratives, *and* its process of signification. On the other hand, surveying the points of divergence between the ethnoepic and the FA film (i.e., the epic as entertainment *and* religion vs. as commercial entertainment *only*; serious vs. comedic; allusions to the tribe vs. allusions to the nation; concrete plot and character motivations vs. abstract/incompatible plot and character motivations; otherworlds as expansion vs. otherworlds as escape; heroics of virtues vs. heroics of faults) highlights more the "underdevelopment" of contemporary FA narrative.

Instead of delving deeper, coming from the *bakbakan*, into narratives that highlight the compatibilities between the epic impulse and realism, as some well-made action films have already tried to do, or instead of traversing the complex narrative possibilities of the fantastic, the sacred, or the mono-mythic, which are at the root of the epic, the contemporary popular epic film has played safe. In order precisely to remain popular and commercially viable, it has capitalized on the popular narrative for its accessibility and not for its profound universality or its artistic possibilities. Contrived thus, the popular epic narrative, at this juncture in Philippine film history, is revealed to be not only escapist in the context of a globalizing world, but inane being devoid of clear motivations.

Ironically, the contemporary FA, now simultaneously presented nationwide instead of performed in only one family's home at a time, still perpetuates a narrow, even muddled, sense of nation (notwithstanding – or especially because of – its insistence on using the nation as trope). No real nation is seen for the families. From the lofty vision of heroic and expanding tribes in the ethnoepic narrative, the FA film has shrunk its vision into the comfort zone of the home, insecure about and unsure of the Filipino's and the nation's possibilities of heroism and expansion. Instead of a natural outgrowth from the already established centrality of the family in the ethnoepic, the FA film has closed in on the theme and has neither widened, deepened, nor problematized it.

The spectator watches and laughs at the unlikely FA hero engaging in impossible battles, ultimately, against the extinction of one family. On the one hand, the narrative is wishful thinking, an escape, an impossibility entertained. On the other hand, it is an expression of a wish for better times for the family, if only for two hours once a year, but never a wish for an epic golden age for the nation. Mainstream cinema, with popular genre films, has the most real potential to literally reach the people of the nation. The epic, as an exalted narrative form, has the potential to spark a collective response to such a lofty idea as sacrifice for the nation. However, the FA film and its spectators have settled for turning the epic impulse into bite-size narratives, soft, sugar-coated, easy to chew, and easy to swallow.

Notes

- 1 This article was previously published in 2009 in *Plaridel: A Journal of Philippine Communication, Media, and Society*, 6.1 (February): 1-36, and is reprinted here with permission.
- 2 For a discursive study of the former mode of criticism, see Campos 2006, 35-73.
- 3 The **pure FA**, which includes *Enteng Kabisote 4* (Tony Y. Reyes) and *Resiklo* (Mark A. Reyes) from 2007; *Enteng Kabisote 3* (Tony Y. Reyes) from 2006; *Enteng Kabisote 2* (Tony Y. Reyes), *Mulawin* (Dominic Zapata & Mark A. Reyes), *Exodus* (Erik Matti), and *Pekto: Okay Ka, Pare Ko!* from 2005; *Enteng Kabisote* (Tony Y. Reyes), *Ang Agimat* (Augusto Salvador), and *Alamat ng Lawin* (Ronwaldo Reyes) from 2002; and *Pedro Penduko, Episode II: The Return of the Comeback* (Erik Matti) from 2000. The **superhero FA**, which includes *Zsa Zsa Zaturrnah* (Joel Lamangan) and *Super Noypi* (Quark Henares) from 2006; *Lastikman: Unang Banat* (Mac C. Alejandre), *Volta* (Wenn V. Deramas), and *Gagamboy* (Erik Matti) from 2004; *Captain Barbell* (Mac C. Alejandre), *Fantastic Man* (Tony Y. Reyes), and *Lastikman* (Tony Y. Reyes) from 2003; and *Super B* (Joyce Bernal) from 2002. The **horror FA**, represented by Chito S. Roño's *Spirit Warriors: The Shortcut* (2003) and *Spirit Warriors* (2000). The **action FA**, represented by Augusto Salvador's *Bertud ng Putik* (2003). And the *non-adventure*, *Halik ng Sirena* (Joven Tan 2001), *fantasy-melodrama*, *D'Anothers* (Joyce Bernal 2005), *fantasy-horror-comedy*, and *Xtreme Warriors* (Philip Ko 2001), *action-sci-fi*.
- 4 Plus 12 more titles in 2006, if one would count the limited-theater digital film runs. Acknowledgment must go to Lucenio Martin Lauzon for providing this researcher with yet unpublished filmographies of Filipino films from the 1990s and 2001-02. To compare the film releases from 2003 to 2005, see the published filmographies compiled by Lauzon et al.

- ⁵ Note for example the titles of Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr.'s article, "The Film Industry is Dead. Long Live Philippine Cinema!" (2001) from *Sanghaya 2002* and the TV documentary *Pinoy Movies, Buhay Ka Pa ... Ba?* (2005), produced by Bayan Productions.
- ⁶ For instance, our own superhero FA films have been made around the time of release of the *Spiderman* series (2002 & 2004), the *X-Men* series (2000, 2003, & 2006), *Daredevil* (2003), *The Hulk* (2003), *Hellboy* (2004), *The Punisher* (2004), *Elektra* (2005), *Fantastic Four* (2005), *Batman Begins* (2005), and *Superman Returns* (2006); and our pure FA films have been made around the release of the *Harry Potter* series (2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, & 2007) and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001-3).
- ⁷ Apart from the surge in FA film production, new graphic novels have been created, superhero narratives have been theatrically staged, and new creations and adaptations of old fantasy narratives have been abundantly produced for TV since 2004 (around 27 FA series, or "fantaseries" and "telefantasias," on ABS CBN 2 and GMA 7), gathering impetus from the viewers' continued patronage and from each other.
- ⁸ See for example Zeus Salazar's "Ang Kulturang Pilipino sa Harap ng Mga Institusyong Panlipunan sa Pelikulang Bakbakan," Agustin Sotto's "Christ Figures in Troubled Land," and Prospero Covar's "Paniniwala, Pananampalataya, at Paninindigan sa Pelikulang Bakbakan" in Salazar et al.'s *Unang Pagtingin sa Pelikulang Bakbakan* (1989); Nicanor G. Tiongson's "From Stage to Screen" (1983) and Rafael Ma. Guerrero's introduction to *Readings in Philippine Cinema* (1983); Isagani Cruz's "Si Lam-ang, si Fernando Poe Jr., at si Aquino" (1985); and Soledad Reyes, "Film and Literature" (1991), to cite a few.
- ⁹ *Labaw Donggon* was first popularized as an epic (*sugidanon*) of a mountain people by F. Landa Jocano in the early 1960s. He was the first one to publish a comparative study of the epic's archaic sociocultural context and its contemporary sociocultural context (see Jocano 1965). The Sulod is a group of people inhabiting the interior mountains of Central Panay (see Jocano 1968).
- ¹⁰ Another version of *Labaw Donggon*, in particular, the one in Damiana Eugenio's anthology (2001), does not have this fight between Labaw Donggon and Manalintad; he wins the hand of the maiden only through the intervention of his parents, and the dowry that they offered to the parents of Abyang Ginbitinan. Since epics are transmitted orally, and by different chanters, the extant documentations of epic narratives are understandably varied. There is no "original" story, and there is no one "author." For instance, Jocano, Magos, Gina V. Barte and Alejo Zata, have each recorded different "versions" of the *Hinilawod*. For a general discussion of this, see Villareal 1997.
- ¹¹ E. Arsenio Manuel considers the *Hinilawod* of Panay the longest and most coherent epic recorded (1963, 18). *Humadapnon*, which Jocano was able to document in 1957, is the other cycle which, he believes, comprises the *Hinilawod*. In each of the two cycles,

one finds the same heroes, but the character in focus, the plot and conflict, and some supporting characters differ. Anthropologist Alicia P. Magos, however, believes that while the same character names are present in the ten epics, which she was able to document in 1993, these epics are not necessarily cycles of one long epic only; in fact, she claims, these epics can be and are told independently (Magos 1996, 118-20, 130; and email to the author, dated July 13, 2004). If one heeds Magos's corrective, one may still consider the ten to twelve epics as microepics, but as one macroepic when taken together, forming cycles revolving around the same central heroes.

- ¹² The openings of *EK 1* and *3* feature Jeffrey Quizon and Antonio Aquitaña, respectively; and the middle portions of *EK 2* and *4* feature Victor Neri and Carlos Agassi, respectively.
- ¹³ Notable exceptions, by degrees, are *Spirit Warriors* and *Spirit Warriors: The Shortcut*.
- ¹⁴ The heroes of *Pedro Penduko II*, *Volta*, *Fantastic Man*, *Agimat*, and the *Spirit Warriors* series are all reluctant heroes, always on the brink of giving up their powers or responsibilities, for one selfish reason or another. *Bertud ng Putik* and *Exodus* have unworthy heroes, whose quests include the catharsis of character. In *Mulawin*, Aguiluz is killed by a stronger Ravenum, only to be resurrected again, because he is pure-hearted. Lawin, in *Alamat ng Lawin*, would have been surely killed if not for the help of four ordinary children, responding extraordinarily to the call of duty. Pedro Penduko and the clique in the *Spirit Warriors* films are the most vulnerable, being only mortals and possessing no special powers. The alter egos of Zsa Zsa Zaturannah and Captain Barbell are unlikely heroes, weak and helpless as mortals.
- In a number of films, like *Lastikman: Unang Banat*, *Gagamboy*, and *Captain Barbell*, references to the *komiks* as source of the fictional superheroes are made, as if to suggest that the superhero and its incarnation in a current film actor are differentiable; the former will exist mythically and outlive the latter. This underscores the unlikelihood – and hence the backhanded joke – of the possibility of an ordinary, scrawny guy, like Mark Bautista or Vhong Navarro, becoming a superhero.

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The Alternative Metaphor in Metaphors: Discursive 'Readings' on Language, Symbols and Enculturation in Philippine Cinema and Other Media¹

by Shirley Palileo-Evidente

While several research studies in Philippine cinema and culture examine how one correlates vis-à-vis the other, theoretical perspectives in "reading" discourses on symbols, language and enculturation in internal film and media production practice are yet to be outlined. There are noteworthy gaps in the existing literature, such as the origins of metaphoric language, internal (folk) conventions, relations among film and other media individuals in making public meanings, impact on organizational identity, and trace-seeking and insightful consequences. This research identifies the symbols and language in Philippine cinema and other media production practice even as it leads to enculturation. It also presents the factors, cultural development, language production, translations and transformations that considerably contributed to the organization's desire for economic and cultural prosperity as foundation for the constructed metaphors in the organization. An overall insight of these discourses were explored from collective inputs; leading the study to look into the conversations and texts embedded in peanuts-jinx, lucky days, oro-plata-mata, numerology, feng shui, astrology, blood, chicken and egg offerings among others.

Culture is a label of social compositions and is a result of a long period of way of life. Within the understanding of social and cultural framework lies the basic conjecture in the communicator, message, conversation, relationship, group, organization and media. Social order is held as axial piece whereby communication serves as bond of society. As people relate with one another over time, they come to share meanings for certain terms and actions and thus come to understand events in a thorough way. Identity is the unifying point between the individual and society, and communication is the association that allows for the junction to occur. Identities are produced

through negotiations whenever one asserts, modifies or challenges his or her own or other's self-classification. This process provides considerations on how people carry out things with their words through the use of narrative in communication. It can also illustrate how identities are established, maintained and changed within relationships, and address the apprehension between openness and privacy, the public and the private, in a relationship.

When people communicate with one another, various structures are produced; these range from large social and cultural institutions to smaller individual relationships. This institutes the effectiveness of group decision-making. People are motivated to act based on the meanings they assign to people, things and events. Meaning is generated in the language that people use, both with others and in private thought. Language allows people to expand a sense of self and to interrelate with others in the community.

James R. Taylor and Elizabeth J. van Every assert that conversation and text cannot be really separated. The conversation is understood in terms of the text, and the text is understood in terms of the conversation – a process referred to by Taylor and his associates as double translation: “We take the organizational conversation to be the total universe of shared interaction-through-languaging of the people who together identify within a given organization. This obviously includes all the informal occasions of talk they take part in” (Taylor and van Every 1993, 35-36).

Coorientation is the concept that two people both adjust to a familiar object (topic, issue, concern, situation, idea, goal, person, group, etc.). The communication brings about negotiation of a coherent meaning toward the object. A two-level surface structure of an organization is also presented: first, the surface structure which comprises the daily activities of the members; and second, the deep structure which gives the organization its character and guides its action.

Our choice of perspective leads us to conceive the basis of organization to be in the generation and regeneration, within conversational contexts of text: multiplexed (in the sense of composed of many layers that correspond to the simultaneously ongoing occasions of communication that collectively realize organization), to be sure, but nevertheless, conceptually, texts (or what could be called a layered, multiply interconnectable hypertext). Conversation is the site of organizational emergence,

text, its surface. We assume, in other words, that the structure of organization is a property of communication. (Taylor and van Every 1993, 37)

This study takes off from the object-food peanut toward illustrating the chronicles of the collective others constructed in Philippine cinema and other media. Peanuts have long been one of the unique cultural epitomizations of Philippine society. In the late 18th century, the impetus to commercially produce this legume in the country arose due to demands for home consumption. The still-current sacrosanct taboo of eating peanuts while commissioning work for film and other media work has been around for more than half a century now. Several film and other media enthusiasts implement this in order to avoid unfortunate consequences involving the project. Corollarily, disengagement from the myth is a production jinx. There are claims that this phenomenon subsists in news and public affairs and in events organizing as well. Apparently, while the belief remains within the film and media industry, it has had its counter-transformations through time.

Others have well adapted to the *oro-plata-mata* (gold-silver-death) practice; several others to beliefs in numerology, astrology and the like. Some film and media enthusiasts offer blood, chicken, and eggs to various patrons, saints, and mythic gods in order to achieve success in production projects.

The Metaphors

It was in the late 1960s when Jun Urbano first recalled the peanut-jinx belief while working for a movie production. He states, “It was in '68 when I started in production, and yes, peanuts were already taboo then. When I visited the movie shooting of my father, at that time I was still studying, peanuts were already prohibited” (Urbano 2008).² Meantime, film instructor Cenon Palomares recalled an article he read which described Doña Narcisa de Leon of LVN productions to have started prohibiting peanut-eating during production of her movie projects. He stated that “Doña Sisang saw all the litter and she was mad. So she said that she was prohibiting the eating of peanuts. When asked why, she simply said that it was a jinx. The other production companies followed suit” (Palomares 2008).

Other than the peanut-jinx belief, there are also practices of the same tenor believed to be effective as objects and rituals to counter bad occurrences while engaged in film or other media production. Figure 1 is an illustration in one of Jun Sabayton's posts on his web page. He describes that the placement of an egg above the director's chair with a lighted candle under the chair is a production shooting ritual especially when the weather seems to be turning for the worse. He added that this is believed to prevent heavy rainfall. Sabayton specifies that since times have changed, at present mostly monobloc chairs and apple boxes are used, instead of the more iconic director's chair. Sabayton posted in Filipino, "Since I started working in film and video production, I have encountered this already and several other practices such as not eating peanuts while shooting because it will spoil the day" (Junsabayton n.d.).

Figure 1. Jun Sabayton Corresponding Photo in His "Beliefs and Superstitions (Quest for Perfection Series 28)" Blog (Junsabayton n.d.)



Reuel Aguila believes that all these social metaphors go back to merging influences of the Spanish with old Filipino beliefs. He adds,

We have created several superstitions. These superstitions are generally carried over in the industry. One very basis is not doing the shoot when it is raining. They are very diligent on that, they really offer eggs near Katipunan [Avenue]. I thought they were just jokes before. But it is really costly to do a location shoot. It's costly, and much more so if it will rain. One dozen eggs won't hurt you [so] that is what they will do. There are so many kinds of [practices]. Mother Lily [Monterverde], she's a bit much. From saints and statues – so very big. In general, imagine our Filipino-type of Christianity or Catholicism; it really bridges superstitions.... You will take care of a Sto. Nino or whoever is the flavor-of-the-week saint.... It is prohibited [during] the first shooting day to do scenes with coffins with dead bodies inside of them.... There are prayers, then excuse-excuse me's. They observe those since they think that it won't hurt. (Aguila 2010)

Issues on Superstitions

Folklore subsists in urban settings. Michael L. Tan referred to people who develop their own forms of folklore as urbanites. His discussion with Danilo A. Arao provides a view of how one perspective of anthropology regards folklore's alleviating function in society. The non-linear development of progress he deems may have provided for the several functions the folklore may bring even in industrialized countries (Arao 2009). Meantime, in Victor Valbuena's study of folk media in development communication, he states:

What the mass media in high stage have failed to realize is that existing side by side with them on an actual village level that is quite different from the global village infrastructure ... is another form of media, one which even antedates then – the traditional media of communication.... Nevertheless, traditional media still survive and are used as meaningful channels of communication in traditional or developing societies. Their unobtrusive nature is, perhaps, the reasons why they have been ignored for most of the time by the mass media experts and development planners, indeed, they are still visible forms of communication. (1986, 3)

This affirms the importance of traditional media's endurance through time and recognizes the task for the mass media specialists to explore the unobtrusive yet evident form of communication. In related terms, Lent (1990) in the history of Philippine cinema raised three main points: first, the Filipino filmmaker is progressive, but not the industry; second, business was the reason for the creation of films and; third, the socio-political landscape of the country undeniably shaped the movies' content. He gave a view of Philippine film as a product, rather than an art form. As such, local filmmakers had been stalled from developing the industry. Lent explained that the resolutions and development of local cinema mostly turned on economics and materialism.

In an article by Jose B. Capino (2006) in an Asian cinema anthology, he describes the cultural aspects of popular film production while analyzing key films within national, regional and global contexts. In his discussion, he took in film theory and Asian cinema, popular film genres, major industry figures, the "art film," relative to the liaison of the state and commercial interests, cultural policies, accounts of national identity, developments in international co-production, transnational and diasporic aspects of Asian filmmaking and viewing, and politics. The context of Capino's insights proved valuable to the inspection of the very culture of that creative "society." As Bryan L. Yeatter states, in verifying the systemic necessity of the former:

The Philippines seems to be a nation eager to assert its identity, and yet concurrently on an endless quest to discover itself. Within is a fascinating and complex amalgam of styles and artistic modes that have always tended to set Philippine cinema apart, often making it seem like a culture vying against itself, between two worlds, too Asian to be thoroughly Westernized to be thoroughly Asian. (Yeatter 2007, 2)

Premises

Clifford Geertz, writing on E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1983), stated, "Cultures were no longer metaphorical 'grammars' to be figured out and written down; they were 'languages' to be translated into terms intelligible to members of other cultures – or more often than not, the anthropologist's own culture" (qtd. in Barnard 2004, 158). He upholds a focus on peoples' use of symbols,

as well as to the ways they interpret actions and events, in order to look into culture as a product of active social beings who are trying to make sense of the world.

Furthermore, Geertz states, "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun" (qtd. in Erickson and Murphy 2008, 163), while Michael Pacanowsky further argues that "if culture consists of webs of meaning that people have spun, and if spun webs imply the act of spinning, 'then we need to concern ourselves not only with the structures of cultural webs, but with the process of their spinning as well'" (qtd. in Griffin 2008, 250).

The character of an organization is often called its culture, which consists of shared rules, norms, values, and practices that are commonly used and accepted within the organization. Taylor and van Every see organizing as a spherical process, with interaction and interpretation affecting one another. Interaction leads to shared meaning. In their discussion of alternative metaphors, Taylor and van Every speculate on two theoretical terms: first is the conversation, the interaction or how participants behave toward one another (the words, demeanor, and gestures they use); and second is the text, the content and ideas embedded in the language used.

The term "conversation" is being used here not only in a literal sense, to mean just the ebb and flow of spoken interaction, but also in the metaphorical sense, as an image, or even a simile. Similarly, for text. Metaphorically speaking, we can claim that an organization is a conversation, or, alternatively, we can claim that an organization is a text, or, even better, than an organization is both a conversation and a text, in dynamic interaction. It is a discourse. (Taylor and van Every 1993, 109)

Taylor and van Every (1993) further support this through enumeration of the eight premises for the assertion of this conceptual basis. These are:

- 1) Every conversation is composed of transactions.
- 2) Conversation is the means by which people construct and maintain social identities.
- 3) The relationships linking people in communication form a semantically determined system. The structure of an organization is a fabrication of language.

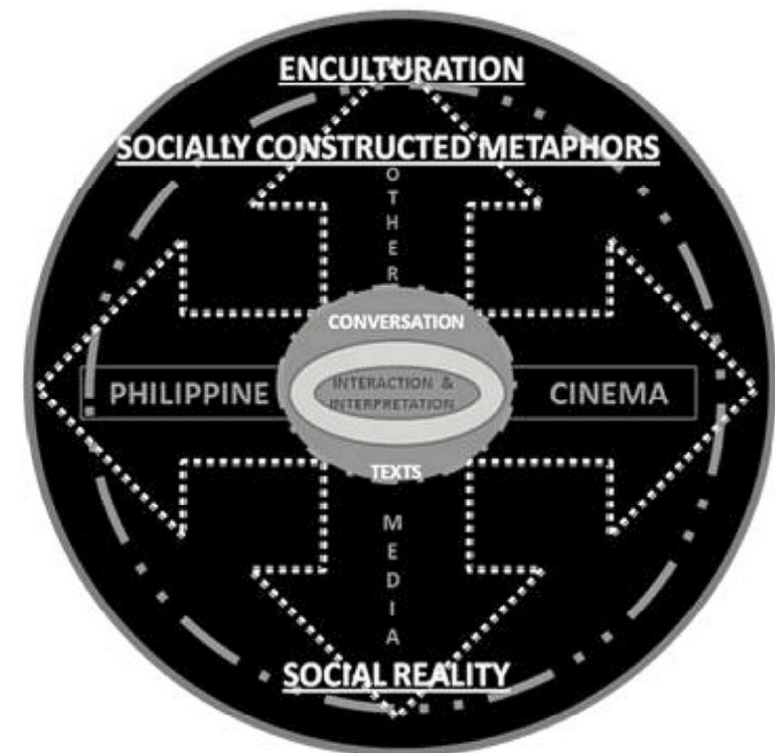
- 4) All communication has reflexive character. This is the dialectical relation linking conversation and text.
- 5) Information is a property as much of the transactional situation as of the message.
- 6) Actors who take part in conversation can be either micro-actors or macro-actors. Either way, they still follow the same conversational rules.
- 7) Conversation has both a micro- and a macro-process dimension.
- 8) Conversation, as organization, is a multiplex phenomenon. The organization that is created through conversation is a mixture of tight and loose coupling.

(Taylor and van Every 1993, 109-26)

Klaus Bruhn Jensen's theory of social semiotics proves constructive in this study. The theory approaches both the critical and cultural issues in the problem, and explores how people process cultural constructs on a daily basis. Repetition becomes important to the study's focus: the stock knowledge of the individual becomes an integral part in her or his usage in interpreting constructs (Jensen 1995). To further illustrate the discursive 'readings' of language, symbols and enculturation in film and other media industries, an integrated model of alternative metaphoric-discursive "readings" of symbols, language and enculturation in Philippine cinema and other media is presented (see Fig. 2).

Geertz (1973) asserts the presence of web in significance. The conversation and texts within the film and media industries are investigated in relation to its social meaning-making that brought forward the discourses of language and social metaphors and their consequent enculturation. The metaphors, through conversation and text, become evident in the organization's culture as it continuously contributes to the production of a spherical social reality. The conversation and texts as alternative metaphors are investigated as they exist in the locales of the peoples' minds, as they represent shared sets of meanings that are constantly created and recreated in everyday life in film and media production experience. The distinct language communicated among the members of the industry serves as the vehicle of meaning; thus enculturation becomes an outcome of active social beings.

Figure 2. An Integrated Model of Alternative Metaphorical Discursive "Readings" of Symbols, Language and Enculturation in Philippine Cinema and other Media (Palileo-Evidente 2010)



The metaphoric construction of social reality and enculturation are based on meanings people produce. These alternative metaphors operate as objects/elements/stories that identify the unique character of this industry that produces an illustration of a conversation of an organization, of a "culture." Meanwhile, these metaphors also lead to a textual understanding of that culture and as to how members of these organizations function effectively in this culture. Practical metaphors for victory and good fortune, such as the peanut-jinx, lucky numbers, *oro-plata-mata*, and several others, serve to identify the discourses of language and metaphors of film and other media industry members. The present study looked into the social construction of

these through another layer of alternative metaphor, the conversation and text; language as it contributes to these discourses is also investigated.

Discussion

The operational metaphor was the peanut-jinx belief in film and other media, from which other metaphors were perceived to evolve. Several related experts were asked about their views and experiences related to the origin, development, and status of the collective metaphors in film and media production. The focus group discussion (FGD) respondents enumerated and gave insights to other sorts of discourses and commitments in practice of film and other media other than the social metaphor peanut-jinx myth. These are as follows:

- The following day, if you come from a night shoot, do not perform any miracles [a reference to premarital sex] because it is another kind of jinx.
- On locations, if there are enchantments, there should be a sacrificial offering or placing of chickens. Also eggs [for Santa Clara, patron saint of good weather] so that it will not rain.
- For Celso Ad. [Castillo – semi-retired film director], all male homosexuals are asked to leave the set.
- “Mother” Lily [Monteverde – film producer] has many superstitious beliefs, she combines everything.... She knows by just looking ... at the shape of your face if she will [find you lucky].
- In Viva Films, there should be a beach scene, for the movie to earn.
- At Viva, the non-celebrities are not allowed to have a haircut if the shooting is not yet done.
- In formulating movie titles, you have to base it on the *oro-plata-mata* [gold-silver-death] system of counting. For example for movies, these should be like *Kimmy Dora* [4 syllables, oro] or *You Changed My Life* [4 syllables, also oro].
- Gambling is prohibited, or else you cannot shoot anymore. As [the late actor] Amado Cortez said, if there is gambling, the actor will say, “Oh so you are having a good time,” so even if he

comes in late, he will not feel shame. Then of course, when there’s gambling, there will be arguments and fights. The drivers will use up all their salaries.

- At Lea Productions, there’s time for coffee, before 9 a.m.; past that hour, you can only have coffee by 3 p.m. I think this is good discipline. Also they cannot collect their salary if they do not have their own ball pen. There’s a joke among production groups, “Hey are you from Lea? It’s not yet time for your coffee!”

(Focus Group Discussion 2010)

In film and other media industries, several discursive metaphors are implemented other than the peanut-jinx myth. Roy Iglesias observed that some apply the numerological concept of *oro-plata-mata*. This is done by counting the number of words (or syllables) in a movie title, with the last word (or syllable) preferably ending with *oro* (“gold” in Spanish) in order to assure it of commercial success. Iglesias added that others also adopt beliefs in lucky days and compatibility among the zodiac signs: “If you’re a dog, are you compatible with a monkey?” (Iglesias 2010). He said people in the industry adapted this through time, so that shooting days would end up on the lucky days: “We would just hear them say, ‘Why the rush?’ because there’s a date to meet. If it does not get done, then they will just have to postpone it and re-align with another lucky day.” Iglesias also claimed that other producers believe in *feng shui*, so that they will ask someone to prescribe the lucky days to do the shoot. The producers would call for a break in the shoot when celebrities are not available on the prescribed dates (Iglesias 2010). Others would look more closely at the movie successes of celebrities and directors. Iglesias explained, “If anyone had three flops already then they are considered jinxed. No one will hire that celebrity anymore. If ever these people want to work again, they have to have a hit project, even from other countries. It works the same way with a director: if he or she had consecutive flops, he/she has to have a mild hit first.” Iglesias said although people tend to correlate mishaps or misfortunes with certain people or specific location/s, these beliefs are not exact science (Iglesias 2010).

Mariano Reyno averred that the television industry has become relatively more progressive. He claimed, like most of his ABS-CBN colleagues, he neither believed nor adhered to the superstition-metaphors, such as the peanut-jinx myth. In fact he professed that he loved consuming all

kinds of peanuts. However, as his personal preference, he said he consults his *feng shui* calendar. He confided that even Kris Aquino (former Presidential daughter, now Presidential sister and an actor and TV host) openly uses this as well: “Like if you are launching a new program, it is better to be sure. This is from Marites Allen, from the world of *feng shui*. I tell my boss, and then we check” (Reyno 2010). Moreover, Reyno complemented the importance of avoiding bad dates and added that even celebrities would avoid them in signing contracts or launching new products. For example, one has to consider the 18th of the month and the good and bad hours. He said that in production, everything relies on Murphy’s Law: that is, any way one does something, there will always be an occurrence of some sort or other. In this wise, Aguila explained,

Just combine your being Catholic, Filipino, and [East] Asian. “Mother” Lily [Monteverde] is like that also. The year of the so-and-so, they observe those things now. If you are mistaken with your *feng-shui*, they will really note that. Even the naming of the performers will be consulted.... They will change a name if it has the wrong numerological value, the letters should be lessened or increased, something like that. (Aguila 2010)

Iglesias stated the Philippine film industry has been known to generally implement three must-avoid tendencies in order to avoid misfortune: “One thing to avoid is doing a film about filmmaking, that will not earn. Then films about priests and nuns will also not earn, and the third I cannot remember but for sure there are three of them” (Iglesias 2010). Aguila observed, “The first day of shooting should always be happy. Don’t put scenes on the first day where there is death, crying, that sort of thing.” He added that *feng shui* even recommends the directions of how doors should be opened or closed, and inclusion or exclusion of gays and lesbians. He identified Robbie Tan as a producer who employed weeks of doing *feng shui* as part of preparing for a movie project (Aguila 2010).

Meantime, Jose Boy Aguilar testifies he first heard of the peanut-jinx myth in 1967. According to him this was implemented mostly by Chinese producers, while most Filipino producers adhered to numerology and preferred to start location shoots on dates that included the number 8, “such as 8, 18, 28,” possibly because of the shape of the figure. He added the

importance of getting along well during film production. “If a producer or a director does not vouch for you, you become a nobody. You can be instantly included in a project if you know how to get along with others” (Aguilar 2010). In the case of the metaphor peanut-jinx, Aguilar observed, “It already existed even before I started work in the industry. It was in Lea Productions, Seiko Films.... Since you answer to producers, you must follow them. In Imus [Productions], Marlon and Andeng Bautista do not prohibit that” (Aguilar 2010).

Felipe Jocano stated that the Americans influenced the perception of peanuts in the Philippine context. This is evident through the saying, “That’s just peanuts,” which is an adaptation of the American expressions “You give me peanuts, I give you back peanuts” and “You give me peanuts, I’ll give you monkey business.” Within these contexts, peanuts are regarded as something easily acquired, cheap in value, poor in quality, or something insignificant (2008).

Roehl Jamon recalled that on the production set of *24 Oras*, a GMA-7 news program, crew members mock each other on matters of peanuts. Superiors and/or colleagues would tease others as having recently eaten peanuts when they are physically weak when they report for work (Jamon 2008). Ascribable is the sexual connotation underlying the notion of peanuts Philippine culture, attested to by Jocano: “Peanuts symbolize two domains of society: sex and economics. They are also used in sexual symbolism, as in peanuts in relation to the anatomy of female genitalia. The peanut and its shape [resemble] ... the clitoris” (Jocano 2008). Peanut consumption has been part of the Filipino wake tradition, with the product being an inexpensive commodity and a favorite type of junk food along with watermelon seeds, practical for spending hours at a time (Jocano 2008). According to Jamon, peanuts may occasionally be linked with these funeral wakes since the nature of media production mimics the sleeplessness of wakes. Thus, peanuts are taken as representing bad luck since they denote the visuality of “death and mourning” (Jamon 2008). This association according to Aguila is new. He explained, “If you’ll associate that with wakes, it would be already the 20th century. Anyway, wakes in the past didn’t serve peanuts. Food then would be for real meals, such as slaughtered pigs and cows. Peanuts would be more of a commodity of the present” (Aguila 2008).

In the meantime, several theater practitioners attribute the bad-luck notion of peanut-eating at work to the beginnings of the theater – to the

Greek gods, specifically Dionysus. Eric de la Cruz recounted that peanut-eating in theater production was believed to anger the Greek gods: “the gods of theater will strike while you’re onstage,” if anyone brings peanuts (de la Cruz 2008). These discursive symbols and language presented in myths are part of Filipino culture due to Spanish colonial influence and merger of the Catholic religion with Filipino traditional beliefs. These have instigated the creation of a variety of superstitions which are then carried over to industrial practice:

It can be annoying. Supposedly if you are religious, you do not believe in these things. Our religion here in the Philippines tolerates these. In fact, it is encouraged that you be superstitious, so that people become all the more dependent on their religion. Our practice is the other way around. There are so many who distort their religiosity in this manner. (Aguila 2010)

Discussants from theater take the peanut-jinx as a practice, and not just a phenomenon. Malou de Guzman states, “There is a scientific reason why peanuts are prohibited – they irritate the throat; that is the logical, scientific explanation” (2008). However, Iglesias argues that it is “Definitely not scientific, or else everyone would have followed it already” (2010). Several discussants and FGD participants connect the attributes of the peanut to the jinx, but some do not. Jerwin Espiritu narrates, “I was an intern at Filmex. Someone had a commercial shoot for Grand Matador ... at Market Market. The director wanted to achieve a shiny floor [but] one lady slipped, and then a luxury car got hit. So everyone shouted, who brought peanuts? [It turned out that] one production assistant had with her peanuts, but we did not blame her” (Espiritu 2010).

Aguilar narrated that even the late action star Fernando Poe, Jr. implemented the peanut proscription in his film productions. He included Caridad Sanchez and people from Lea Productions to the list of practitioners. He stated that avoidance of peanuts was considered the foremost rule in Lea Productions; whenever anyone broke this rule, “They would not get their weekly salary from Ms. Miling and Ms. Toreng [Blas – Lea Productions owner-managers]” (Aguilar 2010). In most cases, production staff and crew members observe the peanut-jinx myth when instructed by their supervisors. The importance of working at the pleasure of the producers, directors, and

higher management becomes economically practical, especially for freelance talent. Faithfulness to the peanut myth becomes petty compared to losing the favor of people in crucial positions. It shapes up as a minor issue in comparison with the millions of pesos the producers invest in the business. In addition,

We are not the only ones who are superstitious: even Sony International, owned by the Japanese, who are global leaders. One of my friends asked them, “There are Beta 1, 2, 3 and 5 only, why is there no Beta 4?” [They replied that] in East Asian context, 4 is regarded as an unlucky number. So even with them, you can see that these business people have made it their ritual, a way of conducting their affairs. In our buildings, notice there are no 13th floors? In China, there is no 4th floor. (Iglesias 2010)

Aguila examined these discourses by remarking that sociologically, people tend to look for security blankets, which they may then blame for their troubles. He emphasized that most superstitions came from “chismis” or hearsay. He stated, “If a movie fails to make a profit, it may be because of the poorly developed story, awful promotion, ineffective acting, and incompetent direction.... But then they have to blame something else and so they turn to peanuts” (Aguila 2008). Aguila added that all these metaphors date back to the 1950s and especially in the ’60s when film production was at the level of a studio system that was then already being challenged:

The original LVN Studios was hectares and hectares of land. In Cubao, going to Ortigas, EDSA, it’s on the right side of P. Tuazon Street. It was really a compound. Most of the pickup shots were done there. They had studios and a big warehouse, then they have neutral areas, convertible to fields. So when they had the studios they had their own trade, own beliefs, own superstitions. And when you asked me a while ago, who among these people are most superstitious, I said the producers because they have the money and they will be followed. (Aguila 2010)

Espiritu speculated that the metaphors may be products of the nature of the Filipino’s ancestors (2010). Incidentally, Reyno said that he believes people have gotten used to these belief expressions already. He said people

may opt to recognize it to be a sort of sub-culture in the media industry. Moreover, he added, “If you strongly believe that there shouldn’t be janitors by 6 p.m., then that will be believed [by others]” (Reyno 2010).

There is no valid reason for proscribing peanut-eating [because] eating peanuts is so insignificant an act to influence an entire production. It may be more rational to believe in the lucky days if you believe in planetary positions, where the planets might influence our lives here on earth..., since we can observe that there are bad and good days for everyone. Even Marcos was superstitious, he believed in that, and Hitler also subscribed to some form of astrology. If you consider astrology superstition, then even Napoleon Bonaparte was superstitious. Shakespeare wrote about the stars governing us. These are just similar to rituals, perhaps they will endure as harmless beliefs that people can follow. (Iglesias 2010)

In terms of the larger context:

Now add our culture to the mix, you will really have a built-in security blanket which is the superstition. Imagine, what if [LVN founder] Doña Sisang did not like pork rind, which makes more noise than peanuts? Or if she did not like beer? The irony would be too great to imagine. Superstition can’t be proven; otherwise, we might as well kill all the black butterflies and black cats, and remove all the ladders. Secondly, our superstitions – they’re combinations of native, Spanish and American beliefs. Most of your generation follows more American superstitions, so all these get mixed up.... But what do you lose in the process? Nothing, so go ahead and do it.... Because with superstition, when you see something, when you feel this way – you acquire a certainty that there is a bad or good thing that could happen to you. (Aguila 2010)

The various metaphors are recognized, acknowledged and internalized by film and other media professionals. The enculturation reveals a significant “negotiated order” in relation to the metaphorical translations and transformations of these practices. Peanuts, numerology, *oro-plata-mata*, lucky days and lucky numbers, *feng shui*, sacrificial and egg offerings

– all translate into symbols that contribute to the film and other mass media industry’s discourses of language, symbols, and enculturation, amounting to a distinct form of social reality. In the same manner, success and failure may be interpreted and translated through uses and misuses of these metaphors viewed through conversation, text, and language production.

Conclusion

The socially constructed metaphors have been passed on and absorbed by people themselves and these became part of the character of their social organization. The agglomeration of metaphors supports the frames of language, where the images of the themes found in culture are located in the mind of the individuals. The narrative accounts used in the study permitted the researcher to recognize these shared sets of meaning as they were constantly created and recreated in the organization’s everyday life. Research results demonstrated the “negotiated order” of social reality within this industry. This supports Klaus Bruhn Jensen’s theory of social semiotics where manners of processing regularly occur on a daily incidental basis. Jensen’s critical and cultural directions in social semiotics were evident through the study’s exploration of peoples’ processing of constructs on a regular basis. The repetition and transfer of the metaphors propelled the individuals’ interpretation of these as social constructs within this organization.

As Geertz had distinguished the webs of significance, so the Philippine movie industry has spun itself around with the various facets of cultural worth within the myth engagement. The symbols, as translations of victory or misfortune, are recognized; they are employed. The process of spinning becomes reasonable and sensible, highly placed within the organization’s cultural understanding of economic and cultural prosperity. The words, demeanor, and gestures used were explored in the study. What could also be gleaned was the individuals’ regard for one another in relation to the sources of discourses of the metaphors. While others shrugged off some of the metaphors as nothing but hearsay, others would regard the metaphoric translation’s impact in terms of its overall effect on the organization’s output.

Apart from religion, the inherent cross-cultural orientation of the Filipino film and other media practitioners participated in the creation of the social metaphors within the organization. Respect for the elders, fear

of economic failure, and isolation from others encourage most individuals to turn the metaphors into social reality. This augments the formation of the “negotiated order,” by far identifying a unique nature of this industry and extending to the understanding of how individuals may opt to work effectively in their organization. What is noteworthy though is the persistence of symbols and enculturation discourses in the industry through time, and their continuous and evolving existence and admission. Individuals postulate these metaphors as tales that may be followed through various points in time.

Likewise, it is worth mentioning that this study encourages the view that the Philippines and its cinema’s history of social and economic development accounted for the long-standing value of discourses in symbols, language, and enculturation.

Notes

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- 2 All interviews and written exchanges originally conducted in Filipino were translated by the author into English.

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Orientalism and Classical Film Practice

by Joel David

The study of Orientalism in cinema found its stride relatively recently, despite the fact that Edward Said's eponymous ground-breaking volume was published over three decades ago, and that Hollywood (following Western cultural tradition) had been churning out Orientalist film-texts virtually from the beginning. The hesitation among film scholars in adapting Said's framework turned on a lack in Orientalism (1978), despite its rigorous deployment of critical theories on race and its record of upending Orientalist studies as a disciplinary option in academe. This paper will trace the development of ideas on Orientalism, from its formulation by Said to the turn-of-the-millennium applications in cinema studies led by feminist scholars, and raise questions aimed at further enriching the approach.

The issue of Orientalism, if one were to date it according to Edward Said's fundamental text, would be over three decades old – enough, by cultural studies standards, to have undergone the modifications and repudiations that usually render similar issues unrecognizable beside their original formulations. Yet the word itself continues to be encountered in a number of recent publications devoted to contemporary concerns, just as the concept of Oriental Studies, which Orientalism has made unacceptable, has been virtually replaced with Asian Studies and its variations (Asian Pacific, Asian American, Australasian, etc.).

In terms of classical film theory, however, critiques of Orientalism could not have arrived at a more opportune moment as they did when Said's Orientalism (1978) was published. André Bazin's *What Is Cinema?* volumes (1958-62) had just been translated from the French and published in the US (1967 and 1971), constituting as it were the last major pieces of classicism in film writing. A consideration of the intertextual tensions between Said's and Bazin's works took a little longer, however, owing perhaps to the initially discipline-bound nature of their fields – i.e., sociocultural history and

film studies respectively. With subsequent efforts at erasing disciplinary boundaries, it has since been possible to come across readings of Bazin that utilize the premise that

The intersection between Egyptianate material and prefilmic and filmic culture has both a physical and conceptual component: projected moving images and traces of Egypt can and do inhabit the same tangible architectural space; but there is also a magnetism between conceptual accounts of the nature of entertainment by projected light and Egypt – an imaginative association pulling together the ancient culture and modern spectacular invention. (Lant 1992, 89)

Orientalism in itself has proved to be still vital, notwithstanding the reservations expressed against it from within the ranks of cultural theorists, for three reasons: first, criticisms of Said's ideas may have centered on the contradictions in his positions or the ultimate futility of his visions, but all acknowledge the importance of his formulation of Orientalism as an instance of a more enlightened but still racially implicated view of the West's Other; second, as already mentioned, Said's call for a reinspection of writings and activities throughout history in the light of Orientalist thinking is far from having been definitively accomplished; and third, the notion of an apparently benevolent though no less insidious approach to the study of non-Western culture has been the key to further considerations of racism and its historical transformations.

Contrary to the claim of James Clifford (1988, 259), Said, perhaps to his detriment, took pains to define Orientalism in a singularly cohesive passage in the first part of his book, thus:

Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot to hold down the "Oriental" world. It is rather a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also

of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what "we" do and what "they" cannot do or understand as "we" do). (Said 1978, 12)

Responses to Said will be dealt with later, but what meantime may be of interest is the manner in which this "will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate" ideas about the practice of and reception to the purportedly universal medium of film has become manifest in classical theory texts. Orientalism in classical film discourse can be seen on the two levels of practice and reception, which are of course related not merely by the fact that most early film practitioners were also engaged in theorizing, but also through the manner in which one level of understanding – the linguistic – has largely determined the shape and direction of the practical, even if in certain cases no trace of Orientalist language (whether visual or verbal) may be found. Hence a closer look at articulations of responses to film as social and technological phenomenon may be the place to start.

Without meaning to sound too indiscriminate of the various divisions in classical film theory, one possibly startling discovery is that several areas – avant-gardism, realism, even Soviet montage – lent themselves to Orientalist imaging as much as American discourses did, although again this does not necessarily imply that the practice they called for was Orientalist in its effects. Furthermore, although, say, an American critic like Vachel Lindsay may have utilized Orientalist language to what may be arguably considered exploitative dimensions,¹ this may be attributed to a

poorly tempered enthusiasm for the potential for social mesmerization of the new medium.

The Orientalist dimensions of American film policy were implemented in a separate sphere – that of colonial aggression – that may possibly have drawn from the sensibilities exhibited by the likes of Lindsay, but which the latter’s writings never overtly intended to influence. This paper will attempt to trace the processes of thinking on Orientalism since the publication of Said’s volume, with special focus on cinema, a realm of practice which, though passed over by Said in favor of critiquing literary texts, was regarded by then-contemporary philosophers as more vital in displaying, as it were, social and historical modes of perception as wrought by Western modernity (cf. Deleuze 1986 and 1989), proceeding from its effectiveness in articulating the perspectives of colonial power.

Philippines as Sample Context

By way of further explication, film as a colonialist tool had proved to be hugely successful in the US’s first imperialist adventure in decidedly Oriental territory – i.e., the Philippines (Lumbera 1983, 68). Purchasing the rights to ownership of the country from Spain for the sum of \$23 million in the 1898 Treaty of Paris (Francisco 1987, 9-10), the turn-of-the-century government proceeded to legitimize its claim by staging a mock battle that “defeated” the Spanish armada in Manila Bay, but then was confronted by the anti-Spanish Philippine revolutionary army, in encounters that decimated as much as a fourth of the country’s population and exceeded accounts of the worst atrocities decades later in Vietnam (Francisco 1987, 10-19); to dispel mounting opposition within the US itself, the colonial administration declared that the Fil-American war was over by 1902, despite the fact that waves of regulars had to be sent over for the next 20 years to suppress what the American government claimed were widespread instances of banditry (Constantino 1987, 47-48).

Cinema fit in propitiously in this schema, since there was in practice no national language to speak of: the official ones (circa the 1936 Constitution) were English, which was imposed as a medium of instruction; Spanish, which was resented by the populace due to the refusal of Catholic and colonial authorities to allow the natives to learn the language during the

Spanish regime; and Tagalog, which was the language of the Manila-based collaborationist region. The numerically predominant speakers then were Cebuanos, who up to the present still agitate against the currently mandated national language, Filipino (which started as a Constitutionally defined ideal), since they claim it to be Tagalog in origin.

Despite the specificities of the Philippine cultural situation, the success of film in assuming the dimensions of a national language may have served to confirm convictions in the West that the medium had essentially universalistic properties.² In fact, the other Cold-War superpower, the USSR, followed the same procedure in legislating film as a primary propaganda tool, this time for avowedly revolutionary ends. Maxim Gorky echoed Lindsay in evoking the supernatural – Merlin in particular (Lindsay 1970, 266; Gorky 1988, 25) – while Futurism was heralded as the key in thwarting “the imported tap-dance of America or [regarded as worse] the ‘tear-jerking’ of the Mosjoukines” (Mayakovsky 1988, 75). Lenin, who made film-political history by throwing his support squarely behind the propagation of the medium, revealed his regard for its effectiveness relative to the type of audience being, so to speak, persuaded: “We should pay special attention to the organization of cinemas in the countryside and in the East, where they are novelties and where, therefore, our propaganda will be particularly successful” (1988, 56).

Outside of questions of governmental policies, Orientalism even then tended toward subtler formulations – a practice that is attributable to the aspirations of discourses on the humanities to be more progressive and enlightened whenever possible. Bazin (1967), for all his Egyptological utterances, endeavored to champion the practice of the mostly leftist Italian neorealist practitioners. Siegfried Kracauer, who was also working on realist discourses independent of though roughly concurrently with Bazin, valorized the technology of the medium over the human subject (1960, 97 and 202), conferring on it a teleology of hierarchal forms from “dramatic productions of antiquity,” through the “word of the poet” with stage action and music, culminating for the moment in film (223): “The task of rendering visible mankind on its way toward this goal [of economic and cultural leveling] is reserved for the photographic media; they alone are in a position to record the material aspects of common daily life in many places” (Kracauer 1960, 310).

It is in his prescriptive passages, however, that Kracauer incorporated what turned out to be in effect Orientalist modes of practice, as witness the following:

Emphasis on speech not only strengthens this tendency away from camera-life but adds something new and extremely dangerous. It opens up the region of discursive reasoning, enabling the medium to impart the turns and twists of sophisticated thought, all those rational or poetic communications which do not depend upon pictorialization to be grasped and appreciated. (1960, 104)

Such distrust for the spoken word not only ties in with, say, Germaine Dulac's demand for the primacy of "the power of the image alone" (1978, 34), or Rudolf Arnheim's assertion that "even the most substantial lines of speech could not make up" for the inexpressivity of visible action (1969, 208); it could also serve as a challenge to what Said described as the only recourse left to the Oriental Other deprived by Western culture of all recourse to the legitimated practices of traditional literary and art forms – i.e., oral speech (Said 1978, 92-95).

Among the European and American classical film theorists mentioned so far, Arnheim may have been the least guilty, in a manner of speaking, of resorting to Orientalist polemic. Yet it was his largely prescriptive pronouncements in *Film as Art* that appeared to have formed the bases against which subsequent criticisms of Orientalism in film practice were directed. His 1933 essay "Film and Reality" presented aesthetic defenses for such then-prevalent filmic properties as reduction of depth, lighting and the absence of color, delimitation of the image and distance from the object, and absences of the space-time continuum and the nonvisual world of the senses (1969, 11-111), in an apparent bid to advance the specificities of the new medium as well as to maximize the effectiveness of the qualities that (as per his view) were unique to film.

It would be possible to argue, from the perspective of the Other, that such a mode of practice would have disadvantaged those who lay outside the medium's earlier assumptions of race and geography: for example, all colored peoples would be conflated into one complexion owing to the non-white binary of black-and-white filmstock; also, the further one lived from a metropolitan capital, the more would one's environment becomes difficult

to distinguish from one's neighbor (whether in the literal or figurative sense – e.g., a figure in sand and another in snow might initially appear to be in the same landscape), given the combination of reduction of depth and disruption of the space-time continuum.

Interestingly, it is in the field of ethnographic film where responses to such primarily aesthetic – and therefore supposedly pure – concepts were most vehement. Moreover, in at least one example, Fatimah Tobing Rony's analysis (1993) of Felix-Louis Regnault's ethnographic presentations, the samples in her study dated back to 1895, well before any of the classical theorists mentioned had produced their works, thus corroborating Said's chronologizing of Orientalism as a discipline from the 1840s onward (Said 1978, 6). Rony described Regnault's social and academic context as racist, the same way that Nazis operated in a context that enabled them to develop their ideas to genocidal extremes during World War II – i.e., enveloped in highly scientized obsessions (notably craniological) with determining the genealogical and anatomical features of representatives of non-Western peoples (Rony 1993, 265-266).

In fact, if the following words from Regnault himself – "all savage peoples make recourse to gesture to express themselves; their language is so poor it does not suffice to make them understood: plunged in darkness, two savages, as travelers who often witness this fact affirm, can communicate their thoughts, coarse and limited though they are" (qtd. in Rony 1993, 275) – were to be transposed to film-aesthetic terms, they would wind up resembling the anti-subject, anti-verbalist, pro-visualist designations of early classical film writers. Tragically, Regnault himself was described to have had a change of mind in "developing the idea of *ethnie* or language and cultural group as an important index along with race" (endnote in Rony 1993, 286), but this was during his later years, when venues such as the *Exposition Ethnographique de l'Afrique Occidentale (Senegal et Soudan Français)* and Regnault's subsequent film studies had already made an impact on the world beyond academe.

In a contemporary text that provided a form of closure for such practices as Regnault's and writings as Arnheim's, David MacDougall maintained that

Filmmakers may be aware that dominant approaches to filmmaking are possible ... and yet not be fully aware how their own filmmaking practice channels their efforts in certain directions and frustrates

them in others. This not only affects the success or failure of individual films but may predispose filmmakers ... to make films in certain kinds of societies rather than others or, if they have less choice in the matter, to focus on a particular selection of cultural features, such as ceremonial events and technology. (1992, 92)

MacDougall then proceeded to catalogue a repertoire of conventions in both fictional and non-fiction film practice that “gain the viewer’s complicity, by disarming and penetrating the subject from every angle” (94), from cinematographic through editorial and aural to structural constructions, demonstrating how in each and every instance film practice had been all along complicit with the interests of Western ideology (94-96).

One might object to this approach the way Clifford had objected to Said, in the sense that MacDougall’s condemnation of conventional Western film practice as totalizing in its ideological project is itself totalizing – i.e., such criticisms leave no room for enabling activities within the fields they criticize; hence the recourse to even more marginal solutions such as Said’s interest in oral texts and MacDougall’s call for film ethnographies by the subjects on themselves (Said 97). Such an extreme position would allow for the search, for example, for even more enlightened film and written texts, if such things can ever still be discovered, during the classical film period, plus additional research into the dynamics of the era through whatever remain of oral sources.

Ethnoanalytic Developments

On the other hand, a recuperatory project from among already existing texts might prove not only easier but also more feasible, if one were to undertake it in the poststructural spirit of searching for fissures and aporia and relativizing and historicizing these in order to possibly account for the beginnings of subversions of film theory and practice from within. This project would lie outside the scope of this paper’s efforts, but mention here can be made of certain concomitant progressions in (anti-)Orientalist [pace Clifford] concepts. The first would be Clifford’s description of Said’s position as actually humanist and cosmopolitan, describable

not in its full theoretical extension, where it becomes a paranoid fantasy of ubiquity and omniscience, but rather (paradoxically) in its local applications, where the unrealizable ideal produces normative pressure against such alternatives as, say, the fashionable “hybridization.” Its provocative association with privilege is perhaps better understood, in this context, as the normative edge that cosmopolitanism tries to add to the inclusiveness and diversity of multiculturalism – as an attempt to name a necessary but difficult normativeness. (Robbins 1992, 183)

Cosmopolitanism in this sense could serve as a framework through which certain aspects of classical film theory that have already been regarded as ultimately oppressive to the Other (granting that the Other may also be generalized in this way) may have first started out as attempts by theorists at formulating responses, whether resistive or accommodative, to normative pressure. In terms of the interests of the film subject, however, cosmopolitanism, given its privileging of privilege, may be even less appropriate than (anti) Orientalism. This predicament suggests a different though still contemporaneous line of thinking – that of neoracism, which ideologically

fits into a framework of “racism without races” ... whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but “only” the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of lifestyles and traditions; in short ... a *differentialist racism*. (Balibar 1991, 21, emphasis in original)

As presented in the foregoing account, neoracism would tend to proscribe the more inflexible aesthetic positions of, say, Kracauer and Arnheim, as compared with Bazin’s, notwithstanding the latter’s propensity for Egyptomania. Seemingly in response to this challenge, a study published around this time, Gina Marchetti’s *Romance and the “Yellow Peril”* (1993), served as a vital and indispensable survey of the most significant Classical Hollywood films that demonstrated intense, often perverse interest in encounters between characters representing the West and the Orient,

allowing the author to consider the fraught interrelationships between racial and gender differences.³

The critical study of Orientalism, however, took an even more productive turn (in terms of applicability to film scholarship) during the end of the millennium, with two books published during the same year by different authors. *Colonial Desire* (1995), by Robert J. C. Young, inspected “Englishness” in British colonies, taking into account critiques of the totalizing tendencies in Said’s study (161-63), specifically *Orientalism*’s lack of psychoanalytically derived ambivalence, as asserted by Homi K. Bhabha (1983, 200); and Said’s exclusion of possible counter-knowledges on the part of the subaltern, as argued by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1987).

By triangulating among the three authors (Said, Bhabha, and Spivak), Young managed to conclude that colonial-discourse analysis

can therefore look at the wide variety of texts of colonialism as something more than mere documentation or “evidence,” and also emphasize the ways in which colonialism ... permeated forms of knowledge which, if unchallenged, may continue to be the very ones through which we try to understand colonialism itself.... It is for this reason also that a major task of postcolonialism must be the production of a “critical ethnography of the West,” analyzing the story of a West haunted by the excess of its own history. (1995, 163)

Ann Laura Stoler’s *Race and the Education of Desire* (1995) further modified Said by recounting Michel Foucault’s then-unpublished lectures at the Collège de France, which were intended to constitute the succeeding volumes of *The History of Sexuality* (1990a).⁴ Undertaking Young’s prescription of conducting a “critical ethnography of the West,” Stoler maintained that nineteenth-century European sexuality intersected with issues of race and colonization. In effect, Young’s and Stoler’s approaches proceeded from Said’s contention that Orientalism was a racially inflected tendency, but found in practice that it was constantly tempered, and occasionally outright destabilized, by the colonizer’s desire for the colonized Other.

Stoler’s conclusion that “the class divisions that divided colonial discourses of desire distinguished subaltern white men,” who were “repeatedly accused of giving into their biological drives at the cost of empire” (1995,

179), proved productive enough for a second volume, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (2002), where she revisited and interrogated “different tensions produced or played out in sites of the intimate” (205) between colonizers and the colonized in the Dutch East Indies. Her observation demonstrated how far critical Oriental studies have departed from Said’s original formulation:

Much of this literature on gender and empire has tacked tentatively between a feminist concern that focuses on women, their daring or despair, and one that focuses on the ways in which a wider domain was shaped by gendered sensibilities and sexual politics.... The first tends to show how the subordination of women in some fashion functioned for imperial enterprises; the second takes insights about gendered relations to make sense of geopolitics. (Stoler 2002, 212).

Recent Film-Studies Applications

The 1997 anthology by Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar, *Visions of the East*, compiled a number of articles that proceeded from the premise that, at this historical juncture, Orientalism “shares an ontological norm (white Western culture) with constructions of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in Western culture. And feminist critics have extended Said’s model most dramatically and usefully by showing how Orientalism is imbricated with the construction of gender” (Introduction, 3). Said himself had already acknowledged the productive potential of this then-emergent approach, observing that “Orientalism is a praxis of the same sort ... as male gender dominance, or patriarchy, in metropolitan societies.... Moreover, Orientals like Victorian housewives were confined to silence and to unlimited enriching production” (1985, 103).

The extent to which the study of Orientalism in film had progressed was further remarked upon in the book’s Introduction, in which the final example consisted of the influence of the Maria Montez Technicolor films on underground filmmaker Jack Smith, who memorialized her representational excesses amid her admittedly limited performing abilities in his *Film Culture* tribute (1963a), and structured his much-celebrated film controversy, *Flaming Creatures* (1963b), “around this representational dynamic.... The

camp 'take' on the [Maria Montez type of] films coexisted with vestiges of a 'straight,' romantic allure, linked, however indirectly, to U.S. involvement in conflicts and nations overseas" (Bernstein and Studlar 1997, 12-13).

A book-length demonstration of this understanding of the conflation of racial prejudice with gender desire, and the potential neuroses that would result from such antithetical tendencies, would be Mari Yoshinara's 2003 study, *Embracing the East*, which literalizes the connection between femininity (white, in this instance) and Orientalism, focusing on examples of Western women performing certain functions associable with nominally masculine Western presences in the region, as well as alliances between Western women and Asian peoples opposed to foreign domination. An example of another study that validates this framework from the obverse perspective (not in Asia but in the U.S., not straight women but gays and lesbians, not mutual interracial sympathy but intra-racially homophobic antipathy) is David K. Johnson's study of McCarthyist Cold-War persecution, *The Lavender Scare* (2004).

The more impactful film-studies operationalization of the gender-inflected approach to critical Orientalist analyses would be Christina Klein's *Cold War Orientalism* (2003), wherein the standard argument of containment by the U.S. – of Communism in particular and racial Otherness in general – is modified into one of proto-globalization. The U.S., per Klein's thesis, responded to Soviet criticisms of racial oppression of its black citizens by embarking on an ambitious project of integration – not of the minorities within its borders, but of those outside – of Asians, specifically.

In linking up with "wholesome" publications such as *Reader's Digest* and *Saturday Review*, and American artists with "progressive" backgrounds (mainly James Michener and Oscar Hammerstein II), whose concern for the racial Others among them found expression in critical assessments of Western expansion in Asian centers, the U.S. government successfully supplemented the aforementioned anti-Communist hysteria with highly popular sentimental middlebrow cultural expressions of the iniquity of racial prejudice and the desirability of interracial relations, even potentially romantic ones. These cultural artefacts proved potent enough to cross over from one medium to another (usually print to Broadway stage to film and/or soundtrack recording – e.g. *South Pacific* and *The King and I*) and have enjoyed regular revivals and reissues down to the present time.

Klein mentions the granting of statehood to Hawaii as the defining political gesture in the U.S. government's repudiation of Orientalism,

as a way for Washington to prove the racially inclusive nature of American democracy.... Statehood would also ease the memory of U.S. imperialism in the Pacific and establish a clear distinction between the United States and the European colonial powers, by making Hawaii's territorial status seem a temporary stage in the development toward full inclusion in the nation, rather than a permanent colonial condition suitable for a nonwhite population. (2003, 250)

Within the terms then of studying Orientalism in the popular imaginary, Klein's text effectively and persuasively argues that it has been eventually erased, at least in the realm of official U.S. policy. The issue of what has happened since to Orientalism as it had been known (in a sense, as Said had articulated it) takes precedence in the wake of its apparent absence – or, perhaps more accurately, in the constant denial of its existence – in U.S. politics, if not everyday life. Several intriguing possibilities suggest themselves, among them the possible Orientalization of non-Asians and even white subjects, but these would lie outside the scope of this study and could productively constitute separate extensive disquisitions unto themselves.

Notes

- ¹ Cf. Vachel Lindsay's regard for film as being as valuable as Chinese ideographs, a variation on Eisenstein's prescriptions for montage, but without acknowledging the latter's literary and historicizing functions in Chinese culture (Lindsay 1970, 226); or his condemnation of the "idiotic precision" inflicted by science on the "cave-man, reader of picture writing" (234-35); or his insistence on Egyptian hieroglyphics as a codifying model for film, with the amazing claim that "Man is an Egyptian first, before he is any other type of civilized being" (254).
- ² Interior Secretary Dean C. Worcester proposed in 1909 the filming of Philippine folkways and culture to be preserved for whatever future studies it may serve "before Western influences irretrievably corrupted them" (qtd. in de Pedro 1983, 26).

- ³ Gina Marchetti's volume, along with a few other and more delimited surveys plus a handful of articles, are listed in a "select bibliography" in the *Visions of the East* anthology (Bernstein and Studlar 1997, 315-18), which will be brought up in the next section.
- ⁴ David Macey, in his biography of Foucault, reported that the original series after *History of Sexuality* were to have been titled, in chronological order, *The Body and the Flesh*, *Perverts*, and *Population and Races* (1993, 354). As it turned out, only two volumes succeeded the first, both of them published the year of Foucault's death in 1984: Volume 2 was titled *The Use of Pleasure* (1990b) and Volume 3 *The Care of the Self* (1988). Foucault's Collège de France lectures were subsequently published, with the first (comprising Stoler's research) titled *Society Must Be Defended* (2003).

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The Grassroots Approach to Communication: How Participatory Is Participatory Communication in the Philippines?

by Randy Jay C. Solis

Evidence of the need for participatory media in the Philippines is growing. However, because of the diversity of participatory communication applications, it becomes difficult to study this approach using a uniform model because doing so would restrict the dynamism of communication in transforming individuals and communities. To attempt at a more localized and updated perspective on this paradigm, this study will explore the unique approaches and strategies of participatory communication in the Philippines, through the point of view of the development communicators in local governments by addressing three main questions: (1) Who are the development communicators and what are their roles in participatory communication? (2) How participatory is participatory communication in the Philippines? and (3) What are the approaches and characteristics of participatory communication in the Philippines? This research has also proposed a framework for theorizing the participatory media approach based on three main factors: (1) typology of participatory communication that distinguishes it from other communication strategies, (2) from outside or inside communication strategies, and (3) the role of development communicators. Analysis reveals that centralized planning and the top-down approach to communication discourage communication as a dialogical process in development communication. However, the knowledge gap model would show that rural societies are relatively deprived of pertinent information for development. Thus, while the "transaction" approach is encouraged in participatory communication, "transmission" and persuasion may be essential components in the movement towards increased information seeking and lasting social change. While the grassroots approach is ideal, bottom-up initiative may also become the end goal instead of a necessary criterion to define participatory communication in the Philippines.



Many communication programs have been successful in reaching audiences but have failed in truly responding to people's wants, needs, and desires. Development has often failed to go beyond public awareness towards producing lasting social change. The Sixth Country Programme for Children by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 2005) reported that although mass media have been utilized to stimulate awareness, these have not been successful in effecting behavior change. Innovations are not handled and communicated effectively especially in the grassroots communities.

To address this dilemma in communication for social change, during the 1980s, a new paradigm recognizing the growing importance of commercial marketing and the effectiveness of tools from the commercial sector (e.g., advertising, mass media) was established in support of development plans. Social marketing programs like that of Manoff International in 1984 marketed nutrition in Indonesia and Academy of Educational Development's program that used the mass media in marketing health practices in Honduras and Gambia in the same year were some of the earlier social marketing applications in this era (McKee 1994).

Building on the developments of the earlier models of development communication, organizations like the UNICEF offered a contemporary paradigm that involves a strategic approach to communication that would, in a sense, combine all the approaches of the past. Strategic communication, as operationalized by models like Johns Hopkins' P-Process, stresses the importance of research in communication planning, as well as the role played by monitoring and evaluation in a results-based approach in programming (UNICEF 2005).

Although recognizing the successes of social marketing and strategic communication, communication is still appreciated as a one-way process of information dissemination, but seldom seen as dialogue. Communication campaigns by donor communities, governments and NGOs are perceived to use traditional tools of advertising and mass media for visibility and awareness but rarely reach the poorest grassroots areas. A cursory glance of development programs in the field reveal campaigns that are centrally planned by the senders of communication and beneficiaries are not involved in the decision-making processes throughout the stages of problem identification, design, implementation, and evaluation of programs that matter to them. Up to some extent, international donors and from-outside implementers are

even perceived to be manipulative or deceptive by community beneficiaries (McKee 1994).

Another, albeit not necessarily newer, approach to communication for development highlights the importance of grassroots participation and recognizes the contributions of indigenous knowledge, local solutions, and context-specific action in the adoption and maintenance of innovations in developmental efforts. Rather than the one-way persuasion model of social communication, participatory communication is a "two-way, dynamic interaction, between 'grassroots' receivers and the 'information' source, mediated by development communicators, which facilitates participation of the 'target group' in the process of development" (Nair and White 1994, 346). It is also a "transformative process of dialogue between people, groups, and institutions that enables people, both individually and collectively, to realize their full potential and be engaged in their own welfare" (Singhal 2001).

The concept of participation was popularized in the 1970s by activist-educator Paulo Freire and then-President of the World Bank Robert McNamara. Freire (1970) introduced the concepts of communication as a *dialogical* process that leads to *praxis* and *conscientization*. The dialogue between teacher and student or leader and the masses deepens understanding that leads to action that is informed, in making a difference in the world. This interplay of words, actions, and reflection develops consciousness, an awareness of one's incompleteness and the endeavor to be more fully human. This consciousness-raising not only shapes the individual but also enhances the community as this consciousness has the power to transform reality. Although developed as a theory of learning, the work of Freire has been adapted in approaches that emphasize people's participation in development. When McNamara called for 'people's participation' during the 1973 annual address to his Board of Governors, the approach started the new directions in development (White 1994).

The Freirean theory of dialogic communication finds general application in the practice of community development, participation, and transformation. Going beyond the view of communication as a **dialogic** process, approaches to participatory communication is also understood as participatory community media approach. "This focuses more on issues of public and community access to appropriate media, participation of people in message design and media production, and self-management of



communication enterprises” (Singhal 2001, 14). Communication in this approach is viewed as the **content and form** of the dialogic process.

The applications of participatory communication vary with the communal and cultural make-up in different geographic settings in which they take place. “The word ‘participation’ is kaleidoscopic; it changes its color and shape at the will of the hands in which [it] is held” (White 1994, 16). It is precisely in the diversity of participatory communication that experiences in the field have not always been successful. Senders of innovations like donors and governments are perceived to exhibit attitudes of arrogance about knowledge and power and perpetuate top-down practices that discourage dialogue with beneficiaries (McKee 1994). In government programs where decision-making is highly centralized, the one-size-fits-all communication strategies undermine the indigenous knowledge of communities with unique cultures and divergent interests. NGOs and CBOs have taken the role of providing the link between donors and governments and the communities. But issues of sustainability and ownership are still observed in the implementation of donor programs as adoptions of innovations in communities are abandoned as soon as program funding ceases.

Case Study: UNICEF Avian Flu Project

In March 2007, the UNICEF Manila Country Office commissioned the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), School of Social Sciences of the Ateneo de Manila University to design and implement a series of community-based communication planning workshops on Avian Influenza prevention. The main objective of the Community Workshops Project was to generate locally sensitive communication plans and information education and communication (IEC) messages on Avian Influenza prevention. This is to complement a National Communication Campaign called *Iwas Bird Flu* formed by the National Avian Influenza Task Force. To achieve this end, UNICEF and IPC conducted community-based participatory learning and action (PLA) and communication planning workshops in three identified “hot spot” (a community, as identified by the Department of Agriculture, with high population of poultry and/or closeness to a wild bird sanctuary like marsh land, feeding ground for migratory birds) communities in the major island clusters of the Philippines: Barangay San Antonio, Isabela in Luzon; Barangay Talon, Capiz in Visayas; and Barangay Tuel, North

Cotabato in Mindanao. In a span of two weeks, each barangay engaged in community workshops, focus group discussions, barangay council meetings, community assemblies, walkthroughs, interviews, community mapping sessions, community profiling, Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) study, and communication planning sessions.

All three communities exhibited high awareness of Bird Flu. Uniquely, Barangay Talon respondents perceived a very low probability of their barangay getting invaded by Bird Flu. The respondents attributed this unlikelihood to the “*pangamuyo o pananampalataya ng mga tao* [prayers or faith of the people].” Other respondents said that “*daw wala may chance nga maka-abot ang Bird Flu diri kay malayo ang amo nga lugar sa ibang bansa (na may Bird Flu)* [there seems to be no chance for Bird Flu invasion because our country is far from countries with Bird Flu cases].”

Although initially, members of Barangay Talon did not see the relevance of a communication campaign on Bird Flu in their community, they eventually agreed that the issue of Bird Flu is serious because “*maaaring maraming mamatay* [a lot of people might die].” Some of them expressed uncertainty about its severity simply because they were not aware about the symptoms (and effects) of the disease.

But after learning more about Avian Influenza, the members of the barangay started to see the benefits of preventive action against Bird Flu: “*malayo sa sakit, healthy ang mga tao* [far from sickness; everyone is healthy].” All three communities also asserted that preventive measures against Bird Flu were no inconvenience at all “*kay para sa kalusugan ...* [because it is for good health].” Corollary, when the environment and the people in it are healthy, “*gaganda ang ekonomiya* [the economy will improve]” and “*maiwasan ang problema* [problems will be prevented].”

By the end of the project, UNICEF produced and distributed the IEC materials developed by the communities including a set of flash cards and accompanying script, posters, and instructional picture cards.

The result of the participatory communication is summarized in the following concluding note from the project report:

For a short time in their communities, residents enjoyed a different spectacle in the form of the community workshops, which for many of them was a first in their lives. Participants emerged from the workshops feeling empowered by the knowledge and fellowship



gained. Community officials, on the other hand, while thankful that their barangays were selected as workshop sites, expressed their appreciation to the participants for their willingness to actively participate in the weeklong activity. Not used to being in the sidelines, barangay officials gladly “handed over the stick” for the first time perhaps, and left the planning of their communities’ welfare in the hands of their constituents, many of whom did not have adequate knowledge about the crucial topic.

At the outset, much of the residents’ notion about Bird Flu is limited to “having heard the term “Bird Flu.” From their perspective, there is still much to learn and understand about the disease. Although they were aware of its severity, not all felt they were susceptible to the disease. Much of this “untouchable feeling” is attributed to cynicism and belief in a higher being that will protect them from any harm. A very important message to reiterate at this point, therefore, is that communication planning for Bird Flu prevention must begin by addressing the information gap existing in the communities.

Looking at this experience, participatory communication seems to adjust to the criterion that development begins when problems are defined by the grassroots communities. In this case, while the project was not distinguished as grassroots, it nevertheless contributed to ownership of the communication initiative. The dialogic process enabled the community members to realize the threat of a virus and led them to communal action of coming up with communication interventions to prevent it. And the processes were rooted in the community’s indigenous experiences. In the end, the community felt empowered.

In the Philippines, there is evidence of the growing recognition of the need for participatory media in development. Efforts to institutionalize development communication and the sustainability of development, even long after the donors withdraw from their “program sites,” are beginning to be at the core in the discourse of participation and development. For one, UNICEF has established Communication Task Forces in the local government units, particularly in the focal office that handles programs for children. They were trained in the participatory approach to research and community-based communication planning. The Health Promotion and

Communication Project (HealthPRO) of USAID assists the Department of Health (DOH) in empowering the Health Education and Promotion Officers (HEPO) and handling communication projects in the different provinces. The HEPOs are being trained in the process of Behavior Change Communication.

Studying Participatory Communication in the Philippines

The following discussion is based on an analysis of 12 in-depth interviews with development communication officers in government channels involved in the process of communication planning, implementation, and evaluation. Respondents were selected based on their qualification as Health Education and Promotion Officers of Provincial Health Offices and members of Communication Task Forces (as organized by UNICEF in their focal areas). Given that they are the conduits between the donor society and the government on one side, and the community of beneficiaries on the other, it is critical to discern how they win the trust of the communities, facilitate everyone’s participation, and empower its people.

The study explores the main research question: How participatory is participatory communication in the Philippines? It takes a look at the approaches and characteristics of communication programs and projects in the Philippines, from the perspectives of these communication officers. Their comments were analyzed and classified according to Alfonso Gumucio Dagron’s typology (2001) to distinguish participatory communication from other communication strategies for social change.

This study finds its significance in exploring participatory communication experience through the point of view of the development communicators and organizing patches of experience that may yield guidelines on effective communication for genuine social change. Since participatory communication is a tool for national development, this study may also have implications for policy development, specifically on how to streamline support and resources, particularly communication, to benefit the poorest grassroots communities in the Philippines.



Participatory Media Approach

After conducting a review of experiences in participatory community media, including fifty cases covering media and tools: radio, video, theatre, interpersonal communication, mobile telephony and the Internet from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Alfonso Gumucio Dagron (2001) offers a model of distinguishing participatory communication from other communication strategies for social change. The criteria for selecting these experiences included community involvement and ownership. This means that the participatory media were not just one-time projects whose lifespan was determined by donor’s resources. Moreover, the community itself had to be in charge of the communication initiative, even if the community had not originated it, from aspects of financing, administration, training, technical, etc. These initiatives were also considered based on their contribution to the strengthening of cultural identity and democratic values, as well as building relationships with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), development organizations, community based organizations (CBOs) and other institutions. Also, these experiences contributed to knowledge sharing and, thus, providing a voice to the majority.

The following is the typology of participatory communication as presented by Gumucio Dagron (2001, 26). Singhal (2001, 13) summarized these in Table 1:

- **Horizontal vs. Vertical.** People as dynamic actors, actively participating in the process of social change and in control of the communication tools and contents; rather than people perceived as passive receivers of information and behavioral instructions, while others make decisions on their lives.
- **Process vs. Campaign.** People taking in hand their own future through a process of dialogue and democratic participation in planning communication activities; rather than expensive unsustainable top-down campaigns that help to mobilize but not to build a capacity to respond from the community level to the needs of change.

Table 1. Gumucio Dagron’s Typology (2001) to Distinguish Participatory Communication from Other Communication Strategies for Social Change (from Singhal 2001, 13)

Participatory Communication Strategies	versus	Non-Participatory Communication Strategies
<u>Horizontal lateral communication between participants</u>	versus	<u>Vertical top-down communication from senders to receivers</u>
<u>Process of dialogue and democratic participation</u>	versus	<u>Campaign to mobilize in a short-term without capacity building</u>
<u>Long-term process of sustainable change</u>	versus	<u>Short-term planning and quick fix solutions</u>
<u>Collective empowerment and decision-making</u>	versus	<u>Individual behavior change</u>
<u>With community’s involvement</u>	versus	<u>For the community</u>
<u>Specific in content, language, and culture</u>	versus	<u>Massive and broad-based</u>
<u>People’s needs are the focus</u>	versus	<u>Donors’ musts are the focus</u>
<u>Owned by the community</u>	versus	<u>Access determined by social political and economic factors</u>
<u>Consciousness raising</u>	versus	<u>Persuasion for short-term</u>

- **Long-term vs. Short-term.** Communication and development in general is conceived as a long-term process which needs time to be appropriated by the people; rather than short-term planning, which is seldom sensitive to the cultural environment and mostly concerned with showing “results” for evaluations external to the community.
- **Collective vs. Individual.** Urban or rural communities acting collectively in the interest of the majority, preventing the risk of losing power to a few; rather than people targeted individually, detached from their community and from the communal forms of decision- making.
- **With vs. For.** Researching, designing and disseminating messages with participation; rather than designing, pre-testing, launching and evaluating messages that were conceived for the community, and remain external to it.



- **Specific vs. Massive.** The communication process adapted to each community or social group in terms of content, language, culture and media; rather than the tendency to use the same techniques, the same media and the same messages in diverse cultural settings and for different social sectors of society.
- **People's needs vs. Donors' musts.** Community-based dialogue and communication tools to help identify, define and discriminate between the felt needs and the real needs; rather than donor-driven communication initiatives based on donor needs (family planning, for example).
- **Ownership vs. Access.** A communication process that is owned by the people to provide equal opportunities to the community; rather than access that is conditioned by social, political or religious factors.
- **Consciousness vs. Persuasion.** A process of raising consciousness and deep understanding about social reality, problems and solutions; rather than persuasion for short-term behavioral changes that are only sustainable with continuous campaigns.

During the selection process of the study, criteria had to be more flexible. According to Gumucio Dagron, this shows the dynamism of participatory communication: that approaches and strategies adopt different forms according to the variety of cultural interactions. And because of this contingent quality, it will be a challenge to create a blueprint especially in the context of a successful participatory communication. In fact, the study did not only select initiatives that proved success but also those that, while they did not prosper, provided valuable lessons to the entire study.

Profile of Development Communicators

There is no particular office that provides communication services for every development program in the provincial government. However, under the Office of the Governor, there exists the information and PR sections which

generally take charge of information dissemination and communication concerns of the Governor, including advocacy, updates, programs and projects, and accomplishments.

The Provincial Health Office (PHO) has a Health Education Promotion Officer (HEPO) who is tasked to prepare, coordinate and implement communication activities or projects related to health and nutrition. In the provincial offices for agriculture, a technical staff is designated to handle concerns on agricultural information management. For the other development programs and offices, the office head assumes the role of communication officer, in case the need arises.

At the municipal and barangay governments, there are no development communication offices. In the municipal level, any communication-related responsibilities usually rest on the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator (MPDC) or the Municipal Health Officer (MHO) for matters on health and nutrition and children. For some municipalities where the Governors and Mayors created a plantilla position for health communication officers, there are Municipal HEPO counterparts. For provinces and municipalities without a plantilla designation, there is a HEPO Designate who is usually the Municipal Health Officer or Nurse in the municipal level, and any qualified provincial health officer who applies for the position in the provincial level.

Communication seems to be unrecognized as an integral program component for development. Some local governments do not allot a specific position or department for development communication. Moreover, in provinces that employ one-person development communication departments, the appointees are not necessarily particularly trained in communication. Most often than not, those who hold the HEPO positions are technical health professionals rather than expert communicators. More alarmingly, these HEPOs also perform other technical services in the PHO aside from handling communication, as described by these two HEPOs in Mindanao and Visayas:

Aside from being designated as HEPO, I also handle other health programs like Healthy Lifestyle, Mental Health, and Communicable Disease programs.



I'm also handling the Newborn Screening Program, Training and Affiliation, and I also serve as the BHW coordinator.

In the health sector, communication committees or teams are formed whenever the need arises, usually to implement health events spearheaded by the national Department of Health:

I'm a part of a department (PHO) but we do not have a committee or team for communication. If there are activities to be done, it is being discussed by the concerned program managers with the Provincial Health Officer. We only form a committee when it is needed, especially during big events like what we did during the *Pagpasidungog sa Ika-ayong Lawas* – The awards and recognition for health workers.

Thus, the development communicators in the provincial level are change agents whose purpose is to represent the donors and the national government's innovation adoption interests. They are considered "technical assistance workers" (Rogers 1962, 267), providing assistance on communication planning and implementation for municipal and barangay-levels campaigns. As evidenced by the consistent request for technical assistance from the municipalities and barangays, they are considered "local level bureaucrats" (1962, 267) because they share common characteristics and culture and are also familiar to their clients. The purposiveness of the change agents is oriented towards the interests and needs of the change agency, as in this case where a HEPO in Mindanao shows her orientation towards the mandate of the Department of Health:

Implement programs and projects handed to us by the Department of Health. As a communications officer, I am tasked to conduct capability building, advocacy and information campaigns to the municipalities as my areas of coverage.

On the other hand, the members of the Communication Task Forces are oriented towards the purpose of their donor:

The task force was only created for the implementation of the UNICEF's communication program.

Our office handles communication projects and programs of UNICEF in the province. We implement projects approved by UNICEF.

Compared with the HEPOs of the PHO, the PCTF of UNICEF program areas have a clearer mandate because these groups were formed by an executive order by the Governor. While health communication is the HEPO's sole responsibility such that health communication teams are convened ad-hoc, the executive order of the PCTF includes representatives from PIA, PHO, DepEd, PSWDO, PPDO, and DILG. But beyond these, the characteristics of PCTF officers do not differ much from the HEPOs'. Members of the CTFs are also not necessarily communication experts more than program professionals. And in the same way as the organization of the HEPO, not all UNICEF focal areas have a communication task force in the municipal level, as this depends on whether the Governors or Mayors established a plantilla position for this or not.

When asked about her roles as the communication focal person of the PCTF in her province, a respondent described them in terms of a change agency-change agent relationship:

I take charge of the planned activities for the year under the Annual Work and Financial Plan (WFP) of the CPC 6, including leading the preparation of the communication materials, their production and reproduction, and dissemination; lead the coordination of communication related activities in the province, municipalities and barangays; and prepare accomplishment reports.

Even if the goals of the provincial development communicators are highly oriented towards the interests and needs of the donors and national and provincial governments, reciprocally, these change agents also function by relating the grassroots communities' needs to the change agencies. This is explained by one communication officer from Mindanao:

Part of the gains of the communications program of the CPC VI was the formation of the Communications Task Force, which brought together health workers in the community, child and youth representatives, media members and independent film makers in the city who became the core group in advocating for children's



rights in their respective areas and fields. It became a collaborative endeavor. The nature of work related to communications and campaigns entails the drafting of a comprehensive communications programme based on the situation on the ground.

The Nature and Approaches of Participatory Communication in Communities

Top-Down Transmission

Communication Officers from 12 different provinces reveal that most communication goals and strategies are defined centrally by donors, technical personnel, and planners from the provincial government and people in communities are perceived as passive receivers of packaged information and communication instructions:

The communication activities for the year were planned and identified by the PCPC including the municipal partners with the guidance of the UNICEF's communication section's thrust for the year.

Generally, representatives from the provincial level initiate communication projects, campaigns and activities in the barangays. Communication projects, campaigns and activities are conducted in the municipal and barangay level through the coordination with the Mayor's Office and Barangay Captains.

Annually, UNICEF, which is the funding donor of CPC 6, conducts communication planning to determine the gaps and identify activities to be implemented in the ensuing year. Communication projects, campaigns and activities are implemented in close coordination with the municipal and barangay concerned personnel.

Referring to the experiences of Guimaras and Capiz, communication strategies employed both horizontal and vertical participation in the process of communication planning and implementation. In Guimaras, while decisions were finalized centrally, community members clearly had an active

role in the development of communication messages and materials for their nutrition campaign:

The outputs [of the communication planning workshop in Guimaras] were also presented to the PCPC/PITF [Provincial Council for the Protection of Children/ CPC 6 Project Implementation Task Force] during its monthly meeting. The PCPC/PITF agreed with the suggestions of the communication planners. Then more suggestions came up, particularly on how the images on the poster would look like. One of the PCPC/PITF members in attendance was an artist and so he was assigned to work on the proposed poster.

The provincial communication plan and draft poster were presented to the BHWs and Pre-School Teachers of the focus barangays for comments and suggestions. Then the group prepared a schedule of activity in conducting group meetings among parents and other stakeholders in the barangay to disseminate the Nutrition Key Message which is "Masustansya nga luto ni Nanay kag ni Tatay, Paborito ni Toto kag ni Inday" and as well as other health and nutrition information.

A similar process was done in the planning and implementation of the breakfast campaign in Capiz. The community members participated in the development of communication messages and materials with technical assistance from the Provincial Communication Task Force:

The most recent communication project that was conducted in the first five CPC 6 disparity barangays is the campaign on "Kon Nakapamahaw sa Aga, Very Good ang Pag-eskwela." The campaign involves the conduct of the following major activities: Develop IEC materials (radio plugs, brochures, posters, tarpaulin). The materials were developed by the PCTF with the help of barangay folks as models. The parents were given the chance to critique the materials.



Campaign Mobilization

While community participation in communication planning and the development of messages and materials was realized in Capiz and Guimaras, most of development communication in the country focuses on the implementation of campaigns rather than the continuous dialogue towards social change. In communication campaigns, community members are merely mobilized to accomplish the activities as planned but are not capacitated to sustain changes in the community after the campaign is done and donors and government implementers leave them. A Health Education and Promotion Officer (HEPO) describes how mechanistically these come-and-go campaigns happen:

Communication projects start with planning at the provincial level. Each LGU [Local Government Unit] make its own program of activities. Then, there's mobilization of municipal and barangay health workers and other health-related partners. For example, in the "Buntis Party/Sabay-Sabay Pa-Suso" health event campaign, planning was done at the provincial level, participated by HEPO and HEPO designates, HealthPro [Health Education and Promotion Project of USAID], PHN [Provincial Health Nurses] and midwives. After advocacy with the mayor at the LGU level, the nurses, midwives and BHWs gathered 118 pregnant women, giving priority to those belonging in the first trimester.

Respondents indicated that the communities become a part of the communication process only during the implementation phase when the provincial officers coordinate with members of the barangays to make sure that campaigns and activities are implemented in the grassroots.

There are indications though that participation of community members is included but more as participants in data-gathering, to inform the planning process that is still done centrally.

We do planning for every communication activity or project that will be undertaken with technical assistance from the national or cooperating agencies. We do situational analysis, gather data and compare it with the standards. Sometimes we also do focus group discussion. Based on the situational and data analysis, we

can come up with strategies or activities that would address the gaps and problems.

While donors take part in the identification of problems and solutions to development in the country, they also take an active role in capacitating local governments so that communication solutions in communities may be defined and executed by community members themselves. For instance, after a UNICEF training on strategic and participatory communication planning in 2008 (as a follow-up to a similar training in 2006), two provinces in the Visayas conducted participatory communication campaigns to address malnutrition in their areas.

In Guimaras, we conducted a communication planning workshop on August 4 & 6, 2009 which was participated in by a total of 31 representatives from five municipalities, which included members from the focus barangays. The PCPC [Provincial Council for the Protection of Children], represented by members from the PHO [Provincial Health Office], PSWDO [Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office], PPDO [Provincial Planning and Development Office], and DepEd [Department of Education] were joined by MHO/MHN [Municipal Health Officers/Nurses], MNAO [Municipal Nutrition Action Officers], Rural Health Midwives, Barangay Nutrition Scholars, BHW [Barangay Health Workers], ECCD [Early Childhood Care and Development] Coordinators/MSWDO [Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers], and school heads.

In Capiz, the teachers as well as the community volunteers and health workers (CVHWs) played a huge role in implementing the communication and advocacy campaign on the importance of breakfast for school children.

The teachers helped in the advocacy campaign on nutrition to parents of school children, barangay officials, and CVHWs. They also conducted the pre- and post-survey on the eating habits of school children to determine the impact of the campaign. Also, CHVWs helped in the monitoring and follow-up operations.



Davao, also a UNICEF program area, implements participatory research to guide communication planning, which is still done in the provincial level:

The CTF [Communication Task Force] initially sits down with the inter-agency committee [IAC] to review the indicators and challenges identified by the respective field workers. With the data, the CTF goes directly to the barangay and conducts KII [key informant interviews] or FGDs [focus group discussions] with them. Then we spend time (one or two weeks) immersing in the community to observe. Analyses are done in coordination with the community members. The drafts of the results are presented to them for validation. After which, the final results are presented back to the IAC for discussion and planning.

Long-term Process in Social Change

While a lot of communication initiatives in the communities employ short-term campaigns and mobilizations as discussed above, all communication officers-respondents agreed that development communication needs a long time in order for community members to sustain genuine social change. This is especially true for an Indigenous People's (IP) community in Davao where the issue of birth registration runs deep in the culture of the Badjaos:

The last campaign that we initiated with the city was the campaign on birth registration for IP children. This was a result of more than two years of immersion and working with the Badjao community in Matina Aplaya (in the urban area) and with IP communities in the hinterlands where we learned that while most of the children in these areas would want to go to school, they are hindered from doing so because of being unregistered at birth. While late registration is an option, the parents could not register their children because the LCR [Local Civil Registrar] would ask for their marriage certificate. The culture of the IPs requires a different ritual for marriage and birth which runs contrary to the requirements set by the civil registration system.

Other communication officers perceived that the dissemination of messages and transmission model of communication is enough to incite social change. They associate the lack of success in development and social change to the fact that communication is only one of the factors that contribute to social change:

In Guimaras' recent case on malnutrition of pre-schoolers, the key message easily got through or was understood by almost all of the target audience and a number of them also changed their practices. But for most of them (who need to change for the better), to easily change their behavior would take quite a longer time, even if they would really like to change, due to other factors like unemployment or low income, families with single parents and many children, inherent physical condition of the child (genetically poor), lack of time or having too much work inside and outside of the home, and insufficient water especially during dry season to sustain their home gardens.

Limited Participation

Preceding responses enumerated above show that members in the barangay do take part in the planning and implementation of development communication in their community; however, the respondents consistently indicated that only a few individuals in the barangays take active roles in these activities. Participatory communication in these provinces is not necessarily a communal activity where members act collectively for the interest of the majority. Rather, participation and decision-making are performed by people of authority in the barangay. As mentioned earlier, teachers and barangay health workers usually participate in development communication.

The communication activities are handled by the PHN [Provincial Health Nurse] in the municipality and RHMs [Rural Health Midwives] in the barangays. In barangays, the BHWs and the barangay council officials usually implement these activities.

In instances when participation includes ordinary residents in the barangays, only women would normally join in the implementation of these



activities: “Usually, the activity is undertaken by day care workers, health workers and barangay officials, mostly women.”

External Intervention for the Community

While the participatory communication experiences discussed earlier show that communication planning, implementation and evaluation are done with the involvement of barangay members, the provincial communication officers still perceive that development communication planning, implementation, and evaluation are conceived for the barangay by donors and provincial government personnel. One respondent explained that this is because the planning, implementation, and evaluation of donor projects are expected of them. They merely, as already discussed earlier, mobilize the members of the community once plans are approved by the donors and provincial officials.

If the communication project has been included in the activities of the provincial communication task force, it is the PCTF that initiates the project or campaign. We also coordinate with barangay officials for our communication activity in the concerned community. However, it is the provincial task force that does more work especially in the conduct of lectures, campaigns, and advocacy in the municipal and barangay levels.

Same Approach for Different Cultures

Since the health sector in the country is devolved, local governments are expected to run their own health campaigns. But still, most health promotion and communication activities are based on the health events calendar that is designed by the national Department of Health (DOH). These occasions are communicated to the HEPO of the health offices in the LGUs through the National Center for Health Promotion (NCHP). And as expressed by a HEPO in a province in Mindanao, “planning for health activities is done by a technical working group from the PHO.” The health themes, messages, and materials are created from the national level and shared with the local governments. While they are encouraged to appropriate the materials to the local culture, the messages are merely translated to the vernacular, if at all.

Another respondent from the Visayas shared that it is more efficient to indigenize communication messages and materials, but that this depends on the nature of the project and the availability of time and funds. Donor support probably explains the success of the nutrition campaign in Capiz:

We had the nutrition campaign “*Kon nakapamahaw sa aga, very good ang pag eskwela.*” It is aimed to encourage more parents or caregivers to give breakfast to their children before sending them to school, as data show that more children in the elementary schools are not taking breakfast or skipping meals. Initially, the task force was able to gather base line data by conducting breakfast mapping and focus group discussion.

Parents, barangay officials, barangay health workers, teachers and pupils were also met for communication planning to determine the effective means to deliver the campaign and its message. Stakeholders also participated in the critiquing of the campaign materials for them to have ownership of the communication materials: radio plugs, leaflets, posters, and tarpaulins. They also decided on the other communication activities to be undertaken to address the problem.

Donors’ Felt Needs

In the same way that problem identification rarely comes from members of the barangays themselves, respondents shared stories that indicated that the communication needs of the barangay are determined by the donors and provincial governments and not by its members. In Guimaras’ case, the identification of malnutrition as a priority was systematically derived through the review of the 2007 Sub-Regional Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (SR-MICS), Situational Analysis, Accomplishments and Annual Reports of the provincial officers on health, social welfare, and planning and development, as well as barangay profiles, FGD results, key informants interviews, and direct observations in the barangays. However, “*the priorities and communication activities for the year were planned and identified by the PCPC including the municipal partners with the guidance of the UNICEF’s communication section’s thrust for the year.*”



According to another respondent from the Visayas, communication plans are formulated on the provincial level before being approved by UNICEF and program funds are disbursed at the provincial level.

Initiation of communication campaigns and activities in the communities may also come from as close as the municipal government, and sometimes, even from the barangay itself. But most initiatives arise only when assistance from the municipal government (for barangay initiatives) and provincial government (for municipal initiatives) are assured:

The municipal health office usually initiates health communication projects or activities at the barangay level though there are also instances where the barangay itself does the health communication projects with technical assistance from the Municipal Health Office and Provincial Health Office, such as the national search for the barangay with best sanitation practices and the dengue campaigns.

Political Access

Communication campaigns and activities are not owned by members of the communities themselves as they only gain access to these based on social and political factors. According to a communication officer in Luzon, communication projects, campaigns, and activities are conducted in the municipal and barangay levels through coordination with the Mayor's Office and Barangay Captains. At the onset, selection of priority or focus barangays is based on agreements between the donor institution and the provincial government. But while the selection on the provincial level is based on objective standards such as poverty and health indicators, selections on the municipal and barangay levels are sometimes tainted with political favors. Some areas are not reached because "that is not mayor's barangay" or "that community did not support Gob."

Communication as Persuasion

Development communication in the country appears to be more of a transmission of persuasive messages than a dialogic process of conscientization. This is implicit in how the communication officers perceive

success in their campaigns. Development is determined by the increase in the knowledge and favorable changes in attitudes and behaviors among the audiences of communication interventions, more than the process of raising consciousness and deep understanding about particular social problems. For example, when asked about positive results in their nutrition campaign, the communication officer said:

After the nutrition campaigns in the focus barangays, there were notable changes, aside from increased awareness, on the behavior or practices of a number of parents especially those who have attended the parents' meetings on nutrition.

Conclusions and Implications

Communication as a program component has been perceived as unimportant merely because it does not have immediate tangible effects to development, as compared to say providing health commodities or infrastructures in communities. It is therefore part of the participatory communication process to raise people's consciousness away from the oppressive traditional mindset of the dole-out system and into the dialogic process of knowledge sharing and genuine ownership of actions towards social change. While communication as a program component is not only a problem in the grassroots but also in the donor communities, and more so in the governments, there are identifiable moves towards the institutionalization of participatory communication in development.

Centralized planning and the top-down approach to communication discourage communication as a dialogical process in development communication. Utilizing media processes and activities does not only encourage local participation and use of indigenous knowledge, talents, and resources but also stirs initiatives and sustainable positive change in the grassroots. Participatory media promotes dialogues and discussions within an active community of beneficiaries instead of a mere presentation of packaged information to a group of receivers. Instead of the transmission approach, the transactional mode should focus not only on the reception of development messages but also on the impact of media, their production, content, and use.



The role of the development communicators in participatory communication is crucial because they facilitate the participation of the receiver community and provide critical information that will enable its people to take control of their own lives. Nair and White define development communicator as “trained professional or paraprofessional who is linking the bureaucrats, experts and scientists to the grassroots intended receiver” (1994, 352). As conduit to the transactional communication process, on one end, the development communicator has to be committed to the development goals of the sender institutions. On the other hand, the development communicator also has to be accepted by the receiver community where the beneficiaries of development reside.

The price of participatory communication is indeed very high. As the role of development communicators is pivotal in this process, the need to capacitate these change agents becomes urgent. Because most of the development communicators in the provincial government are not necessarily communication experts, trainings in the technical aspects of participatory media and communication (strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation), as well as the creative aspects of media development (message and materials design) are imperative. Aside from these, interpersonal and community process skills are also essential in order for these development communicators to become effective and efficient facilitators in the dialogic process of media and communication.

As time is an essential element to foster trust between the change agents and the people in communities, tasks of development communicators in the provincial offices must include a provision that allows them to move among the people in their constituencies. Instead of merely one-person communication department for each program, the provincial government must consider a model for communication systems in the political structure to improve human resources in development communication.

Aside from trust, motivation for self-reliance is an essential element in assuring sustainability of developmental changes in communities. This goal may be achieved if the participatory approach becomes the norm in development communication. Ultimately, communication programs must enable the grassroots to capacitate themselves, using a mix of indigenous knowledge and talents with that of external support, to incite lasting and genuine change.

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Cross-Cultural Experience and Media Use: OFWs in Korea and Their Acculturation

by Fernando A. Austria, Jr.

The overseas Filipino workers in Korea, like any other migrant workers, are displaced. They are in a foreign land, far from their families and friends, plucked out of their habits and customs, removed from their daily pleasures and responsibilities back home. OFWs are active media users and in choosing Philippine-based media products, they try to bridge the gap between the expansive void to mitigate the loneliness and alienation experienced in this diaspora, and to provide continuity in their disrupted lives. The consumption of Philippine media in South Korea happens primarily because of two reasons: first, South Korean media is basically in Hangeul, a language that the OFW cannot understand; and second, the need to gratify personal desires. As such, the use of Philippine media is, in the words of James Carey, a ritual that maintains the cycle of life to alleviate the disruptions and sacrifices they experience overseas.

Korea and the Filipino Worker

Upon arriving in South Korea for a fellowship in 2007, I became part of the Filipino Diaspora – one of the four million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) providing the Philippines with 20% of its export earnings and 10% of its Gross National Product (Paragas 2007).

In South Korea, as of January 2008, there were 38,591 Filipinos who were either industrial trainees, workers who have gained employment after their training, unskilled (Employment Permit System Workers), arts and entertainment, professional and household workers (Philippine Embassy in Korea 2008).

A majority of these Filipinos belong to the Employment Permit System (EPS). The EPS, according to Delmar Cruz, Philippine Labor Attaché in South Korea, is a government-to-government program that

allows the employment of foreign workers in small and medium enterprises in South Korea. These enterprises employ from 10 to 20 persons and are in the manufacturing, construction, and the agricultural and livestock sectors. Among Filipinos, this type of work is characterized as the 3Ds – dangerous, dirty and difficult (Cruz 2008). Eleven percent (11%) of Filipino workers in these sectors comprises illegal workers or, to use the more politically correct term, irregular migrants. In the Filipino community (Filcom), they are called TNTs or *tago ng tago* (always in hiding – see Table 1).

Table 1. Number and Percentage Distribution of OFWs in South Korea as of Jan. 31, 2008¹

Status		Total		Illegal	
Visa Type		No.	%	No.	%*
D-3	Industrial Trainees	2,203	6%	2,081	5%
E-8	Employment after Industrial Training	3,369	9%	2,125	6%
E-9	Unskilled Employment (EPS)	28,298	73%	4,434	11%
E-6	Art and Entertainment (OPAS)	3,236	8%	1,240	3%
E-7	Particular Occupation (Professionals)	386	1%	18	0%
F-1	Household workers	1,099	3%	393	1%
TOTAL		38,591	100%	10,291	27%

*Percentage from total number of OFWs staying in Korea

A precursor to the EPS is the Industrial Training System (ITS). In this system, South Korea takes in foreign workers as trainees to work in the same sectors but receive lesser salaries and benefits and are not given the same rights and privileges of Korean nationals such as medical and unemployment insurance (Cruz 2008).

Arts and entertainment workers or Overseas Performance Artists (OPAS) usually work in hotels and clubs as singers. Included in this category of workers are those who are employed as hostesses in clubs and those who voluntarily go or are coerced into prostitution (Cruz 2008).

Professionals and high-skilled workers such as engineers and architects belong to the Particular Occupation category. Before the implementation of the implementing guidelines for the deployment of Filipino English teachers in South Korea last year, there were irregular migrants in this category, according to Labor Attaché Cruz (2008).

Legally, only diplomats and foreign CEO's of foreign companies are allowed to hire household service workers. There are Filipino household

service workers who are employed by Korean families and foreigners who are not top officers of their companies. Labor Attaché Cruz notes that many household service workers belong to the same family because of an informal referral system in the hiring of these workers (2008).

Reflections on OFWs and Media Consumption

I was also part of the Filipinos in exile who consumed products from Philippine media companies, who according to Paragas, in his article "Trans/Nationalism? The Globalization of Philippine Media and the Ethnicization of Overseas Filipino Workers," "ultimately reinforce loyalty to the Philippine nation-state and essentialize the OFWs' 'otherness' as a foreigner in the host country" (2007, 195).

In this study, Paragas concluded that in spite of the availability of a variety of media products from the host and other countries, OFWs consume "globalized" Philippine media. Here, Paragas finds irony in the way "the globalization of Philippine media ... [promotes] the ethnicization of transnational Filipinos" (2007, 195).

When Paragas presented his paper in the Media Culture and Industry in Asia Conference in South Korea, I wondered why OFWs, given that they have become "citizens of the world" and are exposed to a variety of media products, still consume Philippine Media. Would it not be more logical, if not easier and less expensive, to consume media from the host country to understand their present environment and to help in their adjustment to the new culture which has become part of their situation?

Why patronize Philippine Media? Is it a question of maintaining a Filipino Identity? Or a nationalist agenda – of portraying pride in being Filipino? Or is it simply a language problem?

I reflected on what media I consumed in Korea, and asked myself why I consumed these media products.

Life Stories and Media Consumption Motives

Story Tellers

In this study, I posit that the motives behind the uses of and gratifications sought from Philippine-based media products is a largely personal endeavor



that does not really take into account any agenda for pursuing or reinforcing a nationalistic identity; that the ethnicization of OFWs occurs due to their personal desire to provide continuity in their disrupted lives.

To find the motives behind their media consumption, this study delved into the “Life Stories” of the OFWs in South Korea. The life stories of these OFWs were constructed using in-depth interviews from purposely selected narrators.

This study involved 20 OFWs. Herewith are some of the OFWs I interviewed in South Korea.

Dione, 47 years old, started as an Industrial Trainee. Before coming to South Korea, he was a technician in a garment factory and he was promised a job in a textile company where he was to also work as a technician. Upon arriving in South Korea, he was considered an unskilled worker and was placed in a company that did not have anything to do with garments or textile. When offered by a contact to work as a TNT, he readily decided to run away from his employer because he felt deceived. He started out as a helper in construction sites. Now he does rough carpentry work for different contractors like Samsung. Dione has been in South Korea for 11 years.

Lina and Maribeth are both domestic helpers. Lina worked in an embassy in the Philippines where her employer asked her to join them when they were transferred to Korea. She was able to get a recommendation from her first employer that allowed her to transfer to another embassy. She has been in South Korea for 13 years. Maribeth went to South Korea with a tourist visa to accompany her aunt, a Filipina married to a Korean, who was bringing her children to South Korea. She found work as a domestic helper for a Korean couple and has been working for them for 2 years.

Vanessa ran away from her Korean husband because he was abusive. She started out with odd jobs until she met a Korean who asked her if she could teach English. She has been in South Korea for 8 years and has been teaching for 6 years. At work, she passes herself off as a U.S. citizen from Hawaii. Liza came to South Korea as a tourist and had stayed for 8 years. She started out as a factory worker. Like Vanessa, she first started as an English tutor. Aside from being full-time English teachers in academies, they tutor in their spare time.

Emely Abagat has a doctorate degree in education. She works as the Chair of the Education Committee of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center

for Filipino Migrants in Seoul. Her work includes counseling OFWs with problems, conducting retreats, recollections and values formation seminars for Filipino migrant workers, and editing *Sambayanan*, the newsletter of the center. She is an E-7 visa holder which is for professionals with a particular occupation. She has been in Korea for 3 years.

Reasons for Coming to Korea

Overseas Filipino Workers come to South Korea for a variety of reasons. The most dominant reason is to earn money to improve their lot in the Philippines. The attractiveness of what an OFW can earn in South Korea prompted Labor Attaché Cruz to say, “One reason Filipinos come here to work and patiently suffer the difficulty of being in another country is because of the compensation here. Where else can you see an unskilled laborer earn US\$1,000 a month?”² (2008).

Of course, we know that in the Philippines life is very hard... In Korea, the salaries are higher, the basic pay is higher. Our basic salary is W786,000.³ (William)

In coming here, Dave was also thinking of his future. Aside from helping his parents financially, he wants to become economically stable so that when he returns home and starts a family he will be able to give his children a better future and not suffer what he has gone through.

I am not thinking anymore about the hardships here. I went here with the knowledge of what is in store for me. I went here to work, to stake my chances for the future, to earn money.... When I came here, I was ready for all the work and all the hardships. (Dave)

Aside from earning money, there are other reasons why Filipinos come to work in South Korea. Liza came over to forget her troubles in the Philippines. She separated from her husband back home. Emely is in South Korea for altruistic reasons. She wants to help her Filipino compatriots weather their hardships here. Ferial, aside from earning money, came to South Korea to practice speaking in Korean. He graduated from an aviation school as an airplane mechanic. He wants to work for Korean Airlines.



Living in Korea

Leaving for a foreign country to work is disrupting. Migrant workers would have to leave comfortable surroundings and a way of life that they are accustomed to, confront unfamiliar situations that nobody can really completely prepare for, and limit ties with family and friends.

The OFWs in Korea experience these disruptions in terms of culture: lifestyle and traditions, work ethics, as well as emotional well-being, personal relationships, and family life.

At the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center for Filipino Migrants, Emely Abagat deals with OFWs who have encountered problems such as abusive employers, unpaid salaries, contract violations, medical emergencies and even deaths. She also adds the grave impact of the cultural differences that newly-arrived workers encounter in South Korea as a source of dissonance or disruption.

It really is a culture shock. Others are able to cope with the changes but there are those who can't and decide to go home. They encounter psychological problems. In the center, we try to encourage them to stay on, we tell that that this is a good opportunity for them ... but they will always reply that they don't like to stay any longer, they are finding it so difficult to stay in Korea (Abagat)

Vanessa took more than a year to adjust to the culture. She wanted to go home. Like the others in this study, she found the food too spicy compared to Philippine food. Jun says, "Three years of eating Korean food is of course very tiring." The diet consisting mostly of vegetables becomes monotonous. Aside from the food and other customs and traditions like sitting on the floor and bowing that OFWs find strange, the language difference is more alienating to the Filipino migrant.

The OFW, specifically those who came to South Korea under the EPS, has to pass the Korean Language Test (KLT) prior to employment. According to Dr. Abagat, the language training needed to pass the KLT is very basic. She says, "The Korean language is difficult. It has various levels. The language you use with children is different from those you use with your employers.... What the workers learn in the accredited Korean language

schools in the Philippines is formal Korean and not oriented to the language used in the factories." Abagat expounds on the problem of not understanding the language:

It becomes so lonely because you cannot understand anything. ... When you want to buy food, you don't know what to say. ... When they hear you speak in English, even the sales ladies will move away from you (Abagat)

The working environment in South Korea is very different from what these OFWs have experienced in the Philippines. Liza opines that "it is harder to work here because of their work ethics." Elmer notices how most find themselves in the verge of tears because of the difficulty of working in South Korea.

Jun finds the working hours in Korea longer than the 8-hours-a-day that he is used to in the Philippines. Like most OFWs, he works 12-hours-a-day, 6-days-a-week to take advantage of the overtime pay. Also, Jun says that the way his employer gets angry is very severe – "they have a bad temper and a bad mouth." Abagat, in her conversations with OFWs, observed that the gap in the relationship between superiors and subordinates is wider in Korea.

In the Philippines, the gap between you and your boss is not that wide. Here you can really feel it. Maybe this is because of the language and the treatment Because the basic work ethic is very different. In the Philippines your boss cannot just slap you at the back, or shout at you or swear. (Abagat)

Dioneo also sees the great difference in the work place. He feels that OFWs here have to take more responsibilities and are overworked.

For example you are a mechanic, in the Philippines that is all you have to do. In here you have to do all the work. ... If the machine breaks down, you have to fix it yourself. And you have to fix it fast so that you can go back to your work immediately. You don't just have to meet your quota, you have to do everything. (Dioneo)



Ariel feels bitter about the attitude of Koreans towards work and how they take advantage of their foreign workers.

You will resent the Koreans for their work habits because they treat you like a slave. Because they know that they have foreign workers [who are not familiar with the labor laws of South Korea and are desperate for jobs] they don't stop giving them more work ... even if the worker is already very tired and even if they are not doing anything.... (Ariel)

According to Labor Attaché Cruz, the difficulties experienced by some of those working in South Korea is compounded by a disparity between their experience and positions in the Philippines and their actual work in Korea. He mentions how some OFWs are overqualified for their job and find it difficult to accept the kind of work that they do here. As an example, he pointed out that most OFWs in Korea are college graduates doing manual labor. "Imagine, a licensed engineer ... here you will ask him to carry steel or buckets of squid ... or a guy who is a supervisor back home and here you ask him to work that way...." (Cruz 2008). One of these workers is Dave. He is an airline mechanic but works as a laborer for a display construction company. Another is Elmer, a computer engineer who worked as a support technician in the Philippines. In Korea, he operates a plastic mold injection machine, collects and packs plastic products.

Boredom is another personal circumstance that affects the OFWs' emotional well-being in their workplace. The routine of inverting socks makes Elmer's work boring. Day in and day out, it is the same thing for him and this makes his work difficult. John does not only find his work putting bricks inside a kiln and taking these out when it is done monotonous, he says that the place where he stays is also boring. He stays in an industrial area far from the city, far from residential areas and places for entertainment. For irregular migrants like Maribeth, going around and visiting malls and parks is difficult. There is the fear of being caught by the immigration police. Since she has become a TNT, she only goes to three places: her home, the place of her work, and in Hyehwa where she help her aunt sell Filipino goods to other Filipinos who congregate there every Sunday.

In Hyehwa, OFWs get to see each other, establish friendships and join Filipino community activities. Labor Attaché Cruz says that these

activities, even just seeing or buying Filipino goods sold in the improvised market, somehow help mitigate homesickness and loneliness. But he also admits that these connections to the homeland are not enough. On his first weeks in South Korea, Dave was so lonely and homesick that his Filipino co-workers brought him out to see the sites. "My co-workers said that I was always looking at the window ... looking far.... If only I could drill a hole into the mountains to be able to see the Philippines," says Dave. Lina also feels lonely even if she is with Filipinos here in South Korea. She says, "Even if I am with a lot of Filipinos, ... even if I have family here, ... it is still different if you are in your own country. It is sad to be away.... It is different ... it is not complete."

For Filipinos with very close family ties, living away from one's family is a disruption OFWs have to live with when they are abroad.

Aside from a personal capacity to endure these disruptions, the OFWs rely on many other factors that allow them to provide continuity between their life in the Philippines and in South Korea.

Emely Abagat believes that the capacity of each person, their threshold for pain and sacrifice allow them to cope with the differences and dissonances that the Filipino experiences in South Korea. She also points out that having Filipino friends and staying in touch with Filipino culture gives them the ability to stay on and undergo the hardships of migrant workers. "With Filipino friends, they are able to open up.... Look at the number of Filipinos going to Hyehwa ... not all of them go there to hear mass.... They go there to meet friends, to eat Filipino food ... to get enough energy to survive another week in their work" (Abagat).

Motives for Media Consumption

Media Products Consumed

In South Korea, because most media products are in Hangeul, the OFW has to be resourceful in order to consume such items. John says, "When we arrived in Korea, we did not have any media ... only Korean TV.... Magazines are also in Korean.... If you don't have cable, you don't have English channels." As Elmer Cruz observed, "If you do not have the patience to search online or buy pre-paid Internet cards for Philippine programs, you won't have access to any media products coming from the Philippines" (2008).

The media products available to and patronized by OFWs in South Korea are limited. There are those who tune in to the FM channel from the American base or use online radio stations. English language newspapers like *Korea Times* are usually available if the employers subscribe to them. Filipino tabloids like *Abante* are sold in Hye-hwa, but these Filipino papers are very expensive and are a day delayed. More accessible are the flyers published by Filipino organizations like *Newbits* and *Newsgate* and the online version of Philippine newspapers. On television, Filipino movies dubbed in Korean are sometimes aired like the Kris Aquino starrer *Feng shui* (Roño 2004). But more available are English programs on cable TV and the English language, Korean produced, Arirang channel. To watch Filipino Television programs, OFWs go online. Sites like Spreeb and Pinoy Channel TV (<http://www.telebisyon.spreeb.com> and <http://www.pinoychanneltv.com> respectively, currently inactive) have illegally put together archives of Filipino programs. Pre-paid Internet cards for The Filipino Channel and Filipino TV Online are also available. Pirated DVDs of Filipino and English language movies are sold in South Korea. For communication, pre-paid cell phone cards from various providers compete for patronage among the Filipino migrants. The online communication channels like e-mails, chatting, messaging and so on are also used by the OFWs.

Uses and Gratifications

The reasons OFWs consume Philippine-based media can be understood using the Uses and Gratification Approach where it is assumed that the choice of media and media content is generally rational. This choice comes from the fulfillment of specific goals and satisfactions; and media-related needs of audiences arise from personal and social circumstances and these needs can be seen in terms of rationalizations (McQuail 2000). The typology of media-person interaction or needs gratified by the media includes “diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance” (2000, 388).

Diversion is associated with the consumption of content for “escapism, or being diverted, from problems, relaxing, getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment, filling time, emotional release and sexual arousal” (McQuail 1987, qtd. in Chandler 1994). Dave listens to radio to wile the time away. Arnel watches television programs online to get entertained. He likes comedies and love stories. Gello captured the sentiments of many

of the respondents when he said, “Of course we become lonely ... of course we find ways to get entertained, especially when it is cold and you feel too lazy to go out.... You stay inside your room, watch DVDs ... even chat online....”

Personal relationships include both finding “how other people live ... [and identifying] with people in the media and thus [gaining] a sense of belonging” (Underwood 2003). Given the use of media as a tool for communication, the gratification of “personal relationships” goes beyond identifying with those in the media but in the real-world, extends maintaining relationships. Jun talks to his mother for 30 minutes on the cell phone, and “*kwentuhan*” is how Jun describes the conversations: they do not talk about any specific subject, they just chat to keep in touch. Liza also uses her cell phone to communicate with her family. She notes that for some OFWs, 13 cards a month, which allows one to talk for 30 minutes per card, is not enough. Vanessa chats with her boyfriend when she goes online. Lina call her children. And like any mother, she inquires about how they are doing back in the Philippines. She also scolds them and gives them reminders.

Personal identity is the introspective action of “gaining self-knowledge and reinforcing personal values” (McQuail 1972, qtd. in Windahl et al. 1992, 160). Because his work in a plastic injection mold company is so different from his line of work in the Philippines, Elmer, a computer engineer, uses the Internet to talk to his former co-workers so that he can keep updated with the developments in communication technology. He also surfs the net for the same purpose. By doing this, he is able to maintain a part of his identity that he left in the Philippines.

Surveillance is both the need to acquire and seek advice and provide information about what is happening in various parts of the environment (McQuail 1972, cited in Windahl et al. 1992). Maribeth wants to keep informed, especially about the Philippines. She says, “When the newspaper comes, I first look for news about the Philippines.” William also reads the newspaper to get information. First, like many of the respondents, he looks at the exchange rate between the Philippine peso and the U.S. dollar.

Motivations

A deeper look at how these OFWs use media and the gratifications they seek points to motivations that are greatly linked with the disruptions that they

are experiencing as migrant workers. I posit that their media usage, especially their consumption of Philippine-based media, is predicated on individual or personal motivations that will bridge the distance between South Korea and the Philippines. These motivations are based on the need to provide continuity to the dislocation, heal the trauma of migration and the social cost of leaving ones family, afford an equilibrium and balance to create a sense of normalcy – a continuity for these disrupted lives.

Lina says that when she is lonely, she calls home. “Of course I call them a lot of times... If I am lonely, I will call them ... this is my only diversion ... and when I am able to talk to them, I’m happy.” This is a very personal motivation that prompts her to use the media. Dave points out how resourceful Filipinos are in finding Philippine-based media content online. He says that these online sites were created specifically for Filipinos overseas. He explains, “You will always come back to the Philippines... these shows, especially the re-runs of comedy programs and old Filipino movies, these make you happy.” Again the motivation here is to become happy. It shows that being happy in a foreign land is dependent on a very personal and individual criteria for satisfaction. What the OFWs’ media usage shows is how they select both media and content that will provide them with very personal pleasures.

Dave deals with his homesickness by reading news on the Philippines. This allows him to bridge the gap between his two new environments. He feels that he is at home when he watches Philippine programs. “I don’t become that homesick ... when I watch news about the Philippines... When you are here, you want to see news on what is happening in our country... Because you are far away from them ... you do not know what is happening to them.” This gives Dave and the others respondents a sense of being at home. Vanessa gets excited when she hears news about the Philippines on CNN. Jun and JR keep themselves updated with what is happening in the Philippines. This gives a sense of being near one’s homeland – a sense of being at home. As Edward emphasized, “For OFWs like me, our mind is on the Philippines.”

Media habits also are hard to change. Liza used to subscribe to newspapers in the Philippines. Here, she seeks out the news online. In South Korea, Elmer sought to watch sports but he was not really interested because basketball, his favorite sport, is not popular in South Korea and consequently there is limited coverage of this sport on the networks. What he used to do

in the Philippines is go online to chat and this he still does here in South Korea.

Very telling is how Dione goes online to search for information that will allow him to share this information with his child. In order to decrease both physical and emotional distance and heal the trauma of migration, Dione uses the media. He says, “I am getting old, if I do not know anything, what will I be able to share with my son? Even if we are far from each other, we talk ... and I believe that it is important that he learn something from his father.”

Disrupted Lives

Indeed, as Paragas noted, since the consumption of Philippine-based media reinforces loyalty to the Philippines and emphasizes the “otherness” of the Filipino as a foreigner in a host country, the media consumption practices of OFWs in South Korea exhibit these tendencies. With their continuous patronage of the products of the globalized Philippine media, these OFWs become more Filipino and their identities as Filipinos become bolstered and strengthened.

But what is more telling, when motivations for media consumptions are examined, this ethnicization does not happen because of a sense of nationalism. The consumption of Philippine media in South Korea happens primarily because of two reasons: first, South Korean media texts are basically in Hangeul, a writing system that the OFWs cannot understand; second, the need to gratify personal desires becomes a strong motivating factor in the selection of media products. This brings us to James Carey’s concept of communication as culture, a ritualistic “process through which a shared culture is created, modified, and transformed ... the maintenance of society in time ... the sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality” (1989, 43). The motivations of these OFWs point to a maintenance of a way of life – a continuation of a culture that has been withheld from them because of their displacement. When OFWs consume a Filipino media product, when they hear their language and witness acts and activities to which they had been accustomed throughout their lives, they reflect on their fellowship with other Filipinos and their commonality with those they had left behind. The ritual allows them to “become” who they are, of being Filipino.



In media consumption, being Filipino happens as personal circumstances shape the motives behind media use. The overseas Filipino worker in South Korea, like any other migrant worker, is displaced. OFWs are in a foreign land, far from their families and friends, plucked out of their habits and customs, removed from their daily pleasures and responsibilities back home. They are active media users and in choosing media, they use both rational and emotional goals to define the needs to be gratified. And in this personal construction of gratifications, OFWs choose Philippine-based media products to bridge the gap between the expansive void brought about by migration, to mitigate the loneliness and alienation experienced in this diaspora, and to provide continuity in their disrupted lives.

Notes

- ¹ Data from the South Korean Ministry of Labor provided by the Labor Office of the Philippine Embassy in South Korea.
- ² The direct quotations used here were translated from Filipino or Taglish (a combination of Tagalog and English), the languages used in the interviews, to English.
- ³ Quotations are from personal interviews gathered from the field work for this research conducted between November 2007 and April 2008.

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‘Their History Is To Have None’:
Between Clandestine Practices and *Facebook*
in Timor Leste, Media and Culture/s
in a Newly Independent Nation
by Jacqueline Aquino Siapno

This paper examines how culture/s (broadly defined, including clandestine culture, bureaucratic culture) and media are unfolding in independent East Timor, after centuries of colonial occupation by Portugal and decades of war and violence under Indonesian rule. How are indigenous belief systems and traditional cultures in the rural villages responding to, cooperating, clashing with, or ignoring successive UN Missions and international development paradigms? Do “global governance mechanisms” and their technocrats work together with indigenous ritual leaders, or marginalize them?

Every day in Dili, I buy the four newspaper dailies (*Suara Timor Lorosae*, *Timor Post*, *Diario*, *Semanario*), watch the one television program in the country (TVTL), and sometimes listen to the radio programs. Occasionally, I surf the Internet to check news on East Timor. While the daily print media is predictably boring and unimaginative (more on a content reading later), TV is becoming more creative, radio has the widest and farthest reach in the remote rural areas, but Internet (even with its limited circulation amongst the urban middle class and elite) breaks the most boundaries in terms of creating a new online cyberspace communities for purposes both positive (e.g., transparency of e-governance transactions, social networking, information) and negative (e.g., fabricating rumors and destructive gossip, pornography).

In the digital age of information transparency and accountable e-governance, Timor Leste's transition from clandestine resistance practices to openness is challenging, to say the least. Observers of East Timorese politics and society sometimes comment that because of the impact of the war and subsequent conflicts (including the political crisis in 2006), it is very difficult for the East Timorese to psychologically open up, talk to each other (transcending political and regional divisiveness), or trust each other (in the past, the Indonesian military occupation encouraged spying on each other, even within one family). Openness is challenging because within the country itself collective healing from the war and violence – from the colonizer's strategy of turning members of one family and community into spies spying on one another, and acknowledging the deep wounds of colonization instead of being “in denial” – has yet to begin. This is where media and new forms of social media in the Internet can play a critical role.

In *The Art of Not Being Governed*, James Scott (2009) argues that in anti-colonial and anti-state resistance movements in upland, mountainous Southeast Asia, “their history is to have none.” How did clandestine, anti-colonial resistance movements shape Timorese culture/s and psyche? Here it is worthwhile to cite James Scott at length because the themes he raises in his book are very relevant in understanding the East Timor context:

The hills ... are not simply a space of political resistance but also a zone of cultural refusal ... Fernand Braudel acknowledged the political autonomy of the hills when he approvingly quoted Baron de Tott to the effect that “the steepest places have always been the asylum of liberty.... The mountains are as a rule a world apart from civilizations which are an urban and lowland achievement. Their history is to have none, to remain always on the fringes of the great waves of civilization, even the longest and most persistent...” (Scott 2009, 20)

What blocks a clear view of the peoples of mainland Southeast Asia for most of their history is the state: classical, colonial, and independent. While a state-centric view of, say, the past fifty years might be justified, it represents a gross distortion of earlier periods.... Why this should be so, why the histories of states should have so persistently insinuated themselves in the place that might have been occupied by a history of peoples, merits

reflection. The reason, in a nutshell, I believe, is that state centers, even the tenuous and evanescent Indic-style classical states, are the political units that leave the most concentrated volume of physical evidence ... they leave far more concentrated rubble in the form of middens, artifacts, building materials, and architectural ruins. The larger the pile of rubble you leave behind, the larger your place in the historical record! The more dispersed, mobile, egalitarian societies regardless of their sophistication and trading networks, and despite being often more populous, are relatively invisible in the historical record because they spread their debris more widely.... The thicker the paper trail you leave behind, the larger your place in the historical record. It becomes difficult, in this context, to reconstruct the life-world of nonelites, even if they are located at the court center. They typically appear in the record as statistical abstractions: so many laborers, so many conscripts, taxpayers, padi planters, so many bearers of tribute. Rarely do they appear as historical actors, and when they do, as in the case of a suppressed revolt, you can be sure that something has gone terribly wrong. The job of peasants, you might say, is to stay out of the archives. (2009, 33-34)

How do upland Timorese living in the mountain regions of Ainaro and Ermera, for example, or peasant farmers who have stayed out of the archives and the news for so long maintain their non-state spaces in independent East Timor? How do former ex-guerrillas and clandestine leaders negotiate their former identities with new social media such as *Facebook*, which is currently very popular among MPs, the youth, and other civil society actors in Timor Leste?

Transitioning from a culture of clandestine practice necessary for the anti-colonial resistance to one of openness, trusting the state (which is now Timorese, not colonial) is a challenging process. One is asking former clandestine resistance practitioners who only trusted closed networks to migrate into a zone, a post-independent, post-colonial space which is ostensibly more inclusive, participatory, democratic and de-colonized. In this sense, it is possible that the emergence of new social media in Timor Leste, such as *Facebook*, is seen as a site of freedom – a new cyberspace zone where one can create a new identity, new social networks, an independent, non-state (or transcending state and national boundaries) space where local adat

(indigenous belief systems and practices) no longer frames you completely. It is like migrating from a small village to a huge metropolitan city, but in a virtual community. In *Facebook*, Timorese are able to migrate from the small country of Timor Leste with a population of one million where everybody is related in one way or another, everybody knows what you are doing, to a site where you can be more “anonymous,” creating their own new identities and self-representations in a different way, sometimes meeting their new girlfriend (as in the case of a Timorese student in Korea who is now dating a Filipina; they met in the Internet). It may also be perceived to be more democratic as the authors of the blogs are “anonymous” and can produce rumors, scandals, gossip, attack and criticize political leaders without ever having to be made accountable (as regulating cyberspace assaults is still a new phenomena in this country). The cyberspace zone of freedom fits very well with the clandestine mentality of ephemerality, leaving no traces behind, producing rumors and gossip without having a point of origin, having 1,000 masks and changing them to suit the self-representation needed for specific audiences depending on the context.

New social media such as *Facebook* has caught on like a fever in Timor Leste. As one Timorese woman put it, the idea of using the Internet and new media for propagating one’s ideas and political campaign, as Obama had done in the U.S., is something that is not lost on the Timorese. For example, in the recent campaign to get the very first Timorese woman elected to the CEDAW Committee in the UN in New York, Ms. Milena Pires, the Ministry for Gender Equality, Rede Feto, and other women’s NGOs collectively used *Facebook* as the media for getting their message across – about Domestic Violence, Reproductive Health, Human Trafficking, Prostitution. At the same time, however, it is also through new media such as blogs that the opposition have managed to produce negative fabrications about the private lives of political leaders – including sex scandals, affairs, gossip, yet unable to provide hard-hitting evidence on corruption as the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) has done, for example. In a small country where the media (one television station – TVTL, a few radio stations, at least 5 print media) is still very weak and largely derivative (i.e., reprinting news from other international news agencies, with very minimal local content, and not so critical investigative journalism), rumor and gossip in blogs tend to be read as “real news.” One could even argue that fabrication and gossip is the art of not being governed in Timor Leste. When one reads the blogs on

the production of fabricated rumors and gossip in East Timor, one is truly amazed at the imaginative capacity of the anonymous bloggers intent on a character assassination of the present government, for example. This is a continuing resilient practice from the past, when Timorese resistance leaders led production of riot campaigns against their former colonizers. During the anti-colonial resistance and authoritarian rule under Suharto as Benedict Anderson argues elsewhere, “what passes as fact is actually fictive, but that which passes as fiction is real.” In this kind of space, it is challenging to read which is fact and which is fiction. In the political sphere, for example, it is common to encounter “spin doctors” – people who specialize in producing negative news and propaganda against their opponents, in an attempt to shape public opinion and perception which benefits their particular group or political party. In terms of media freedom and democratization, Timor Leste may be one of the more relaxed, compared to Singapore. However, that doesn’t mean that everyone is free to criticize, as self-censorship (internalized from previous punitive regimes) and paternalism (fear and paranoia of criticizing the powers-that-be and at the same time the powers-that-be being perceived as a kind of “mafia”) continue to prevail.

Having said that, however, compared to other countries like Korea and the Philippines which have already migrated to e-governance and have been long comfortable with living in the digital age and even having “digital families,” in East Timor today, only a small percentage of the population within the country have regular access to the Internet. There are also the different diasporic Timorese communities in Australia, Portugal, Ireland, and students studying in Cuba, the Philippines, Korea, the US, and other places who are active in this new social media. Local institutions (e.g., Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste, website at <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/>, Lao Hamutuk), international organizations operating within Timor Leste for the past several years (including the UN, UN agencies, WB) and solidarity networks (e.g. East Timor Action Network, ETAN) which supported the anti-colonial resistance movements for decades have also had an active online presence producing news and research reports, in addition to more recent online media such as the Timor Leste Media Development Centre (TLMDC) and Center for Timor Leste Investigative Journalism. Not to mention the numerous scholarly publications that have recently been published on East Timor history, politics, culture and development in the past few years by scholars from all over the world,¹

and visual media (films and video) including in the Max Stahl film archives housed in the Independence Memorial and the digital archives in the Museu Nacional da Resistancia.

But within Timor Leste, there remains a huge gap between the majority of the population in rural districts who continue to rely on traditional methods of communication and cooperation (i.e., face-to-face conversations, structured community consultations) and those in Dili who are media-savvy and already conducting most of their social life in new social media like *Facebook*, blogs, and mobile phone text messaging.

Content Analysis of Print Media

In a country with 32 local languages, and a pluralistic array of multiple cultural influences, what is the role of language in the shaping of culture/s and media? Can culture/s be “managed? Can media be “managed?” Do media play a role in democratization, inclusiveness, participation, and pluralism or does it continue the resilient tradition of paternalism and patronage? Did independence bring new methods of learning, or did it prove that colonial methods of colonizing the mind are successful and difficult to eliminate?

This is my reading of the print media, based on several years of everyday reading after 1999:

1. Most of the news, especially on the front page is state-centered, focusing on only a handful of your usual personalities (the President, President of Parliament, Prime Minister...) Strong element of paternalism, if not state-propaganda (it is now “fashionable” for political leaders, including Ministers and Secretaries of State to have big photos of themselves with a message or “legitimacy” caption at the bottom, taking up an entire page in the newspaper).
2. Methodologies: Very minimal primary source content based on interviews. Most of the rest of the pages are secondary news cut and pasted from other Indonesian language, Portuguese language, and English language newspapers. No representation of the rest of the other local languages, except for Tetun, and even that, according to Tetun language teacher and linguist

Catharina Williams van Klinken, is not very good written Tetun. She once said when I took her Tetun class: “If you want to learn good Tetun, don’t read the newspapers.”

A lot of pages spent on Indonesian celebrities’ gossip columns (as if the Timorese in the rural villages really cared about the sex scandals of actors and actresses in Indonesia), in Indonesian language. Proof that de-colonizing the mind has yet to begin. Problem of colonial languages being so dominant: rural peasants cannot grab governance into their own hands because official languages are colonial languages, and those who cannot read, speak, nor write in them are considered marginal and non-existent in the scheme of nation-building.

3. Hardly any rigorous investigative journalism: mostly provocative, if not destructive language, violent, divisive title captions pitting leaders against each other, in order to attract audience attention, and sell. Journalists need to be trained in using the media for new methods of learning and political rhetoric, not reproducing violent language and mentality fostered during the colonial occupation.
4. While some of the print media now include “Voices from the Streets” – with photos of “ordinary people” and their opinions, generally, it is not-inclusive. Print patriarchy is strongly evident.
5. Need to build a critical mass of critical readers with an intellectually nuanced and subtle palette asking probing questions. This can only be done through more education, new methods of learning, and consultations throughout the country.

This is one important area where Media Cooperation and Cultural Exchange with other Asian countries can be mutually beneficial. For example, Koreans and Filipino scholars can learn about the enduring resilience of Oral History and Oral Cultures in the upland and remote regions of East

Timor, who, for centuries of colonial regimes (both under the Portuguese and Indonesians) managed to evade the state and continue to maintain their own anti-state spaces. Given the pressure to write down everything under print patriarchy, to make legible all kinds of local knowledges for the easy comprehension, tracing and appropriation of the state (whether colonial or post-colonial), upland communities in Timor Leste have managed (if we are to use this term “management”) to evade incorporation into violent and exploitative colonial state spaces (known for state enclosures of ancestral lands), by having no mappings and written history easily comprehensible to former colonizers and current dominators.

There is now a website for the Center for Timor Leste’s Investigative Journalism, but besides a few lightweight articles, the topics on “anti-corruption” and “who got which government tenders” are weak. Again, this is where they can learn a lot from cooperating with the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism which has managed to bring down Presidents and corrupt government officials through their rigorous research and production of new knowledge. The most serious problem now on governance in East Timor is the lack of mechanisms, systems, and controls (i.e., strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission, Inspector General’s Office, Ombudsman, training more investigative journalists, building a critical mass of students, strengthening Civilian Oversight mechanisms in Parliament, an independent judiciary sector.) All of these continue to be quite weak.

**Culture/s in Timor Leste that May Be Obstacles to Democratization:
Paternalism and Patronage: “Father Knows Best...”
and “All in the Family...”**

In a survey conducted by IRI in 2003 on media and political participation, it is noted that only around 1,000 people in Timor Leste, mostly in Dili, read the print media, the majority of the population, especially in the rural districts, rely on radio for information (e.g., Radio Falintil, Radio Timor Kmanek). Those with the most information tend to vote for the smaller but transformative and innovative political parties, and those who have the least access to information tend to just follow the status quo (i.e. easily manipulated by media-savvy political elites using “historical” symbols).

As Althusser argues in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” media can become an instrument of the state for state purposes. Even though

RTTL is headed by someone from the opposition and some of the print and radio media try to be more “polemical,” I’d like to argue that generally, a polemical culture of healthy (rather than destructive and brutal) debate and critical dialogue is minimal in Timor Leste. Healthy communication and critical dialogue, without resulting to physical and verbal abuse, needs to be fostered, including in Parliament. Due to the long history of colonial occupation and suppression of dissent, the space for healthy contentious critical dialogue and debate is minimal, and government insiders who wish to criticize the powers that be for corruption, lack of democratization, authoritarian personalities resort to indirectly articulating their ideas outside for an external audience. Fostering a culture of healthy polemical debates and critical dialogues requires a critical mass of young people, women, and rural communities who are not afraid to question entrenched social inequalities, patriarchal systems, and paternalistic-patronage politics from old methods of governance, all of which can only be done through transformative educational processes.

A Cultural Geography of the Production of a Public Sphere

Why does corruption, state incompetence, wastage, paternalism, patriarchy, neo-colonialism persist? For several reasons:

1. Journalists tend to place themselves in a weak and inferior position vis-à-vis the powers-that-be, in terms of seniority and hierarchy (e.g., age, who suffered and sacrificed more in the struggle for independence) and independence (the idea that independent media can be a powerful mechanism to make the state accountable to the people has yet to take off and blossom.) RTTL for example, is funded by the state, and in the past, at least according to a former Director, had experienced excessive state intervention in the running of their station.
2. The resilience of Bureaucratic Culture: inherited from previous colonial regimes (both Portugal and Indonesia) but continues to grab hold of the mentality of Timorese, who have been unable to de-colonize their minds, up to this day. One outside observer of East Timorese state pageantry commented: “The protocol is

an exact copy of the Indonesian bureaucratic culture. If you read Furnivall on ‘Designing a Nation-State,’ it’s amazing that the Timorese just copied the Indonesian state pageantry.” What is the point of becoming independent? The idea that state events and activities are the only legitimate and interesting news, and that the rest of the people do not really exist as historical actors. Everyday reporting tends to highlight only the activities of the most powerful and monopolizing personalities, mostly male. In fact this doesn’t just happen in the media, it also tends to happen in lunches and dinners as well, where a handful of leaders truly monopolize the conversation space and have little capacity to be curious about other people’s experiences, nor to listen. Space for internal dissent is also increasingly narrow.

Slowly, some media are beginning to cover “people’s voices and opinions,” what the guy in the street thinks, but that is still very minimal. The idea of Subaltern Studies has yet to take hold. In such a culture, it is crucial what the leaders do: if they happen to provide good examples, then the people follow. But what if the leaders are providing bad examples: e.g., wastage, corruption, unethical behavior, “wang-wang” phenomena (as in the Philippines), greed, vanity, authoritarianism, and other bad practices?

3. The UN culture of hypocrisy: while the UN is good on rhetoric when it comes to “participatory communication,” “good governance,” “human rights,” and “gender,” there is a huge gap between their ideals and practices. Several analysts have written more in-depth reports and studies on their ineffectiveness in Timor Leste and their inability to learn from their maladministration in other places, but one example is language and their continuing inability to be able to communicate with the locals in the local languages. “Rule of experts and advisors” abound where so-called highly qualified consultants, demanding very high salaries, from different parts of the world descend upon the Timorese, ready with their modules on all kinds of development programs but cannot implement them

due to inability to communicate them in a language that the Timorese can understand perfectly.

4. Romanticizing “indigenous cultures”: a tendency among anthropologists and civil society activists to cordon off “indigenous cultures” and “traditional authority” as untouchable and “pure,” even when some aspects of it are quite unjust (especially toward girls and women), as if indigenous cultures are static and not innovative or evolving. Very little cutting-edge studies on urban space as not just as space that is “corruptive,” but also emancipatory for women, especially those who find the culture of adat and traditional authority as cyclically producing and reproducing mechanisms of subordination.
5. Culture of “denial”: in spite of the increasing public acknowledgements of collective trauma, at the individual and socio-political levels, reconciling with one’s self in terms of the violence and tragedies that happened in this country is only beginning to open up. The culture of mistrust, lack of trust, being in-denial about things like family violence, incest, serious political crimes, spying on each other, a culture of paranoia, continue to persist.
6. “All in the family...” Some analysts have observed that because Timor Leste is relatively small in terms of population (1 million), almost everyone is in some way or another related to each other (either by blood, kinship networks, clandestine networks, guerrilla networks, *inan-aman sarani* patronage network, or some other social network). UN and other international experts and advisers trying to implement the modern-nation-state-building processes have not yet done enough local mapping on how these kinship networks operate and so are often frustrated and make comments like: “East Timor is run like a family business, rather than a nation-state.” Internal analysts, however, have more subtle understandings of the dysfunctional fragmentations even within this so-called “united family.” While family resilience and social cohesion

does continue to exist in certain “social networks,” increasingly there is acknowledgement and recognition that even within these “alliances,” there are serious fault-lines.

New Methods of International Cooperation Not Based on Domination

In a country where there is not a single cinema, nor a film industry, what is the impact of the recent Korean film on East Timor, *A Barefoot Dream*, upon the local population? How do they read and interpret “Korea” and “Koreans”?

I went to a public screening of this film in Dili, Timor Leste In June 2010 with my son, 7, who is the same age as the boys in the film. It is the first time for many Timorese in the audience to see a fiction film about East Timor, based on a true story about a Korean soccer coach who lived in Timor, that is not a documentary about violence, war, trauma, or suffering, but everyday politics of life in Timor from the perspective of a Korean businessman-turned-soccer coach. The Timorese audience’s reactions were interesting: first of all, it was refreshing to see a film about themselves, made by an outsider (i.e., Koreans, in collaboration with Japanese) that is not about the usual thematic topics: war, conflict. Secondly, it was enjoyable and entertaining to see foreigners (Koreans and Japanese) speaking in Tetun (it was dubbed, of course, the version I saw in Seoul was not even dubbed nor translated, and the Timorese in Seoul with whom I went on the opening night were annoyed that it was only in Korean), and observing the Timorese, being a kind of “mirror” to show us some of our strengths and weaknesses. It is also a pretty funny movie and there were some sections that elicited a lot of laughter and intense emotional reaction (e.g., the scene of the soccer match between the Timorese kids and the Japanese kids). There were also local reviews in the local print media and I also wrote my own review of the film.

This is just the beginning of making “contact” with each other, and so far, it is a pleasant one. However, this “contact” and cooperation can turn bad if some problems are not addressed: the newly initiated program to send East Timorese laborers to become “trainees” in Korea is beginning to have some casualties, especially in the fisheries sector, in the same way that other Southeast Asian laborers have been discriminated against and treated

very badly in Korea. A Timorese laborer from Oecussi who was physically beaten by his employer apparently said to Timorese students and Timorese Embassy staff in Korea: “We did not come here to become their slaves. We came here to learn about their work ethics. We’ve just been through a war, the last thing we need is more violence.” This worker went back home to Oecussi last year.

A month ago, here in Dili, Timorese “trainees” who had finished their contracts in Korea and experienced maltreatment there held a demonstration in front of the Korean language school in Caicoli. Like other Southeast Asian workers, they were protesting unjust and unfair treatment by their Korean employers. In certain circles now in Timor Leste, civil society groups are commenting that this kind of “cooperation” is not worthwhile and humiliating for a new country which has just experienced war and trauma.

Surprisingly in Korea, even though these kinds of violations of human rights in the labor sector have been happening for a long time, not much is being done about them. Can this be called “progress”? How do we build “international cooperation” not based on domination and exploitation?

Concluding Remarks

What are the creative and innovative possibilities for inter-regional cultural cooperation and exchange with other East Asian and Southeast Asian countries in the fields of media and culture studies? What can East Timor learn from other Asian countries when it comes to media and culture management? In conclusion, there are some areas where cooperation, engagement and exchange would be mutually beneficial:

1. Encourage Koreans to learn more and study Southeast Asian languages, histories, cultures and strengthen people-to-people friendships, beyond the usual using the Philippines to study English-only-purposes. There is so much more to Philippine and Southeast Asian languages histories, music and culture/s beyond that which is available in the English language. Furthermore, Korean companies really have to be made more accountable to corporate responsibility, international human rights standards, and basic decency in terms of seeing Southeast Asia and Southeast Asians not just as a source of “labor made

cheap,” or as “mail-order-brides to do unpaid caregiving work,” but as fellow human beings who deserve kindness, compassion and respect. Cosmopolitan virtue has yet to be learnt in Korea especially by those engaging actively with Southeast Asians. Cosmopolitanism is also an important virtue to learn if Korea is to be a good “new donor” not reproducing the bad practices of bad Samaritans.

2. Investigative Journalism, especially on Anti-Corruption: Timor Leste can become a very peaceful and prosperous country, if only it can avoid the pitfalls of corruption, wastage and greed. Korea and the Philippines have a lot of experience in building systems and mechanisms, institutions, and social processes in checking, controlling, evaluating, monitoring, in making political leaders publicly accountable. Timor Leste is a natural resource-rich country who tends to rely on withdrawing money from the Petroleum Fund for its national budget, yet without having effective systems, mechanisms, and controls to make sure that these funds are not going to waste and corruption. It has a lot to learn from countries like Korea in terms of how a country that has little by way of natural resources has been able to implement collective saving, prioritize education, prevent corruption, and become a leader in knowledge-economies and ICT.
3. Creative Media and Film: when the film crew of *A Barefoot Dream* began their program in Timor Leste, they asked the Timor Leste Consul in Seoul: “Do you have any acting schools where we can recruit actors/actresses?” The Consul replied: “Forget acting schools, we don’t even have a cinema. You’ll have to recruit them from the streets.” Which is precisely what they did. Nevertheless, the film is quite a success and a fascinating learning process for both countries. For the Koreans, engaging with an audience that is not yet saturated with media images and is fairly new to analyzing the impact of “soft power” and culture on international cooperation can be an interesting study. For the Timorese, having an outsider who is not a colonizer

observe and document everyday experiences of children playing soccer and being mentored by a Korean coach, is an interesting experience, as most other media often focused (as I have mentioned above) primarily on state-actors.

4. Education and New Methods of Learning: in East Timor, teachers and Professors are under-valued, in comparison to Korea and the Philippines where their professions are considered “noble.” This is the kind of mentality instilled by the previous colonizers, to ensure that the Timorese continue to be dependent and not free. Decolonizing the mind is a long process, as experienced by Korea and the Philippines (from previous colonial occupation). It is an experience that the three countries can share, learning across conflicts and processes of de-colonization, so that smaller countries can create their own social networks independent of the superpowers and produce a regional governance framework from their specific historical contexts of shared experiences.
5. Korea and the Philippines can share their experiences of developing and using ICT in high schools, primary schools and in e-governance to engender more inclusive, participatory and democratic, ethical politics. These can be initiated by civil society groups, through sister-city friendship associations, for example, or funded by ethically responsible private sector companies in the ICT sector, UN agencies, or government-to-government.

In an age of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and “knowledge-economies,” Timor Leste continues to be one of the poorest in the world in terms of access to the Internet (which is extremely expensive, being under the monopoly of one company, Timor Telecom) and hardly any resources nor facilities for students and people in the rural areas to access knowledge and information in public libraries, bookstores, or other fora (besides that of advocacy campaigns by NGOs which are single-sector oriented). In a predominantly Oral Culture, a reading and writing culture is weak. Some developmental organizations consider this to be a “handicap,”

but Southeast Asian historians, anthropologists, and sociologists including James Scott, Sylvia Tiwon, Sally Ann Ness provide a very different perspective on the strengths of Oral Culture and Southeast Asian performing arts.

There are some leaders and analysts in Timor Leste who look up to the Singapore model and Lee Kuan Yew's approach to "culture and media management." Their argument is that they prefer to have an authoritarian government that delivers the goods and services, rather than a democratic one that will take East Timor on a path of permanent underdevelopment. Most of these people are not very well informed on the costs of the Singaporean model of economic development and management of the media and culture. This kind of discussion, regionally, for example, would greatly benefit the Timorese at this point in our nation-building process.

Cultural Exchanges:

New Methods of International Exchanges Not Based on Domination and Superiority

This should be a two-way, or rather three-way traffic, not one-way as some Korean scholars put it. In some of their articles in *Korea's Changing Roles in Southeast Asia: Expanding Influence and Relations* (Steinberg 2010) some Korean scholars argue that most likely these exchanges will be one-way as Korea has so much to "teach" Southeast Asia (on governance, ICT, media, corruption, "trainee programs" in the private sector, etc.), but that Southeast Asia has little to teach Korea. Considering that these ideas are written by so-called more informed and progressive Korean scholars, I find it very disturbing: this paradigm that Korea is so much more superior to Southeast Asian countries and societies, that Southeast Asia (minus Singapore) is "inferior" and needs to be "lectured." Unless we learn new methods of international cooperation not based on domination, these exchanges will be meaningless.

Note

- ¹ In 2010 alone for example, several books came out. I was asked to review three of them, including: *East Timor: History, Politics and Culture* by Andrea Molnar; *Gender and Transitional Justice: The Women of East Timor* by Susan Harris Rimmer; and *If You Leave Us Here We Will Die: How Genocide Was Stopped in East Timor* by Geoffrey Robinson.

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