THE HALLYU MOSAIC IN THE PHILIPPINES:
FRAMING PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICE

2014 AIKS Korean Studies Conference
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MESSAGE

Dr. John Paul Vergara
Vice President for the Loyola Schools
Ateneo de Manila University

Good morning, and welcome to the Ateneo de Manila University.

I’d like to thank the Ateneo Initiative for Korean Studies, the Department of Communication, the Department of Modern Languages, and the World Association for Hallyu Studies, for organizing this conference and bringing the discussion on Hallyu to the Ateneo.

Like most of you I’ve observed the different trends in foreign telenovelas, beginning with the Mexican show Marimar in the mid-90s, to the Taiwanese series Meteor Garden in the early 2000s, and on to the long-lasting Korean wave which began in the early to mid-2000s as well. I’m not sure which were the first Korean dramas to be shown but I do remember “Jewel in the Palace” for all the endless cooking scenes and interesting Korean dishes featured there.

To this day the Koreanovelas rule the airwaves, which shows their lasting popularity with Filipinos. I’ve also observed the Korean influence not only in TV shows but in music, fashion, personal grooming, and food as well.

I do agree that the phenomenon of Hallyu in the Philippines is a subject that must be studied in a scholarly way, just as popular culture in any country is always a subject of academic discourse. If the numbers of people watching Koreanovelas, viewing K-Pop videos and concerts, eating at Korean restaurants and buying Korean skincare and cosmetics can be used as a factor in deciding which topics should be written about, then there would no question at all!
Here at the Ateneo we’ve been building up to this, and we now have the AIKS, or the Ateneo Initiative for Korean Studies. We hope that interest in Korean Studies grows, not only here in our university, but within the larger academic community as well.

I hope that you will find today’s discussions interesting and enlightening, and that they will inspire you to continue studying this very dynamic, and very colorful area.

Have a good day, everyone.
MESSAGE

H.E. Hyuk Lee
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of the
Republic of Korea to the Republic of
the Philippines

Dr. John Paul Vergara, Vice
President for Loyola Schools;

Dr. Oh Ingyu, Director for General
Affairs of the World Association
for Hallyu Studies;

Esteemed panelists;

Officials and faculty members of the Ateneo;

Dear students;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning.

I am delighted to be here today and be a part of this conference that will pave the way for a more comprehensive course on Korean Studies. It is a distinct honor to belong to this esteemed institution that has been providing quality education and producing leaders for over 150 years.

The fact that experts have converged here is a testament to the growing interest in Hallyu, a subject that is close to my heart. I have often articulated my observation that the Korean Wave is washing into the shores of many countries. However, it has actually reached the Philippines way ahead of the others, which is not surprising considering how bilateral relations between our countries began.
In large part, the strong bonds that tie our two nations is due to a shared history, which, as most of you know, started with the Korean War and the way the Philippines supported our cause. The bravery and selflessness of what came to be known as the “Fighting Filipinos” contributed to the recovery of the Republic of Korea and its emergence as one of the more successful economies in Asia today.

I would venture to say that Hallyu has opened up Korea and allowed the rest of the world to peer into its cultural heart. I am happy to see that the Philippines, in particular, has been very receptive to our brand of art, film, music, fashion, and cuisine.

It is interesting, the way Filipinos have embraced our Koreanovelas and K-Pop, so I went to see the Korean all-female band 2NE1 when they performed here last month. It may be self-serving to say, but I think they are really fine entertainers, especially Sandara Park—who now calls herself simply as Dara. It is a tribute to the Philippines that she found and honed her talents right here where she started her career.

This conference offers the perfect venue to discover what other factors may be playing a part in the growing interest in Korean culture. With discovery comes a deeper understanding of people’s perceptions. I see only good things coming out of this event.

In closing, I would like to thank and congratulate the Ateneo de Manila University, particularly the Ateneo Initiative for Korean Studies, for hosting this conference. I hope those who are in attendance will greatly benefit from today’s discussions.

Gamsahamnida!
MESSAGE

Jaime Manuel Flores  
Department of Communication  
Ateneo de Manila University

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I hope everybody had a very fruitful and insightful conference.

When Sarah [Domingo Lipura] first approached us about collaborating with them for this conference, I could honestly say that I was very enthused with the idea. After all, it made perfect sense to involve our Department in this conference. Whenever we teach classes in media studies or media theory, or even during informal discussions over lunch, it would seem almost inevitable that it would include discussions on Korean television or film, music, or food. When we talk about issues of globalization, flows of content, and creative expressions of cultural discourse, Korea would always offer a fine example, something that many of our students could definitely relate to.

However, when it got to the point where we were asked if some of our faculty were interested in presenting anything, I realized that this was an area that none of us had done any significant work on. I assure you this was not something deliberately ignored from our end—perhaps, this may be attributed to the fact that our awareness on the impact of Korean media was not as extensive as we would hope it to be.

This is why I am glad that the Ateneo Initiative for Korean Studies (AIKS) is now here, because finally, we have a group in the University that will continuously push for the significance of Korean scholarship in academia. I hope that your presence in the University would inspire more students, and faculty, to pursue this as an area of research, because as this conference has
already established, the role that Korean Studies plays is something that cannot and should not be ignored. (In fact, our Department will be holding a disaster communication conference in July, and one of the most interesting papers we received was a study on the Korean public’s collective response on the media’s reporting of the April 16’s Korean ferry disaster.)

So on this note, I would like to congratulate the Ateneo Initiative for Korean Studies for holding this very important conference, and I am hopeful that this will lead to more substantial discussions on the crucial role played by Korea as a truly powerful force in global discourse. Thank you very much and a pleasant evening to all.
KEYNOTE PRESENTATION
The Globalization of K-pop: Korea’s Place in the Global Industry

Oh Ingyu

Abstract

K-Pop is a new buzz word in the global music industry. Korean pop singers such as TVQX, SNSD, Wonder Girls, and Psy currently attract unprecedented followers in Asia, Europe, and North America. The dominant explanation behind this unique cultural phenomenon rests on the concept of cultural hybridity or Pop Asianism (i.e., continuation and expansion of Japanese, Chinese, and Indian subcultures in the global cultural market). I argue that the globalization of K-Pop involves a much more complicated process of globalizing-localizing-globalizing musical content that originates from Europe than what hybridity or Pop Asianism arguments suggest. Specifically, the rise of K-Pop in the global music industry involves a new technique of locating new musical content in Europe or elsewhere, modifying it into Korean content, and then redistributing it on a global scale. Furthermore, K-Pop represents an effort to network global talent pools and social capital in the formerly disconnected music industry rather than an effort to emulate and slightly modify Japanese pop culture. As such, within the global music industry, Korea occupies a structural hole that exists between Western and East Asian music industries.

Key Words: K-Pop, Music Industry, Globalization, Structural Hole

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Introduction

As the trendy magazine Monocle put it recently: “The Korean Wave movement is the biggest soft power success story of the region, acquiring global — and still growing — adulation over the
past decade, with the fevered export of South Korea’s pop culture, from music to drama to anime to computer games” (Monocle 49, Dec. 2011-Jan. 2012: 48). Particularly, the rise of K-pop or Korean popular music in the global music scene came as a coup de main to many music fans, commentators, and business people in Asia. The Anglo-American or European domination of the global music industry has rarely faced challenging competitors from Asia prior to the sudden K-pop epidemic. Psy’s “Gangnam Style,” for example, ranked number one in the world in terms of YouTube click counts, reaching more than 1.7 billion hits as of July 21, 2013. The second most hits recorded in YouTube history by Justin Bieber comes in at just 0.9 billion. Before Psy’s ascendance as a global pop star, other boy and girl bands from Korea have enthralled a massive number of young Asian and European fans who rushed to quickly sold out live concerts and/or YouTube for instant and free access to music videos. In countries like China, where YouTube is banned, young fans relied on alternative social networking service (SNS) sites for free music videos from Korea. Girls’ Generation, Wonder Girls, TVXQ, Big Bang, 2PM, 2NE1, and Rain are particularly popular among a diverse and long list of young entertainers from Korea who currently dominate the Asian music industry (see inter alia, Ho, 2012; Lee, 2012; Lie, 2012; Oh and Park, 2012; Hübinette, 2012; Hirata, Forthcoming; Iwabuchi, Forthcoming).

Against this backdrop, many scholars of popular culture and mass media have tried to theorize K-pop’s sudden and global popularity using various perspectives from cultural studies, mass media theories, and other social science disciplines. The dominant explanation of the global K-pop phenomenon is the “hybridity” view that advances a liberal argument about Chinese, Japanese, and Indian cultures as a grand Asian Culture (AC) that may countervail the dominant Western Culture (WC) as a whole (Chua, 2004, 2012; Iwabuchi, 2004, Forthcoming). These authors conclude that the rise of K-pop therefore is only natural, given the expanding forces of AC vis-à-vis WC. In this sense, K-pop is not a new cultural force in the global cultural system as long as it originates from Japan and/or China (i.e., hybrid), both
of which have already hybridized their pop culture with the mix of WC since the 19th century (Iwabuchi, 2004, Forthcoming; Park, 2006; Hirata, 2008; Ryoo, 2009; Shim, 2011).

On the opposite side of this theoretical spectrum is a grounded view of K-pop as Korea’s new export industry that “denuded and destroyed whatever exists of received (South) Korean culture and tradition” (Lie, 2012: 361). K-pop has nothing that can be considered “Korean,” as it is a timely, commercial combination of: (1) the global liberalization of music markets in Asia and the rest of the world; and (2) the rapid advancement of digital technologies like YouTube which prefers to select and feature perfectly photogenic performers from all over the world, including Korean girl and boy bands. According to Lie (2012), no other J-Pop groups and their producers could have imagined this new export opportunity partly due to the lack of economic need or the lack of technological advancement. Perhaps even now, J-Pop singers or bands may not be able to imagine matching Koreans’ success simply because of the lack of photogenic appeal that Koreans have demonstrated in their music videos and on concert stages. In this sense, K-pop is not Japanese or Chinese, even though it is Asian. Rather, K-pop is global and more Western than ever.

Despite this enlightening explanation of K-pop’s global success, Lie’s analysis lacks insight into the anatomy of the whole production process of the export business (i.e., the K-pop industry). To provide an example, Japanese cars have dominated the global car market due to several externally crucial and timely factors. However, exogenous factors are just as important as endogenous ones. If global factors are significant for an export industry like automobiles, there is also a need to understand why automakers such as Toyota created the Just-in-Time System (JIS) and Kanban. As Lie (2012) succinctly puts it, if SM Entertainment is “the single most important” factor behind the global success of K-pop, a meaningful analysis demands an understanding of the inside organizational dynamics of an industry dominated by firms like SM.
SM Entertainment’s core business competence was bifurcated within the organization into: (1) creativity management; and (2) export management. In one of the extant studies, Oh and Park (2012) focused on export management, characterized by SM’s business focus shifting from B (business) to C (customers) to B (SM) to B (YouTube). This transformation of SM’s international strategy necessitated competent international managers like Youngmin Kim, SM’s CEO, who was pivotal in successfully introducing BoA and TVXQ in Japan. Hailing from Japan himself, Kim spent his primary, middle, and high school years in Japan before coming to Korea University for undergraduate studies. While Soo Man Lee, SM founder and Chairman, has managed just the creativity management side, Kim has had full freedom and power to blandish his sword in export matters. The connection between YouTube and SM, something that Japanese and Chinese entertainment managers have not sought to utilize, was first mapped out by Kim, who accidentally discovered the YouTube icon as it was permanently pre-installed on a Japanese iPhone first released in 2008.

The story of creativity and export management from SM’s perspective therefore adds richness and flesh to the theoretical skeleton presented by Lie (2012). In this paper, I continue to present aspects of creativity management with an emphasis on successful linkages with export management. I first discuss existing studies of the global music industry to draw an understanding of the whole business system from K-pop’s viewpoint. Through a case study on SM’s creativity management, I suggest that the recent rise of the global music industry offers many structural holes that can be occupied by linking Asian and Western networks. However, either the tertiusiugens or the tertiusgaudens in the music industry must be able to identify audience preferences in each music genre and geographical segment.

**Theorizing the Global Music Industry**

The plural usage of “music industries” reflects the diverse nature of the industry in producing and delivering a variety of
different goods and services to music consumers. For example, the classical music industry, a representative case of “high culture” in Bourdieu’s (1984) term, has a widely different system from that of the K-pop industry, an exemplary case of “low culture.” While the classical music industry has prestigious national and international schools that officially train musical geniuses, the K-pop industry has no such privilege except for private training camps often labeled as “slave camps” by antagonistic journalists. Whereas opera is delivered in luxurious nationally or imperially founded opera houses, K-pop concerts are performed in sports stadiums or open air stages constructed overnight.

The sociological understanding of the popular music industry has often assumed the above class line and elaborated on the process of top-down control of “low culture” contents using institutions, organizations, and technologies (Hirsch, 1971; Peterson and Di Maggio, 1975). According to these cultural classifications, K-pop belongs to the “Third World” low culture category emanating from a country unheard of in usual mainstream cultural (both high and low) discourses in developed countries. Although Hirsch (1971) correctly predicted the structural nexus between mass media technologies and new popular music genres, as evidenced in the case of radios after the massive success of TVs and the birth of rock and roll music. However, like other sociological studies of popular music, he couldn’t predict that the birth of YouTube and digital music would usher in a new popular music genre of K-pop. In the dominant sociological study, artists and recording companies in the core countries only would invent, develop, produce, and disseminate popular music.

The picture has changed dramatically since the birth of the global music industry. The rise of the new Caribbean music genre is one example, while the spread of J-pop all over Asia was another. Traditional and national music industries have relied on discs and magnetic tapes (SPs, LPs, tapes, CDs, MDs, LDs, DVDs, etc.), which were played on playing devices (e.g. audio components). These discs and tapes carried price tags, although
they were easily pirated all over the world for cheap dissemination. Unless countries enforced strict copyright rules, singers and recording companies found it very difficult to garner any substantial profit out of their music. Free music also existed through the broadcasting model of music dissemination (Fox and Wrenn, 2001). Music was aired on radios or television music channels without fees to the audiences, as long as they listened to or watched program sponsors’ commercials. In many countries where piracy was rampant, appearance on TV programs was one of the important income sources for artists who had no other option but to appear on night club shows or take a national concert tour with less secure income guarantees than that of TV programs.

The ascendance of the global music industry has destroyed this structure. No longer are music audiences required to purchase music released by recording companies (or labelers), as they have full access to free music on the internet, especially YouTube. Concerts are still organized by production managers (who either have or do not have recording facilities), although more and more regular fans prefer to watch them online for free. Today, the global music industry allows music producers and distributors to make their fortunes through posting free music on the Internet without going to radio stations or begging recording companies to produce and distribute records (Hilderbrand, 2007; Mangold and Faulds, 2009; Elberse, 2010; Oh and Park, 2012). Whereas recording companies owned and managed copyrights of music they sold, music producers in the global music industry recruit, train, and own artists in addition to the copyright of the music sold online.

The establishment of the global music industry has also destroyed the thick line between “high” and “low” culture on the one hand, and “developed” and “developing” country cultures on the other. As the case of Psy illustrates, virtually anyone can post music content on YouTube and enjoy instant fame overnight. Unlike what the Birmingham School used to preach, people do not have to resist mainstream culture by deliberately enjoying subculture music (Hall and Jefferson, 1993). Subculture music
from all over the world is easily searchable and watchable through streaming technology on YouTube. It is therefore not uncommon now to find K-pop and other popular music artists form the developing countries who have previously pursued classical music careers, because their chance of making fortune in the popular music industry has tripled and quadrupled due to the internet.

The success of subculture music on YouTube, or the new global music industry, depends on the nature of the organizational ecology created by a specific home country’s music industry. K-pop has an industrial ecology that favors a very high level of individual and group participation in YouTube-based music production and dissemination based on a new model of popular music venture capitalism. The three major music venture capitalists (SM, YG, JYP) in Korea actively recruit and train future K-pop talent on a continuing basis in order to create an organizational ecology characterized by a large supply of musical inputs (composers, lyricists, singers, session bands, etc.) and a small number of producers (SM, YG, JYP) and distributors (YouTube). In this syphoning type of industry, producers, for their capital investment in young individuals and groups from their early ages, and distributors, for their monopolistic position, take the largest cut in the form of profits, whereas the input elements (e.g. singers) gross relatively smaller share (Oh and Park, 2012).
The question, then, is what makes these producers qua venture capitalists legitimate in the whole value chain, where

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YouTube is the only powerful distributor in the new free digital music industry? The answer lies in the fact that these big three K-pop producers have not chosen to rely on a local pool of talents in Korea for creativity management, but have extended production networks (or musical/cultural capital) to global cultural centers in Hollywood and Europe (especially Sweden and the U.K.). As Table 1 shows, the K-pop music industry represents a global business project encompassing local components to regional and global inputs and outputs.
Furthermore, Figure 1 shows that these global music suppliers occupy the middle point between multinational enterprises (MNEs), which provide funds to K-pop production by buying advertising time, and Korean producers who buy some of the K-pop music originally coming from Sweden (melody), England (melody, lyrics, percussions), and the U.S. (beats, lyrics). Performers (mostly Koreans with some Chinese, Japanese, Southeast Asian, and other talents) occupy the lowest value bracket on the value chain, whereas MNEs, producers, and distributors (YouTube) take the largest cut in the global music industry. As exemplified from this value chain, Korean music producers have adopted a new globalization strategy that can be referred to as a “G-L-G” strategy, to which this paper now turns.
G-L-G’: K-pop’s Globalization Strategy

Globalization in the music industry can mean several things. First and foremost, it can refer to a situation where center music can dominate the peripheral music markets (music imperialism) (Black, 1994; During, 1997; Fine, 1997; McChesney, 2001). Second, it can mean cosmopolitanism, where a diverse type of center, peripheral, and semi-peripheral music is sold in the market with sizable groups of fans and “buffs” for each subculture market (Cho-Han et al., 2003; Iwabuchi, 2004, Forthcoming; Baek, 2005; Hirata, 2005; Chang, 2006). This is close to an ideal-typical multicultural music market. Third, it can allude to a possibility that there is a new global division of labor in music production and dissemination. In the past, for example, Japan exported vinyl LPs that contained American popular music back to the U.S. for their high quality and cheap prices. In another case, European singers and artists went to New York and Hollywood to record and release their albums due to the sheer size of the pop music market in the U.S. In a new global division of music production, the music products sold in each subculture market are produced by a new system of global division of labor that involves European, Asian, and American music talents, venture capital firms, and distributors (Oh and Park, 2012).

K-pop belongs to the third type of globalization. By definition, K-pop entails the export of music “made in Korea” to global consumers, because the domestic music market is drastically hampered by its trifling size and rampant, albeit diminishing, piracy. However, before the current K-pop export boom, the Western network of music producers and distributors did not spot or recruit Korean musical talents into their production and distribution systems, although a couple of anecdotal stories exist.1 Korean popular music was simply not Western at all, as the traditional trot or kayo songs with pentatonic scales had dominated East Asian popular music (Lie, 2012). The export of Korean music on a global scale has begun since the 21st century, mainly due to: (1) Korea’s economic ascendance to semi-periphery in the world system; (2) massive immigration of Koreans into center countries (Japan, the U.S., Western Europe,
etc.); (3) active participation in global cultural industries by the Korean and overseas Korean population; and (4) most importantly, participation in the global division of labor in music manufacturing and distribution.

Like in other global divisions of labor in manufacturing and distribution, Korean corporations purchase or outsource raw materials that will be processed in their own factories in Korea. Finished goods will then be exported to center markets in the world system, usually with help from center buyers or distributors. In the 1960s and 1970s, Korean corporations sold textiles, wigs, and footwear in massive quantities to the U.S. and Europe. In the 1980s and 1990s, these corporations began producing cars, ships, steel plates, and electronic goods to be consumed by center customers. In the 2000s and 2010s, these same firms are now exporting IT-related communication hardware and devices, such as smart phones and smart pads, while newly-established entertainment companies are exporting popular cultural content called Hallyu products all over the world.

Despite stark differences in manufacturing and distribution processes, these industries share a similar structure in the global division of labor. Korean firms in the semi-periphery of the world system have to import or outsource raw materials, advanced technologies, and financial resources from the periphery or the center. Even raw materials are often controlled by, and therefore have to be purchased from, the center capitalists. Like the famous Korean electronics and automobile industries, K-pop companies must outsource original music scores to Western (notably Swedish, American, and British) composers. In a similar vein, the finished K-pop CDs, DVDs, music videos, and MP3 music files must be distributed by center companies (e.g. iTunes, YouTube, vevo, SONY Music, Universal, EMI, avex, etc.).

Participation in the global division of music production and distribution (see Table 1) does not necessarily guarantee the global success of K-pop. From the outset, participation itself is extremely difficult to begin with, given the domination of
European, North American, Central and South American, and Japanese music producers and distributors. Equally challenging is sustaining popularity in the global music market. This is why the entire process of Global (G) → Local (L) → Global’ (G’) is untenable if the “L” component of the global division of labor is not creative or unique (i.e., product differentiation) enough to attract producers and distributors, not to mention global fan groups.

K-pop’s differentiation strategy to make the “L” process attractive to a global audience is roughly threefold: (1) numbers; (2) physique; and (3) voice-dance coordination. Every artistic expression has archetypes found in either its own traditional art form or foreign legends (Barthes, 1972; Jung and Hull, 1980). While the debate about the Korean archetype of K-pop seems futile, three candidates stand out, namely, Japanese or Chinese archetypes (i.e., Chinese culture, J-Pop), Korean horse dancers (i.e., Psy’s Gangnam Style mirroring an ancient Korean horse dance), and Western origin (i.e., K-pop came from Michael Jackson).

Pop Asianism under the theoretical guidance of cultural hybridity has proposed circular arguments that K-pop came from Chinese and/or Japanese popular culture that has had significant impact on the global pop culture (Iwabuchi, 2004, Forthcoming; Jung, 2011; Shim, 2011). The argument is circular because it cannot explain why Taiwanese popular music is not globally popular as much as K-pop is. Nor can it predict when and how Taiwanese popular music will be globally popular just like K-pop. The circular argument does not explain the reason why K-pop is successful because it wrongfully assumes that K-pop is similar to Chinese or Japanese pop music.

Korean cultural pundits have also advanced similar functionalist arguments that Psy’s mega hit, “Gangnam Style,” came from the traditional horse dance found on the murals from the ancient Shilla dynasty or that Americans enjoy Psy’s song because they are “cowboys” who apparently love horses (Kwon, 2012a, 2012b; Ye, 2012; Kim, 2012; Park, 2012). Furthermore,
some Americans have argued that K-pop, epitomized by male musicians dancing and singing simultaneously in groups, came from Michael Jackson’s own singing and choreographic styles (Kim, 2010). All these arguments are also circular because their logic is based on the absurdity of: (1) Koreans are born horse dancers and (2) if anyone emulates cowboy dance or Michael Jackson, he/she will be a global idol. If Koreans are born horse dancers, why didn’t American cowboys create the horse dance, too? If Michael Jackson was the key to K-pop’s global stardom, why didn’t Taiwanese singers mimic Jackson’s music/dance and become world stars, too?

This paper is not concerned with musical archetypes for popular music in general and K-pop in particular. Instead, this paper centers on a K-pop producer’s point of view by focusing on their efforts at differentiating K-pop from other musical genres. Producers are concerned with singers becoming global stars and eventually generating high cash returns on initial investments in those would-be stars over a five- to ten-year period (i.e., K-pop venture capitalism). At first glance, K-pop’s product differentiation lies in the number of singers staged at one time. Unlike Chinese popular singers, J-Pop bands, or Michael Jackson, K-pop’s success initially came from the very large number of singers and dancers singing and dancing simultaneously on stage. TVXQ, Girls’ Generation, Big Bang, Super Junior, 2PM, Shinee, Beast, and others constitute archetypal success cases for the K-pop globalization drive through an attractive “L.” The localization process therefore includes a special (or Korean) staging formation for boy and girl bands previously unheard of in other countries. Peculiar only in K-pop, K-pop music features singer-dancers on stage who maintain changing dancing formations that quickly change with strict or perfect synchronization. From the beginning to the end of a song, singer- dancers take turn in occupying the spotlighted center stage one by one, as if there were no lead vocal for the band. Everyone in the band maintains the same vocal and dancing talent in a synchronized movement, as in the Irish river dance, although the river dancers don’t sing at all.
The “number” factor alone, however, is not sufficient. Japan’s top girl bands, AKB48, SKE48, and HKT48, feature 48 singers and dancers at the same time, making them constantly visible on the Oricon chart. However, they have not had any global success much akin to that of K-pop girl bands, such as Girls’ Generation, which features only nine members. K-pop’s “physique” factor therefore must be taken into consideration in its differentiation strategy. In other words, Girls’ Generation and Wonder Girls are at least 10 inches taller than AKB48 or HKT48 members, let alone the fact that the Korean singers show off much sexier and sophisticated looks and bodies than their Japanese counterparts. Japan’s top male idol group, Arashi, which features five members, also pale in comparison with the physique of their male K-pop counterparts. TVXQ, originally featuring five members, and Shinee, also featuring five members, are at least 10 inches taller than Arashi members. As a result, K-pop music videos and concerts are much more visually appealing than those of other Asian (especially, Japanese or Chinese) counterparts. The emphasis on the physique side of performers simultaneously implies that K-pop idol groups have different sources of global attraction from those of African or African-American music artists. Targeting Asian and Western female fans mostly, K-pop emphasizes thin, tall, and feminine looks with adolescent or sometimes very cute facial expressions, regardless of whether they’re male or female singers. On the contrary, Caribbean and African American singers highlight their colonial-style male attractions with body looks that are not manicured, cosmeticized, or thoroughly shaved.

Even though Western Caucasian and other ethnic boy and girl bands may want to choose to rely on the physique factor for their immediate rise to stardom, they often fall short of fans’ expectation in terms of dance-singing coordination in large groups. This is the third feature predominant in globally popular K-pop idols. The “L” process within the K-pop industry involves a high level of specific in-house investments provided by entertainment companies themselves that act like venture capital firms. The learning process of mastering how to sing and dance is crucial in the Korean “L” process of the entire global division of
labor, as similar learning processes in the training of Korean archery and golf players are also pivotal. Particularly, the length of learning period is noticeably long often ranging from five to ten years. The three major K-pop managing firms, or K-pop venture capitalist firms, select potential idols through internal auditions and/ or their K-pop cram schools. Trainees go through vocal, dancing, language, and theatrical acting lessons for at least five hours a day in the evening after school. They have to carry out regular physical fitness trainings as well as take skin and other beauty therapies. The entire program resembles that of a total institution, as trainees are sometimes banned from using cell phones during training (Ho, 2012).

This is why some critics call the learning process very abusive of the trainees, although K-pop managers defend their programs by arguing that the K-pop cram school is no different from college prep schools, exam cram schools, golf school, and other similar institutions. K-pop managers emphasize the fact that they pay for all the K-pop education and training, unlike other cram schools in Korea. After the entire period of training, K-pop idols possess very different skills of singing, dancing, speaking foreign languages, and acting from their competing singers from China or Japan. They also look much sexier and trimmed than their competitors from other countries.

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<th>Table 2. K-pop’s G-L-G’ Process</th>
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<td><strong>Global</strong></td>
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With finished products in the form of global concert tours, CDs, DVDs, and music videos downloaded or streamlined on the internet, K-pop companies go abroad to market finished goods through global distributors. Since CDs and DVDs must be protected by copyright, all K-pop companies rely on Japanese distributors for Japanese and other Asian markets. For concert tours, K-pop companies rely on local concert organizers who are also label sellers in the specific market. However, income from these finished goods is not big compared to royalty income from YouTube and other social media sites (SMS). YouTube is a revolutionary SMS that has provided unexpected opportunities to K-pop producers, while J-pop Asia and vevo are latecomer competitors to YouTube in the global music industry.

**K-pop’s Place in the Global Music Industry**

K-pop’s global ascendance is not a result of its cultural hybridity that Korea imported from China or Japan. Korean culture, be that Confucian or hybrid, has never been popular in Asia, let alone the world. Back in the 1990s, Japanese or Chinese viewers did not tune in to watch Korean TV dramas or films, listen to Korean music or attend Korean singers’ concerts in Seoul, eat out in a Korean restaurant or cook Korean food at home, or drink Korean rice wine or soju (i.e., cheap local alcohol brewed and distilled from sweet potatoes).

The global success of K-pop in the 21st century represents a unique historical and geographical meaning in the present world system. First and foremost, Korean singers have obtained a distinctive physique, either through a long process of evolution or mutation (or simply through cosmetic surgeries), which was unimaginable among Koreans up until the 20th century. Second, the political democratization of Korea has lifted censorship or bans on both Korean and Western types of popular music, including the free importation of Japanese popular culture in Korea. Korean popular cultural content has therefore been far more diverse and creative compared to its history under dictatorship, and is now easily exported to the Japanese market that has opened up its market to Korean content at the same
time Korea did for Japanese cultural content. Third, technological advancement in the 21st century has allowed for a primitive form of cosmopolitanism at least in the virtual world, where fans from all over the world can enjoy global content from various different countries, including Korea. Without this new digital technology (or real time streaming and the new social media), the rise of K-pop as it is recognized today would not have been possible. Fourth, the advancement of the global capitalist economy that has successfully opened up Chinese, Indian, Latin American, and the vast Southeast Asian markets, has allowed for less biased investments and inputs in the Asian music industry than before from Western music producers and distributors.

All these factors, however, do not suggest that either Asian or Korean (or both) cultural content enjoys the same or similar status in the global popular culture market. The K-pop phenomenon simply reinforces the world system view where the global economy, including the cultural market, is more based on the global division of labor than ever and that K-pop represents a new cultural content that provides unexpected windfall to Western and Japanese music producers and distributors by outsourcing manufacturing of the popular music to Korea. Unless Korea obtains technologies, capital, and social capital in the global music industry, it will continue to maintain its semi-peripheral role of export manufacturing, similar to how Hyundai and Samsung rest their corporate survival on the continuous export of finished cars and electronic gadgets to the center markets.

Conclusion

K-pop in the 2010s has rekindled global scholarly attention on Hallyu, which at one point has been considered a declining popular cultural industry. Korean pop singers such as TVQX, SNSD, Wonder Girls, and Psy are popular among a large number of consumers in Asia, Europe, and North America. The dominant explanation behind this unique cultural phenomenon has rested on the concept of cultural hybridity or Pop Asianism (i.e., continuation and expansion of Japanese, Chinese, and Indian
subcultures in the global cultural market). In this paper, however, I argued that the globalization of K-pop involves a much more complicated process of globalizing-localizing-globalizing musical content that originated from Europe compared to what the hybridity or Pop Asianism arguments suggest. Korea’s place in the global music industry represents a new technique of locating already common and popular musical content in Europe or elsewhere, modifying it into Korean content, and then redistributing it to the global music market. K-pop is an effort to network global talent pools and social capital in the formerly disconnected music industry, rather than an effort to emulate and slightly modify Japanese pop culture. As such, in the global music industry, Korea occupies a structural hole between Western and East Asian music industries.

Notes

1. In 1963 Louis Armstrong performed with an unknown Korean girl singer, Bok-Hee Yoon, at Walker Hill Hotel, Seoul, in 1963, and later she was featured in the Ed Sullivan Show (Yoon, 1997). Also, Kim Sisters, three daughters of a legendary Korean female singer Nan-Yeong Yi, went to Las Vegas with their American manager, Tom Ball, and eventually appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show several times (Hankooki.com, July 10, 2008).

2. Based on the interviews with the CEO Youngmin Kim and the A&R Manager Chris Lee at SM Entertainment on Nov. 13, 2012 and Dec. 20, 2012, respectively.

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Ingyu Oh is Professor of Hallyu Studies at the Research Institute of Korean Studies, Korea University, Korea. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Oregon. His recent publications include “From B2C to B2B: Selling Korean Pop Music in the Age of New Social Media” (2012) and “From Nationalistic Diaspora to Transnational Diaspora: The Evolution of Identity Crisis among the Korean Japanese” (2012). This work was supported by the National Research Foundation Grant funded by the Korean Government (MEST) (NRF-2007-361-AL0013).
The panel examined the niche that Hallyu has created for itself in Philippine popular culture and how it has captured the imagination of Filipino Fans who have become co-creators in the spread of Hallyu in the Philippine setting. The panel established that Filipino fans are not passive consumers of hallyu content.

Papers in this panel are: “Formation, Purpose and Gains: An Exploratory study of Hallyu Fanclubs in the Philippines” by Catherine Deen; “Painting the Scenario of Filipino Kpop Fan Culture” by Patrick Capili; and “Stagnant Fans and Retired Fans: The Other Side of Hallyu Fandom in the Philippines” by Gilbert Que. Herdy La. Yumul is the Panel Chair.
Formation, Purpose and Gains: An Exploratory Study of Hallyu Fanclubs in the Philippines

Catherine Deen

Abstract

This exploratory study aims to break ground and explore the phenomenon of Hallyu fanclubs in the Philippines. The study focused on the formation and purpose of Hallyu fanclubs. Data included responses to an online survey from administrators of 22 Philippine Hallyu fanclubs. Using a combination of descriptive statistics and content analysis, results revealed that Philippine Hallyu fanclubs are formed by fans with the main purposes of supporting the artist, unifying Filipino fans and marketing the artist. The importance of socialization with other fans emerged as a strong motivator for joining fan clubs. Gains from fanclub formation also emerged in the form of significant charitable activities. The study closed with a series of propositions and future research directions.

Keywords: Korean wave, Hallyu, Fans, Fanclubs

Author's notes: This paper is a full transcript of the presentation delivered by Catherine Deen, PhD. Correspondence concerning this research may be addressed to Catherine Deen, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, Manila.

I am glad to share with you the results of a research I completed on “Formation, Purpose and Gains: An Exploratory Study of Hallyu Fanclubs in the Philippines.” This study is guided by the following objectives. First, I wanted to break ground and explore Hallyu fanclubs in the Philippines. Being a Hallyu fan myself, I observed that there is a vibrant fandom in the Philippines and it would be interesting to document its
development and practices. Second, I wanted to understand the formation and purpose of Hallyu fanclub development in the country. With the many Hallyu fanclubs around, I wanted to discover why these clubs develop and the reasons and purposes behind fanclub development. Finally, as an exploratory study output, I wanted to generate propositions and future research directions to better frame Hallyu fan subculture in the Philippines.

The Hallyu wave or the “Korean Wave” has undoubtedly reached Philippine shores. The researcher Yang (2012) defined Hallyu as both the flow and popularity of Korean popular cultural products, especially media contents, in other Asian countries and beyond, as well as exported Korean popular cultural products themselves. In her paper entitled “Korean Wave: The Great Splash on Philippine Popular Culture and Life,” Prof. Ma. Cristina Flores of the University of the Philippines stated that the Korean wave has splashed on Philippine shores in many forms including popular media, fashion, food, online gaming and others. She expressed that “Western hegemony on popular culture has become a thing of the past. There is now an emerging Asianness flowing through the current of transnational cultures in the region.” The Hallyu wave has indeed inspired academic investigations around the world and it presents an excellent opportunity for research utilizing a variety of perspectives including economic, political, socio-cultural and psychological.

My research focuses on exploring the world of Philippine Hallyu fanclubs. Now, you may ask me the question, why study fans? To quote Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington (2007), experts on fandom studies, fandom is beautiful. Let me share with you four reasons why fandom is a great area of investigation.

First, fandom is a reflection and projection of ourselves. The pioneer in fandom studies (Said, 1979 as cited by Gray, Sandvoss & Harrington, 2007) expressed that fans usually get a bad rap and are treated as if they are eccentric or deviant. It is all too common for fans to be dismissed as “Others” but as the literature
on “Others” have frequently showed, the “Other is always a reflection and projection of ourselves. Great fandoms such as the Beatles fandom, the Twilight fandom, the Harry Potter fandom and the Comic fandom do reflect aspects of ourselves including our common and changing tastes and values.

Second, fandom fuels trade. The fan as a specialized yet dedicated consumer has become a centerpiece of media marketing strategies. Fans indeed have a decisive role in propagating culture products through their consumption and this does not end in media products. According to Otmezgin & Lyan (2013), “fans not only consume imported music and the fashions associated with it but also serve as marketers, mediators, translators and localizers of globalized culture.”

The third reason to conduct fan studies is that fandom opens discourse about power. In some studies, Hallyu is described as a form of soft power where changing cultural tastes and tolerance are influenced through popular media and its constituents. There are various perspectives and issues regarding this discourse but rather than seeing fandom as an “oppression”, Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington expressed that “the interpretative communities of fandom are actually embedded in the existing economic, social and cultural status quo.”

Fandom studies also provide answers to issues of global modernity. With the realities brought about by globalization, studies of fan audiences contribute to our understanding of how people form emotional bonds with ourselves and others in a modern, mediated world.

Let me now share with you the exploratory research journey I undertook for this project. I entered the field by attending and observing the past three Philippine K-Pop conventions (2011, 2012, 2013) which inspired me to gather initial data through an open-ended survey among 10 Hallyu fanclubs. Out of the 10 surveys, 6 fanclubs responded. Their responses were used to generate the initial categories which served as an input to the development of the “Philippine K-Pop Fandom Survey” Form.
This online survey contained a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions focusing on the following areas: (1) descriptive information on Philippine Hallyu fanclubs, and (2) Philippine Hallyu fanclub purpose and experiences.

The online survey was sent to the administrators of 70 Philippine Hallyu fanclubs. A total of 22 fanclubs responded. The retrieval rate is at 31%. Although this may be viewed as low retrieval, one must consider the exploratory nature of the study and that not all fanclubs on the sampling frame were still active. Today’s presentation is the initial report resulting from this exploratory research journey.

The main focus areas of this research include descriptive information such as the name, initial formation, founding date and memberships of Philippine Hallyu fanclubs. The second focus area is the purpose and experiences of Philippine Hallyu fanclubs which includes purpose, activities, programs and achievements.

The main data sources include observation, open-ended survey, online survey and documents and archives.

In relation to the formation of Philippine Hallyu fanclubs, majority of the fanclubs surveyed showed that their clubs started from a person’s initiative. Fueled by the passion of one fan, groups of fans gather together to establish the club. The second driver of club formation is the fan forum or discussion forum where fans meet online (usually anonymously) to discuss about their idols. There is a small number of clubs which started due to the artist’s company initiative. These results reveal that fanclubs are formed by the fans themselves. Hallyu fanclubs in the Philippines are not institutionalized or formalized as they are in Korea where the company usually birth official fanclubs for their artists.

One interesting observation I found in relation to fanclub formation was in terms of the launch/founding dates of Philippine fanclubs. I noticed that almost an equal number of
fanclubs surveyed showed that they launched before the artist’s debut and after the artists’ debut. This shows curious behavior since how can fanclubs start when the artists’ has not debuted yet? The explanation may lie in the first mover rule. Local fans fight over official status by competing on who forms the club first. Typically, those who form the group online first claims “first mover advantage” and becomes the “official” local fanclub. One issue with this reality is that fanclubs may be started by persons who are not true fans. This practice contaminates the Hallyu fan subculture with possibly dishonest or opportunistic persons.

About 32% of the fanclubs surveyed revealed that they have more than 2000 members (n=7) and another 32% revealed that they have between 100 to 300 members (n=7). Out of the fanclubs surveyed, a total of 55% (n=12) have more than 500 members while about 45% (n=10) have less than 500 members. This data shows that there is a strong subculture of Hallyu fans in the Philippines.

In terms of membership fees, majority of the clubs do not charge membership fees (86%). Since most are using free online services for their activities, they do not see the immediate need to charge fees. I also hypothesize that many of the clubs are run by young people who may not be adept in the formalities of setting up official organizations. Fanclubs that charge fees are typically those that are bigger, older and managed by more mature administrators. The fees are typically used for the official membership card, which provides discounts and other privileges for members.

So, what is the purpose of the formation of Philippine Hallyu fanclubs? For this next set of data, please note multiple responses were accepted and I analyzed the data based on the frequency of responses which are shown on the bars while the stems reveal the percentage of fanclubs who responded within the category. Results revealed that fanclub formation has three main purposes: (1) to support the K-Pop artist, (2) to unify Filipino fans, and (3) to market the artist.
Consistent with the purposes for club formation, fanclub activities involve those that support, unify and market the artist. The most common fanclub activities involve fan support activities (n=22, 100%) such as mass voting, videos, flash mobs and even keeping an online radio station. This is followed by communal fan gifts like birthday and fan gift packages (n=21, 95%), organizing fan gatherings and events (n=20, 91%) and purchase activities (n=16, 73%).

Asked about their perceptions on the reasons why fans join clubs, fanclub administrators expressed that the primary reason for joining a fanclub is social (n=21, 95%). Majority of the fanclub administrators expressed that fans wish to interact and share their Hallyu passion with others. Artist updates (n=15, 68%) and artist support (n=13, 55%) are also some other reasons for joining clubs. To a lesser extent, fans join to avail of perks and purchase official merchandise. Using a psychological perspective, we can see that those who form and join fanclubs typically have the need to express their affinity. This need propels them to seek others with similar interests. Since KPOP fans form a special subculture, fans tend to seek others who they can identify with. As fans gather together, they naturally wish for more success for their idol thus propelling them to the purpose of marketing the artist. In a study among Israeli and Palestinian Hallyu fans, it was revealed that being part of the K-fan community had a therapeutic effect because K-Pop fans feel socially handicapped in their social circles. Through membership in a fan community, K-Pop fans establish what is called a “social capital”. Social capital is defined as the “sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). As stated by Castiglione (2008), “Being part of a community that shares intimacy and emotional depth is synonymous with social capital.”

The top three problems encountered by Philippine Hallyu fanclubs include finance (n=12, 55%), manpower (n=10, 45%)
and conflicts (n=9, 41%). Since majority of the clubs do not charge fees, it is not surprising that finance is a big concern. Also given the social nature of fanclubs, conflicts in the form of infighting and fan wars are inevitable. Other concerns include low and/or inactive members, time management for administrators, difficulty in online management and the artists’ inactivity which affects the activity of the fanclubs.

There are identified gains from fanclub formation in the Philippines.

When asked about what they perceive as their achievements as fanclubs, fanclub administrators cite being officially recognized and affiliated as their achievement. This includes international affiliation and recognition from the artists’ company. This is followed by their ability to mount successful fan gatherings and events. A small number of fanclubs mentioned awards and charity work as achievements which take us to another interesting finding from this study.

It is interesting to observe that fanclubs do not consider charity work as a major achievement of their fanclub given that majority of the fanclubs surveyed (82%) contribute to charity work, which may be considered as a positive societal benefit. Looking deeper, Philippine Hallyu fanclubs have contributed to almost all types of non-profits. Tallying the beneficiaries of their charity contributions revealed that almost all types of charities have benefited although some were only to a minimal extent.

Tallying their reported charity beneficiaries, 64% of Philippine Hallyu fanclubs surveyed contributed to international non-government institutions (NGOs) like Gawad Kalinga, Red Cross and World Vision (n=14, 64%), 41% contributed to animal charities (n=9, 41%), 32% to disaster efforts (n=7, 32%), 27% to special interest charities (n=6, 27%), 9% to environmental charities (n=2, 9%), and 5% to health charities (n=1, 5%). Ironically, none of the surveyed fanclubs has contributed to arts and culture charities.
Before I share my closing statements, let me discuss with you a unique feature of Philippine Hallyu fanclubs which emerged in the form of the Philippine K-Pop Committee, Incorporated or the PKCI.

The PKCI is the first and biggest non-profit KPOP organization in the country which is officially registered in the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The organization is the umbrella organization of more than 60 Philippine Hallyu fanclubs which organizes the annual Philippine KPOP convention. Being a non-profit organization, the PKCI works towards supporting charity efforts specifically Gawad Kalinga and PAWS. Recently, they also started a scholarship fund. So far, based on my investigation of available literature, this type of organized conglomeration of Hallyu fanclubs can only be seen in the Philippines. With PKCI’s social impact and benefits, this unique feature may be considered as a best practice in the area of organizing Hallyu fandom.

Out of the fanclubs surveyed, 91% expressed that they are members of the PKCI. Asked about the advantages of PKCI membership, they expressed that PKCI helps market their club, provide official affiliation, networks and updates. In terms of disadvantages, only a few statements came out including bias and pressure.

To close, here are some emerging propositions and future research directions.

First, there exists a strong subculture of Hallyu fans in the Philippines. Second, the formation of Hallyu fanclubs is driven by fans themselves. Third, the main purposes of Hallyu fanclub formation include the need to express support for the artist and to socialize with others. Fourth, Fanclub activities are consistent with its support and socialization purposes and finally fandom, managed properly, can produce benefits for the individual fan and society in general.
Future researchers interested in Hallyu fandom and Hallyu studies may consider gathering more data among fanclubs to better understand the phenomena. They may also explore extant literature to generate conceptual and theoretical models that may be tested in the Philippine context. Finally, researchers may consider studying the individual fan experience and how fandom influences related behaviors such as tourism behaviors and advocacy behaviors.

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Catherine Deen, Ph.D. holds a doctoral degree in education. Her work in Hallyu was borne out of her personal interests. She was the resident K-Pop blogger of Yahoo! Southeast Asia from 2010 to 2012. Her observations of the Hallyu phenomenon in the Philippine context are well documented through her Yahoo! blog. She has been invited to speak during the first Hallyu Forum sponsored by the Korean Cultural Center of the Philippines. Aside from her articles on Yahoo!, she has also written for Sparkling! and PULP magazines. She continues her blogging career through her Hallyu-oriented blog, "KPOPUNNI.com." Email: catherine.deen@benilde.edu.ph
Painting the Scenario of Filipino K-pop Fan Culture

Patrick Michael L. Capili

Abstract

The paper examines aspects of K-Pop Fan culture in the Philippines. Data were gathered from fieldwork and participant observation in various fan events, as well as, online and actual informal discussions with Philippine K-Pop fans. Results support how the K-Pop scene is cultivating a new area of study in Philippine youth culture; one in which cross-cultural ties with Korea and the rest of the world is clearly manifested.

Keywords: K-Pop fan culture, youth culture, online communities

Introduction

In recent years, the K-Pop scene in the Philippines has visibly flourished. It has truly come far from its beginnings in the mid-2000’s. Today, the Philippine K-Pop scene has become a full-blown culture on its own.

The main objective of this presentation is to paint a picture of K-Pop fan culture in the Philippines. This is a product of an immersion into the scene – the researcher has attended various activities such as concerts, fan meets and conventions, and has joined and participated in online communities. Research included informal discussions with fans, observations during fieldwork and personal experience.

This presentation is divided into four parts. First is a look into the K-Pop fandom scene and the events that comprise it. Then we’ll check out the different ways of K-Pop fandom expression. After that, we will briefly discuss some emerging issues of this phenomenon and to end in a bright note, I will present to you, what in my opinion, are the contributions and/or positive effects of the Philippine K-Pop fandom scene in our society today.
Philippine K-Pop Fandom Scene and Events

Fan Clubs, Online Groups and Text Clans

Like any Hollywood actor or sports idol, K-Pop stars and groups would have their fans club. In the era of internet social networking, it is not surprising that these groups thrive in cyberspace. The internet is the main venue where people of the same fandom meet. They either join existing groups, or in fact create their own. Some are official and highly organized, linked to a real world fan club recognized by the K-Pop stars themselves and their management, and yet some can be very casual, with members joining and leaving when they want, some even change usernames whenever they please, usually bearing the surnames of their idols or “insert idol’s name’s wife”.

Also, there are K-Pop text clans. With cellphone network providers offering unlimited texting promos, fans can always text their fellow fans who are members of their clan.

It is both interesting and important to note that in the Philippines, there is a non-profit K-Pop organization, duly registered in the Securities and Exchange Commission, and recognized by the Korea Tourism Organization and the Korean Cultural Center. The Philippine KPop Committee, Inc. is the first and biggest of its kind and was founded in 2009. It is a conglomerate of 60 different K-Pop fanclubs, two of the biggest being Super Junior United and Cassiopeia PH.

These fan clubs, whether official, real world or online, and text clans, give the fans a sense of community to share their passion with fellow fans or in K-Pop terms, to spazz.

Fan Gatherings

The fan clubs or online groups usually organize regular fan gatherings. This is the fans’ opportunity to physically mingle with fellow fans, and spazz in the real world. Fan gatherings are usually scheduled to celebrate an idol’s birthday, or debut
anniversary, or any other reason like an upcoming concert or in preparation for a fan project. Fans contribute a certain amount for food and drinks, or for fan projects. They are usually very casual and intimate, with attendees who know each other from previous events or who don’t really know each other but become instant friends because they are from the same fandom anyway.

**K-Pop Conventions**

K-Pop conventions are in effect fan gatherings but of a much bigger scale. They are organized by official organizations or production companies like the Philippine KPop Committee, Inc., KFest Manila Events Management and PULP Live World Production. Unlike fan gatherings that can be done in a small restaurant or in a park, conventions need venues that can accommodate fans by the hundreds. As such, they entail rentals for venue, lights and sound, booths and other logistical concerns. Fans pay an entrance fee.

On stage, there will be various activities like song and dance covers and idol look-a-like contests. In between, there are games and music video viewings. On the floor, there are usually booths for each participating fandom and for merchandise retailers. Korean food and ice cream are sold in the venue. And to complete the vibe, fans wear fandom shirts or even dress up like their favorite idol, or bias.

To date, there have already been five K-Pop Conventions and five KFests. Both are done annually. It is interesting to note that the K-Pop conventions have all fandoms represented in one venue, which is not done with other stars of the West.

**Fan Meets**

On certain occasions, K-Pop idols come to meet their fans for autograph signing or fan interaction. It could be a stand-alone event, or it can happen during a convention or before a concert. The fans get a chance to meet their idols up close and personal. Lucky fans get a handshake, luckier fans a hug and the luckiest
are carried by their idols like a baby. Tickets are usually very pricey, or come when you buy a certain amount at a Korean cosmetic store.

_Conserts_

The ultimate event for a fan, this is when s/he gets to see his/her idol/s perform live on stage. The fan consummates his/her passion amidst a spectacle of lights and sound. The fan is wowed by the high tech equipment brought in from Korea. The songs and dance routines, costume changes and special effects come together for a total entertainment experience. There is usually a lot of fan interaction and fan service during concerts which give the fans a sense of intimacy with their idols. During the concert, the fans organize a fan project, a cheer banner, a fan chant or special gifts which they take backstage (for those with access), or throw on stage hoping their idols would pick them up and keep them.

_Avenues of K-Pop Fandom Expression_

_Fan Art_

Fans with skilled hands love making their idols the subject of their artworks. Some of these artworks are done by hand and others on the computer. There are many examples of these on the Internet; with some having themes that are not for general patronage.

_Fan Fic(tion)_

Fans who have the talent for writing take their pens and put on paper their fantasies. In the Philippines, an example of a published fan fiction novel is K-Pop Star and I, written by J.P. Adrian Dela Cruz.
**Memes**

Fans also have a sense of humor. Facebook pages like Super Junior Tagalog Memes have been creative enough to juxtapose different pictures of Super Junior and add statements in Tagalog to create funny memes.

**Fan Projects**

There are different ways of showing your idol that you care – a birthday cake, dried mangoes, a stuffed toy, a scrapbook with messages and Polaroid shots of fans, flowers, and the Korean innovation, a rice wreath. Online communities would post a call for donations for these fan projects and those who would participate deposit an amount of money in a bank or give their donations in a booth during a convention or fan gathering.

**Covers**

Talented fans sing like their idols, dance like their idols and dress up like their idols. Most, if not all, conventions would always include cover contests in their roster of activities. Actually, this particular K-Pop fandom expression is one aspect that has thrived in the local scene. It has become very popular that there have been events that only showcase cover dance battles and/or K-Pop cosplay. Also, aside from the usual cover artist/s covering his/her/their idol/s of the same gender, there is now what is called “reverse cover” with cover artist/s covering his/he/their idol/s of the opposite gender. It is also interesting to note that although the fans do not mistake the cover artist from their real idols or see them as a replacement, these cover artists also have followers of their own.

**Issues on K-Pop Fan Culture**

*Personal Attachment borderline Obsession*
This is not a new issue, as it is shared by all fandoms even when Hollywood was just born. As stated by Samantha Barbas in her book, “Fans, Stars and the Cult of Celebrity” (2001):

“Throughout film history, fans have been accused of a variety of sins. …They were so infatuated, critics claimed, that they spent hours dreaming about their stars. Perhaps more than anything, they seemed to confuse fantasy and reality.”

Although I have not encountered any definitive study on this matter just yet, there are several small hints on personal attachment when you read fan posts on social networking sites and online groups. The stars make or break their day. As they can be inspirations, they can also be the cause for disappointments and depression.

**Fandom Wars**

This is not a new issue either. In the Philippines, we have the perfect example – the Nora–Vilma fan war of the 70’s. Fans usually fight over whose idol is better or more handsome. Bashing is not an uncommon activity. After Super Show 5, an EXO fan who wore her fandom shirt during the said concert was swiftly bashed by Super Junior fans calling her disrespectful. Interestingly, there has also been a report about EXO stans bashing the Filipino boy group Chicser.

**K-Pop Fandom and Social Status**

We can divide this concern into external and internal issues: Externally, K-Pop fans tend to be marginalized by some sectors of society and branded as “jologs”, or of low social status. There was also a joke in Tagalog, “K-Pop, K-Pop-panget” (How ugly!). For those who are knowledgeable of the scene, they should know that this is untrue. In fact, it is the opposite. For a K-Pop fan to keep up with his/her scene – albums, official merchandise, gatherings, conventions, fan meets, concerts both local and abroad, especially in Korea – s/he needs a lot of money.
Inside the scene, there is also a noticeable gap between fans from different social statuses. Some can only afford unofficial merchandise, pirated CD’s and DVD’s and attend conventions organized in a not-so-popular mall. While some, only buy official merchandise, shipped from Korea, and attend concerts “VIP mode” both locally and abroad. Also, while some fans can be “Team Hotel” or “Team VIP” meaning they will stay in their idol’s hotel or have a VIP concert ticket respectively; there are also fans who are “Team Bahay” or those who stayed at home because they do not have money to pay for transportation or tickets.

Gender and Sexuality Issues

With male K-Pop stars defying traditional societal rules on masculinity, does the K-Pop scene provide a safe space for gay fans?

Fans pair up their idols, that is, their male idols. They match them and think they are married or have a relationship. They make fan art of these pairs kissing and making love. On stage, these idols actually kiss each other and the fans are thrilled. I have made an initial investigation on this issue by means of an informal focus group discussion and will be working on further research.

Fangirls, and fanboys, openly announce their lustful desires through their online posts, together with a half naked picture of their idol. They would use phrases like, “I can’t even”, “why so hot?”, or “my ovaries just exploded”. Is this online behavior transmitted to the real life of the fangirl or boy? This also calls for further research.

Money Matters

Online groups and fan clubs collect money for membership, ID cards, fan projects, gatherings, etc. Members deposit the money to a private account. If it is payment for merchandise or any clear item, then it is over when you get what you paid for.
But if it is for fan projects, there should at least be a clear report to account for the fund raised and present legitimate liquidation. The fans deserve transparency.

**Contributions of K-Pop Fandom to Society**

*Business / Commerce*

Local businessmen import official merchandise or manufacture their own line locally. Whenever there’s an event, fans are sure to get t-shirts, bags, light sticks, notebooks, lanyards, button pins and anything with their idol’s face or name on it. Most of these stores are online, some with real world stores in malls. The best examples are Fangirlasia and CNA.

K-Pop fandom has created an entire industry: production houses and event management companies; publishers; distributors of Korean ice cream and other food products, fashion and cosmetics; and many other merchandise and service providers.

*Community*

K-Pop fans find a safe space to *spazz*. They find new people who won’t judge their fangirling / fanboying – here, they belong. They can relate with each other’s passion. They build lasting relationships with friends to share their lives with, at first K-Pop related and eventually even real life concerns.

*Philanthropy / Charity*

Most fan projects are philanthropic acts. When the fans send a rice wreath to their idol to congratulate him/her, the rice goes to a charitable institution in Korea. In a recent fan meet during KNation4, K-Pop idol Xander asked his fans to bring donations for victims of typhoon Yolanda instead of a gift for himself.

Proceeds of conventions go to local charity. For example, the Philippine KPop Committee, Inc. gives event proceeds to Gawad
Kalinga and the Philippine Animal Welfare Society. And some fan clubs pool money from their members and donate it to a local charity in their idol’s name.

**Philippines – Korea Relations**

Filipino fans sing in Korean, learning the language in the process, using key words here and there when they speak or post. K-Pop idols learn Filipino words to say, even songs to sing during concerts. But beyond language and music, there is a very important cultural exchange between our two countries which strengthens our ties and promotes mutual cooperation onward to a brighter shared future.

**Scholarship**

This academic conference is enough proof that K-Pop or the Korean wave in general has not only gathered fans but also scholars from diverse fields and disciplines – humanities and social sciences; communication, sociology and anthropology; cultural studies, diplomacy and tourism, and many others – to develop and generate new perspectives, insights and hopefully, later on, paradigms, that allow us to better understand our own humanity. More specifically, this phenomenon likewise offers a new approach to our understanding of Korea as well as opportunities for research and academic collaboration between Filipino, Korean and international scholars, like our guests from Malaysia and Vietnam who flew all the way to Manila to join this important conference.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

The Philippine K-Pop fandom scene has truly become a rich aspect of our youth culture. It is both interesting and important to dig deeper into the varied aspects of the local scene and understand how K-Pop is making us Filipinos more internationalized and intercultural in a more and more globalized society.
As one can see from this presentation, there are a lot of areas that need further study. Let this be a call for other scholars, both here and abroad to consider research on these areas and so many other very interesting issues on the phenomenon that is K-Pop, or in the bigger picture, the Korean wave. Let us all work to strengthen Hallyu’s place as a legitimate area of Korean Studies and as a vehicle to foster closer relations between Filipinos and Koreans, as what we, the conference organizers, wish to attain in this gathering.

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Patrick Michael L. Capili is a traveler. When he is not teaching at the Department of Modern Languages of the Ateneo de Manila University, he is out celebrating the different cultures of the world. Although his tongue is European and his stomach Asian, he will always be Filipino at heart. He is a proud ELF and his bias is Ryeowook, with Sungmin, Hyukjae, Donghae and Henry as bias-wreckers. He dreams to live in Fullhouse when he retires. K-pop aside, Prof Capili teaches both Portuguese and Spanish and is the moderator of the Ateneo Lingua Ars Cultura. He also coordinated the 1st Campus Korea event in the Philippines organized by the Korea Tourism Organization last 2012 here in the Ateneo.
Stagnant Fans and Retired Fans: The Other Side of Hallyu Fandom in the Philippines

Gilbert Jacob Que

Abstract

The study aimed to answer the questions of how both hallyu itself has evolved, as well as the Filipino fans of hallyu, and why some of these fans lie low or drop out of the hallyu fandom. Results showed that a Filipino fan's interest on hallyu evolve over time. However, the interest and knowledge of Korea's traditional and modern, cultural, and linguistic aspects continue to benefit even the so-called stagnant and retired fans.

Keywords: Stagnant fans, retired fans

"Hallyu," also known as the "Korean Wave," is still big in the Philippines as of 2014. The hit charts in music channels such as Myx show that Korean popular music (K-pop) is still very popular among the Filipinos (and from April to May 2014, 2NE1's song "Come Back Home" has consistently been number 1 in the Myx International Top 20.) Also, local television channels continue to show Korean drama series, coined as "Koreanovelas" by the Filipinos (Que, 2010). These two are the most popular forms of hallyu, as music and television shows are the most accessible to the general public; other forms of hallyu include "films, animation, games," and expressions of fandom such as fan clubs for the celebrities (Cho, 2011).

In South Korea, this trend started in the early 1990s, and has both been influenced by and been influencing popular cultures in Northeast Asia, as well as the west (Ibid.). In the Philippines, hallyu has been popular since the early 2000s through the form of the Koreanovelas, because these drama series are unique from the Filipinos' point of view (i.e. filming locations, fashion, plot, etc.) (Que, 2010; Reyes, 2012.) However, the Korean craze shot up during 2009, when K-pop made its way to the country, especially after Sandara Park became part of idol group 2NE1.
from being a teen celebrity in the Philippines (Que, 2010). During this era, many people instantly became fans of K-pop, but many more Filipinos did not understand why these people were converted easily. The hallyu community back then was just a noisy minority, and hallyu in the Philippines itself was semi-mainstream because of the Filipinos' general awareness of hallyu's existence; hallyu in the country was just waiting for its tipping point to flow to the mainstream Filipino society, and be accepted by the hoi polloi as a "social reality" in the Philippines (Ibid.).

Potential fans, who eventually became full-fledged fans, were drawn to hallyu because of its uniqueness and difference from the typical Filipino or Western popular culture products (Ibid.). Cho (2011) even calls hallyu as a "rejection" of the western culture, although hallyu itself has many western influences in hybrid with the Korean culture. Filipino fantasies encouraged and dealt by hallyu, such as traveling and discovering a foreign culture, having snow, hearing a new language, or having white skin, have also been main reasons why people were hooked on hallyu (Ibid.). More importantly, hallyu has become a daily need for the fans, because hallyu is the reason for these fans' social activities (Ibid.). For some, hallyu has built new friendships, and for others, hallyu has added spice to old friendships.

Recently, hallyu has become a regular, everyday thing in the Philippines, regardless of opinions by both regular consumers (non-fans,) fans, and "haters." Philippine expressions of hallyu have been made, such as Philippine remakes of Koreanovelas, or the mildly controversial sub-genre of Philippine popular music called "P-pop" (Pinoy Pop) (Ibid.). Hallyu is now part of the Philippine mainstream, but despite the increasing number of Filipino fans of hallyu, there are also many who lie low and limit their fan activities to a minimal degree, or drop out of the fandom altogether. These are what this study coins as the "stagnant fans" and "retired fans" respectively. This study takes interest in these two groups of fans, because these two groups present a rare or new angle not only in hallyu studies, but also in fan studies. Most studies on fandom, whether from an emic or
etic perspective, are generally preoccupied with why people are attracted to objects of fandom, in order to give the general public a better understanding as to why people are obsessively drawn to these things. Most of these studies unconsciously assume that people who become fans are stuck with the fandom (i.e. otaku fandom, horror movie fandom, other genre-based fandoms, etc.) with special cases such as terminal fandoms like long-time television series that end after a few years or so. (In these cases, fans of these series may evolve to being fans of the actors from the series themselves, or continue to being fans of the certain drama series by re-watching the entire series repeatedly time after time, or do other fan-like actions in response to their nostalgia of the series.) In the case of this study, understanding why fans lie low or drop out of a fandom sheds light on how both hallyu and the Filipino fans have evolved over time. The hallyu fandom is also an interesting case to study, since hallyu surpasses its label as a mere "genre" or specification, but rather, hallyu itself is an inter-webbing of different aspects of showbiz (and showbiz alone is a complex web by itself), consumerism, tourism, popular culture, (Korean) traditional culture, and human activity (Cho, 2011; Que, 2010; Reyes, 2012). This implies that lying low or retiring from one aspect of hallyu fandom (i.e. media-centric fandom like K-pop,) will affect perceptions on other aspects of hallyu and South Korea.

Research Questions, Framework, Methodology

The aim of the study is to answer the questions of how both hallyu itself has evolved, as well as the Filipino fans of hallyu, and why some of these fans lie low or drop out of the hallyu fandom. A former study on hallyu (Que, 2010) used Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch's (1974) "Uses and Gratifications Theory" infused with Cornell Sandvoss' (2005) concepts of fandom. The uses and gratifications theory states that consumers of media are specific with which types of media they consume, depending on what need they must satisfy (i.e. reading a newspaper to fulfill the need of being updated with current events) (Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch, 1974). One significant aspect of this is the consumption of media in order to satisfy the need
for social interaction and enculturation (Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch, 1974), where the people who accompany or relate to a person in consuming a particular media text are as important, or even more important than the media text itself. As for Sandvoss (2005), he showed that fan actions and receptions differ by gender. True enough, in the study of hallyu movements in the Philippines, female fans were shown to be more attached to, and more emotional towards hallyu, saying that hallyu has served as their inspiration, their love, their stress-relievers, or their happiness; male fans on the other hand were more detached, and still treat hallyu media texts only as forms of entertainment (Que, 2010.)

Since female fans have a closer and a more personal affiliation with hallyu, this study concentrates more on female fans who have become stagnant, or who have retired. To be more specific, "stagnant fans" of hallyu are people who still remain fans, but have greatly reduced their fan activities and updates, usually limiting these to their idol biases, compared to before when they would be highly-updated about everything that has to do with the hallyu world beyond their idol biases; these updates may not even be regular anymore, and because they are "stagnant," they do not re-expand their fan biases, or if they do, the minor revival of being a fan would usually be limited or short-lived. Attending concerts and conventions may still be done apart from personal consumption of hallyu media texts, but the enthusiasm is not that high anymore. The group of "retired fans" is easier to understand, and as stated in the previous section, refers to people who have completely dropped out from the fandom. They differ from "anti-fans," informally known as "haters," in such a way that retired fans of hallyu were once fans of hallyu, but now are generally apathetic. The do not necessarily hate hallyu, unlike anti-fans who are passionate on defaming hallyu, however, it is possible for retired fans to end up becoming haters or anti-fans, mainly influencing their former co-fans to retire from the fandom as well; this will depend on why the retired fans dropped out in the first place, and why fans drop out will be discussed in the next section.
Interview sheets were sent to people who claim to be stagnant or retired fans via snowball method. These people were a bit difficult to find because hallyu still has a big following in the Philippines, and those who seemed to be stagnant or retired were still in denial that they have become stagnant or retired fans; potential respondents who were in denial were not used in the study, as these people's mindsets vis-a-vis their position on the fandom may skew the data. The respondents were also middle to upper-middle class, since previous researches have claimed that most fans come from these socio-economic brackets (Que, 2010; Cho, 2011); these people had more purchasing power, had more opportunities to pursue the fandom more deeply, such as travelling or frequently attending concerts.

Results and Discussions

Among the ten people interviewed, 8 claim to be stagnant fans, and 2 claim to be retired fans. They were asked when they became fans, and when they realized they were losing interest in hallyu. Although the sample is rather small, it can be observed that the life span of being a hallyu fan, based on the respondents' answers, is mostly around 4 to 6 years. These were the people who mostly and officially declared themselves to be fans of hallyu during the K-pop height in 2009, or slightly earlier during the height of Koreanovelas (circa 2006-2007.)

The respondents were asked to give a general overview of their fandom before more specific questions about their status are a stagnant or retired fan, in order to have a close and detailed comparison of their fan movements before and now. Just like in the early study on hallyu in the Philippines (Que, 2010,) these female fans did highlight their emotional affiliation with hallyu, with "happiness" as the most frequent word. One respondent even claimed that her idol bias, Super Junior, "helped [her] get through difficult times in life," and that listening to Super Junior's songs made her feel that she could "overcome any challenge." This attachment may be the reason why many potential respondents were in denial that they were slowly going out of the fandom. Hallyu was a necessity for them in such a way
that much of their social lives revolved around hallyu, and it was a personal obsession for some to make it a point to be updated about the hallyu world every day, or consume any hallyu media text daily. Besides these, one positive effect of being addicted to hallyu is that these people were attracted to, and able to understand the Korean traditional culture, especially its Confucian aspects (Cho, 2011) (with particular attention to the five relationships of Confucianism), and the Korean language.

**Factors that Lead to the Fans' Stagnancy or Retirement**

The fan nostalgia is contrasted by their current sentiments and experiences towards hallyu. The 10 respondents brought up several issues, some overlapping, and some distinct from others. Several factors contribute as to why fans gradually lose interest in hallyu. First, there are personal reasons. Most fans laid low during their early twenties (around 20-21,) and some reasoned out that they had to focus on their careers, or further studies. Apart from not having enough time for hallyu, this also implies that the Filipino fans, at least, see hallyu as a youthful trend that should be let go when more serious and "mature" matters should be taken care of in life. Hallyu's market in the Philippines does focus on the younger age group (Que, 2010,) but does not prescribe a specific age bracket. Second, social factors. Hallyu fans begin to lose interest when the people around them lose interest in hallyu too. This may be related to the first factor, and is also understandable since fan movements, as far as hallyu is concerned, is highly-social and active in nature, even for "closet fans" who may express their fandom in secret (i.e. making fan fiction, or participating in online fora discussions,) still need to interact with other fans and consumers (Que, 2010). The gradual loss of people to socialize with the fandom results to the loss of the "need" for the media text that Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) have exemplified in their article/theory.

The third and the most complicated factor is the evolution and recent trends of the hallyu world (as of 2014.) After its international height in 2009, the hallyu world has since released more idol groups, but has either repeated celebrity
imaging/packaging, concepts, and trends from veteran-but-still-famous groups, or shared the same concepts and packaging as with other new groups. One fan even mentioned that many newer groups, especially male idol groups, have sported "dark" concepts (i.e. wearing all black accompanied by chants and howls, etc,) which some older fans find "scary" and "(oc)cult-like" due to religio-cultural influences and norms in the Philippines; previous trends were "jollier" and "lighter," such as SHINee's colorful fashion trend, or SNSD's cute-adorable-but-still-sexy concept, and allowed these fans to feel happy and light after watching their videos. These fans also claim that members within a group and among groups are just copies of each other, unlike before, and these groups also sound similar to each other too, making it difficult to recognize each member. Aside from these, the newer groups debuted one after the other, with less time gap in between, and as with previous trends, it is normal to have idol groups consisting of more than 10 or 15 members (Que, 2010). The older fans are overwhelmed, and because they have a hard time keeping up with these new groups, they could no longer sustain their status as fans; a loyal fan of hallyu, specifically K-pop, not only listens the groups' music, but also watches all the talk shows and dramas that their idols appear in, as a way to get to know their idols personally. Because the older fans have less time to do these, and with more groups flooding out of nowhere, these older fans just decide to stick with their original biases instead. This, however, poses another issue: older groups now produce and promote less records and products, some have disbanded or had activities more concentrated on the individual members, and as for Korean male members of idol groups, many of them have opted to do their compulsory military service. While there are newer groups to look out for, the older fans claim that they stick to their original biases, because the newer groups are way out of their age group, and they liked the idea of having their idols as their "oppa" or "eonni" (Korean words meaning elder brother and elder sister, used only by female speakers;) these fans did not like the idea of being called "nuna," (older sister by a male speaker) by their (male) idols, and ultimately, a seeming nightmare for them would be when there will be a day that a Korean idol group that they will like would
call them "ajumma" (auntie). This implies that hallyu, especially K-pop, is indeed generational, because the newer groups were made to appeal to younger generations, specifically teenagers, who become hallyu’s new set of fans, just as the older groups appealed to the stagnant and retired fans when they were teens; the old fans are still there to support the veteran groups, although it is not to say that older fans cannot support younger groups, or younger and newer fans supporting veteran groups. Also, this point shows the Filipinas’ rather Confucian-inspired ideal for someone to respect and idolize: someone who is preferably older than, or at least the same age as the fans; other than the idol’s looks, the idol’s experience in the industry and in life also matter, and serve as inspirations to fans. In a personal fan-centered perspective, this also implies that they do not wish to be older than their idols, because they seem to equate beauty with youth; if they are older than the fans, then they will not be able to feel young, and so it may seem to them that their beauty is fading.

The fourth factor is an effect of the third: there are more and newer (mostly younger) fans who belong to a new generation different from the stagnant and retired fans. The new fans cannot relate to the veteran fans, and vice-versa. One respondent claims that new fans are now "rowdier" in general, and another respondent claims that the new fans have a habit of "fighting" with older fans, saying that their idols, most of the time the new groups, are better than the veteran groups.

While the newer and/or younger fans are happy and contented with their hallyu fandom, the older fans from this study’s fan generation have either fulfilled their Korean fantasy, or have shattered their Korean fantasy, a fifth factor in lying low in hallyu fandom. Some fans have gone to Korea, or have seen their idols personally (both of these the most common fantasies or goals,) leading them to ponder if there is more to the fandom after personally experiencing Korea and their idols, and/or fulfilling whatever hallyu-related dream/goal they may have. For other fans, they become frustrated after not being able to fulfill some of these goals and fantasies. In this case, the most common
frustration is not being able to learn the Korean language, and so they still cannot understand the songs or series even after years of consuming media texts spoken and written in the Korean language. Another common frustration is that the numerous Koreans that are encountered by these fans are far, whether in appearance or personality, from the fans' perceived notions of Koreans presented in hallyu media texts. The fans realize these things, and so they lie low, or retire altogether.

Finally, a significant factor is the status of hallyu in the Philippines. As mentioned earlier, hallyu is now an accepted part of the Filipino mainstream media and society. Because of this, the fans feel that hallyu, in the Philippine context, is not "special" anymore, since everyone knows about it. When before, only a minority knew about hallyu and enjoyed their special bubble with other hallyu fans, this time, it is hard to distinguish fans from normal consumers. Also, the fans felt that the thrill of hunting for hallyu CDs or other hallyu merchandise is long gone, because most of them can be easily found in most accessible spaces in the Philippines (i.e. malls, bazaars, local markets, etc.) These fans, mostly from the middle to upper classes, also claim that hallyu in the Philippines is too commercialized, and some even use the word "cheap," or "jejemon" (a local subculture associated with being "cheap" and "pretentious") not mainly because the knowledge of hallyu has spread to the lower "cheap" social classes, but because hallyu products even beyond CDs (i.e. t-shirts, caps, etc.) have been illegally copied, and sold for lower prices in street/flea markets. These situations allow non-fans (not referring to anti-fans) to lump hallyu fans and the people from the lower social classes together, because they think that the hallyu fans' merchandise have also come from the local street or flea markets. However, what mainly makes the fans feel "off" about this is not so much that the people from the lower classes have started to consume hallyu, but those who have purchased these pirated hallyu merchandise are not fully aware of the significance of the products they buy, such as symbols or words associated with certain groups, and that these pirated products per se greatly devalue the original hallyu products possessed or about to be bought by the fans. Many from the lower class even
use hallyu merchandise, like t-shirts with pictures of hallyu idols, without being hallyu fans at all, affecting fan identity in the fandom, and removing the meaning and significance of possessing or wearing something that signifies an affiliation to whichever idol bias. (Think of a person who wears a soccer jersey, but has no knowledge of the team on the jersey, and may not care about soccer at all; this greatly irritates soccer fans, and will not hesitate to label that person as "pretentious.") Through this example, it should be accepted that fandom, generally, is inseparable from labeling and the "otherness" both by the fans from non-fans, and vice versa.

Apart from all these, Philippine mainstream media has also copied many aspects of hallyu, from hair, fashion, sometimes execution of videos, making fans think that the things that made hallyu foreign, mysterious, and interesting, are now tarnished. Filipino hallyu fans do not necessarily label Philippine mainstream media as cheap, but the fans just wished that the Philippine mainstream media would construct an identity of its own, rather than heavily borrow/copy from another distinct media-centric imagery (i.e. hallyu) (Que, 2010). Although hallyu itself has been influenced by foreign, including western, influences (Cho, 2011), hallyu was successful in giving itself its own unique character.

Fan Movements and Sentiments by Stagnant and Retired Fans

It is expected that stagnant fans and retired fans have lessened their consumption of hallyu products, but they only differ in degree. Some stagnant fans act like avid fans, but are distinct from normal fans, because stagnant fans are usually limited to their original biases, while some, like the retired fans, have completely stopped consuming hallyu media texts. Some stagnant fans claimed that it was hard to let go of their original biases, because their original biases have shaped part of their current selves, and some may even continue to show exclusive support to their biases by purchasing original hallyu merchandise produced by their biases. Most of the time, they just listen to music or watch music videos, but less frequently watch
live performances whether through the internet or through television. As for Korean dramas, stagnant fans who still consume them are now satisfied with the dubbed versions shown on Philippine local television channels, and are not in a rush to finish the series, unlike before when they would prefer and have the need to download or purchase, in order to watch the series spoken in Korean, with English subtitles. Also, other fans have lessened or lost interest in these Koreanovelas because through time, the plots that were once deemed as different from the usual, foreign, or interesting (Que, 2010; Reyes, 2012,) now seem repetitive and common; some commented that the plots were too unrealistic, adding frustration to the Korean fantasy, and other life expectations. Stagnant fans also re-consume hallyu media texts from before, in order to satisfy nostalgia - a recurring "need" that is easily satisfied.

Both stagnant and retired fans also claim that while hallyu can still entertain people, they felt that even if hallyu has reached a great milestone worldwide, the hallyu showbiz industry should focus more on improving their artists' images and appearance (in such a way that they will not look like each other,) and innovating new techniques and styles for their songs, videos, or series. They observed that hallyu has become too formulaic, and that the several formula (depending on which media text and area/field) were too obvious for be ignored. The fans also thought that perhaps, lessening the constant debut of new groups and celebrities, but instead, working carefully on image (both physical image and theme/concept,) promotions, and exposures of celebrities (i.e. quality over quantity,) because it would be easier to follow and get to know the idols more, just like before. They also thought that hallyu could perhaps pour more meaning to songs or drama plots, in order to add content and value to the media texts, and perhaps, in order to bring in more fans, and maybe even revive the fandom for stagnant and/or retired fans.

One fan claimed that hallyu is "not growing anymore," because there is nothing new anymore in hallyu that can surprise people. This study, however, does not completely agree
with this. Hallyu has been expanding and growing continuously since its inception and popularity, although in a different way in each era. Hallyu has also consistently attracted newer people as its main purpose, because a part of hallyu's goals is to introduce and educate Korea to the world; hallyu cannot do that if it indeed has stopped growing and expanding. In another light, older fans are now familiar with both traditional and popular Korea, so these veteran fans can have more free will in exploring hallyu, and Korea on their own; hallyu has focused itself on the newer fans, because the newer fans need more "guiding" with the acculturation to "Koreanness." Through this, hallyu's function as South Korea's soft power (Cho, 2011) is far from obsolete.

Without hallyu dominating these fans' lives anymore, they have shifted back to western media (i.e. songs, shows, comics, etc.), embodying cultures and norms that are familiar to most Filipinos, and a language, English, that is well-understood by the middle to upper-class Filipinos. Although this point may be good for another study, it should be mentioned that the Filipino people are more inclined to the west than the rest of Asia, not only because of the Philippines' geographical setting as detached from most parts of Asia, but because of American colonial influences, a primarily English-language educational system, an American-influenced/English-language-influenced mass media even in local television, and the internationally popular "American dream" that has been around since the Cold War era or even before, just to name a few crucial factors. In contrast to this, some stagnant fans are still solid fans of their original hallyu biases, but again, they do not see themselves going back to the hype and height of fandom like before.

_Hallyu in Their Lives_

The respondents were asked how hallyu has affected their lives, despite not being active in the fandom anymore. This is significant because the data collated showed the long-term effects of hallyu beyond fandom, exhibiting the extent of hallyu as a soft power between South Korea and the Philippines.
Stagnant and retired fans claim that hallyu has allowed them to be more tolerant of other cultures, not just Korean. They learned to appreciate the beauty of media texts not in their native language(s), with one fan even realizing "that music is universal and that you don't need to understand the lyrics in order to appreciate a song." Media aside, they have also developed a palate for Korean cuisine (some consider Korean cuisine to be their favorite!) This can be considered as a big change, because the Filipinos' palate is not used to eating spicy dishes, a taste found in many Korean dishes and appetizers. Through hallyu, these fans have also allowed themselves to be active in the hallyu "contact zone" (Cho, 2011) even until now; they are still able to use hallyu as a way to reconnect with old friends, both from the Philippines and abroad, whom they have met because of hallyu; one fan claims that some of these friends are not the type of people she usually mingles with, but she was thankful to have met them because of hallyu. Also, it should not be missed that fashion, beauty tips, and hairstyles, have continued to influence not only stagnant fans and retired fans of hallyu in the Philippines, but even extending to non-fans as well.

Hallyu has also given a degree of empowerment to these fans, because they have picked up words and expressions from repeatedly consuming hallyu media texts during their heydays as fans. This basic knowledge of the Korean language has given these fans the power to erase a small part of the communication barrier with Koreans (usually Koreans in Korea), many of whom are not confident with their English or have forgotten their English, because Koreans, living in a rather homogenous society, rarely use English in their everyday lives beyond their English classes in schools, universities, or in "hakwons" (language institutes.)

Commercially, stagnant fans and retired fans confess that buying Korean products has become a habit for them, because they still trust Korean products until now, especially cosmetics. Apart from this, continued interest in travelling to (South) Korea has also been a long-term effect for these fans.
**Conclusion**

Hallyu is still big in the Philippines, and is now accepted as part of the mainstream society. Despite this, some Filipino fans have grown out of the hallyu fandom because of many factors and frustrations, from personal, social, to inevitable changes by hallyu itself. The stagnant and retired fans of hallyu have certain opinions and suggestions on how to improve hallyu, but it is not to say that this study's point is to bash or defame hallyu and its current undeniable global success. Rather, the point of the study is to further understand the fan movements of Filipino hallyu fans, as well as the current impacts of hallyu in the Philippine society, and the long-term effects of being influenced by hallyu.

It can be observed that while hallyu in a Filipino hallyu fan's life may not be permanent, and even when they will shift their attention to other fandoms, the interest and knowledge of Korea's traditional and modern, cultural, and linguistic aspects continue to benefit both the stagnant and retired fans. It should also be noted that despite all the critiques (and criticisms) they have on what hallyu is today, these people have a generally positive perspective on South Korea, which still probably is the most important achievement of hallyu as a soft power tool.

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Gilbert Jacob S. Que is currently on his thesis stage for the degree of Master of Arts in Asian Studies in the University of the Philippines. He took up Bachelor of Arts in Communication in Ateneo de Manila University for his undergraduate degree, and graduated in 2011; his thesis was an early study on hallyu fandom in the Philippines. In the same year, he became a delegate to a broadcasting workshop organized by the Korean Educational Broadcasting System. In 2013, he presented a paper in the First World Congress of Hallyu Studies organized by the World Association of Hallyu Studies.
Synthesis of Panel 1

*Herdy La. Yumul*

The talks of Dr. Deen and Professor Capili gave us the impression that Hallyu is here and here to stay, although we don’t know how long it will stay. Mr. Que’s talk, for instance, seeds some doubt on how long it will last. For Hallyu have become too mainstream for its own good. Hallyu, having been described by Gilbert, as for the young and, for those who refuse to get old and to remain young forever. But the general impression is that Hallyu is really fun. Any researcher would end with the experience of Professor Capili-- mixing business with so much pleasure and more pleasure to come. As I said a while ago, while Dr. Deen and Professor Capili explored the structure of Hallyu fandom today, I’d be looking forward to witnessing you deliver presentations more on how the fan as a person is seen in this whole picture. Does the fan lose him or herself in the process? Or does he or she find an identity, especially in a country deeply wanting in national pride and identity, and rich in confusion and despair? We also learned that although there is a polarity between those who are financially able and those who have less. That being a fan is expensive (if you’re really a fan), especially in this country where internet costs are high and internet connection is very slow. But overall, Hallyu is an enriching, human and social experience which has forged friendships between two people and for which we are very grateful to celebrate this phenomenon, not only in Kpop conventions and in fan gatherings, but also in the academe and right here in the heart of Philippine academe, in the Ateneo.
Herdy La. Yumul teaches sociology and philosophy at the Mariano Marcos State University in Batac City, Ilocos Norte. He is also chief of the Print Media Section in the same institution. An advocate for cultural diversity and linguistic justice, he has received various citations for his essays published in national and regional newspapers and in his blog. He authored in 2011 his first book of essays, *The He(a)rd Mentality*, and co-authored in 2012 the travel book *Up North*. Having attended various conferences in Asia, Europe, and the United States, he eyes South Korea for his next journey.
PANEL II
Identity and Representation in Film and Television

Media space, as created by film and television, is a venue where the crossing of boundaries between reel and real create new realities of identity and representation. As the Filipino masses actively consume (mostly) Hallyu K-drama imports, notable changes have been happening to Filipino television, especially in the ubiquitous Filipino soap opera. The opening of local television and cinema to influences from the Hallyu wave has once again proven that cultural transference is not done in passivity; as local media space re-shapes and appropriates Hallyu influence to help create an identity for Filipinos in the 21st century. Moreover, the influence is a two-way street, for South Korea’s soft power also is adapting to the cultures and societies it touches creating a real multi-cultural space in Hallyu, and in the process, South Korean society and culture in general.

Papers in panel are “Koreanovelas, Teleseryes, and the ‘Diasporization’ of the Filipino/thePhilippines” by Louie Jon Sanchez; “Once Upon a Time: Koreanovelas and the Galleon Trade of the Digital Age,” by Carlo Jejomar Pascual P. Sanchez; and “Reincarnation of the Pinay Subaltern in Foreign Cinema” by Yu Taeyun. Mary Jessel Duque acted as panel chair.
Koreanovelas, Teleseryes and the ‘Diasporization’ of the Filipino/The Philippines

Louie Jon Sanchez

Abstract

In a previous paper, the author had begun discoursing on the process of acculturating Korean/Hallyu soap opera aesthetics in television productions such as Only You, Lovers in Paris, and Kahit Isang Saglit. This paper attempts to expand the discussions of that “critico-personal” essay by situating the discussions on what may be described as the “diasporization” of the Filipino, and the Philippines, as constructed in recent soap operas namely, Princess and I, A Beautiful Affair, and Kailangan Ko’y Ikaw. In following the three “teleserye” texts, the author observes three hallyu aesthetic influences now operating in the local sphere—the “spectacularization” of the first world imaginary in foreign dramatic/fictional spaces as new “spectre of comparisons,” quoting Benedict Anderson; the crafting of the Filipino character as postcolonially/neocolonially dispossessed; and the continued perpetration of the imagination of Filipino location as archipelagically—and consequently, nationally—incoherent. The influences result in the aforementioned “diasporization,” an important trope of simulated and dramaturgically crafted placelessness in the process of “imagining” Filipino “communities” and their sense of “historical” reality, while covering issues of the diasporic Filipino.

Keywords: Koreanovelas, the Korean turn, teleserye, translation, imagined communities, diaspora, hallyu

Editor's note: The full-length manuscript of this presentation is unavailable for publication in this conference proceedings as it will be published elsewhere.
Louie Jon Sanchez teaches literature and composition at the Department of English, Ateneo de Manila University. He is the author of two collections of poetry in Filipino—*At Sa Tahanan ng Alabok* (2010, UST Publishing House) and *Kung Saan Sa Katawan* (2013, UST Publishing House). While working on a sustained study of Philippine literary history using a geographic approach, he also dabbles into Korean soap opera culture critique in the Philippine context.
아주 옛날 (Once Upon a Time): Koreanovelas and the Galleon Trade of the Digital Age

Carlo Jejomar Pascual P. Sanchez

Abstract

The evident proliferation of Korean television programs in the Philippines manifests a modern form of trade between the two countries. Though there are latent negativities, this trade brings forth a lot of positive effects between the nations involved, specifically in the modern television industry of the latter.

Through the three-step copycat-piggyback-leapfrog innovation, export-quality Koreanovelas facilitate product creativity that can increase not only the quantity, but more importantly the quality, of locally-produced television goods. The presence and proliferation of Koreanovelas also challenges the local industry as it promotes competition for patronization in limited television timeslots. This competition works side-by-side with creativity. Scarce resources with desirable incentives push television stations to offer only programs that are good enough to be consumed in another country, products that are most likely of superior quality.

Finally, Koreanovelas improve employment especially in the Philippine-end of the barter. The drive to produce better programs brought about by heightened creativity and competition will increase production. This, in turn, will cause television stations to employ more and better workers, improving workers and the television industry as a whole.

Keywords: Koreanovelas, Philippine soap operas, Philippine primetime television
The Story Behind the Story

In *Philippine Studies*’ “Two and a Half Centuries of the Galleon Trade,” Benito Legarda Jr. narrated the beginnings of the said trade in the Philippines. During the early years of Spanish occupation, hints of barter with neighboring countries were manifested in foreign products in local towns. Citing Edward Gaylord Bourne’s 1907 *Discovery, Conquest and Early History of the Philippine Islands*, Legarda also discussed on what the article presents as “the apogee of the trade.” Suggested to be thirty years after the Philippines started trading with the Spanish and Chinese, it was said to be the time when “the galleon trade had attained its height and the city was seeing its most glorious days (1955).”

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines the galleon as a “heavy square-rigged sailing ship used for war or commerce by the Spanish.” The galleon trade, though presented with both its positive and negative implications, can easily be a successful bout of commerce, its profits even described in the same article as “fantastic.”

Legarda also cited William Lytle Schurz’s 1939 *The Manila Galleon* in describing the desirable effects of the trade to both parties involved. Directly quoted by Legarda from Schurz, the first part of the article—a specific section at least—closes saying "If the Manileños lived dangerously in the midst of so many perils, they also lived luxuriously and recklessly, and it was the bountiful returns from the annual voyage of the Manila Galleon that provided the means for their lavish way of life." Indeed, it might not be the Manila Filipinos that are greatly benefiting per se. However, the desirable outcomes of the trade are still shared by both parties involved in the barter.

It is in this way that this paper aims to make use of the galleon trade. The focus is not on the details of one or a number of specific voyages or on any particular instance, but is on the way the Filipinos—the local television industry, most especially—can reap benefits from a phenomenal form of digital trade.
The Main Characters

In a November 12, 2013 write-up of Nickie Wang for Manila Standard Today, ABS-CBN Channel 2 and GMA Channel 7 were shown to have the highest television show ratings in the country. Values do vary per time slot and area of data collection. However, the groups of data procured from separate research groups AGB Nielsen and Kantar Research show that it is indeed these two stations that most Filipinos tune-in to. Though these may not end the battle for the top television station spot, the numbers do give us an idea that television goods from these two stations are the ones that a good number of Filipinos patronize.

GMA Channel 7 collectively calls their prime time offerings GMA Telebabad. The term, most likely from the Filipino words for telephone and soak, initially describes the prolonged usage of the telephone throughout the day. Following the same idea, it was used by the station to refer to the act of staying in front of an open television for a long period of time. Using data collected on March 19, of the five programs that the station’s prime time viewers can “soak in,” one is a Korean series. Billed as A Hundred-Year Legacy or A Hundred Years’ Inheritance, it is a Filipino-dubbed drama whose final episode aired in the country last May 15. Two months after the said time, during the second data collection on May 20, The Master’s Sun took the timeslot of the said series. As of July 19, during the third data gathering, the slot was for a series called Secret or Secret Love. Again indicated in the website Viki, the last two shows are also Korean in origin.

ABS-CBN Channel 2, on the other hand, calls their most-consumed—most-watched—program block Primetime Bida. The second part of the term is a Filipino translation of the word protagonist. Of the four programs included in this block, none is a Korean series. However, the station, who fondly calls its viewers kapamilya or family, did offer—at least during the period inclusive of March 19—a re-run of My Girlfriend is a Gumiho in their pre-primetime Kapamilya Gold. As of July 19, a show called the The Heirs secured a slot in the same program
block. Similar to *A Hundred-Year Legacy*, *The Master’s Sun* and *Secret Love*, these two series originated from Korea.

**The Setting: Time**

Information about their daily shows can be seen in the program guide page of GMA Channel 7’s online website, gmanetwork.com. Scheduled from 10:15 to 11:00 in the evening, *A Hundred-Year Legacy* constituted 45 units of the 1172-minute cumulative air time of the station in a day. This was approximately 3.84 percent of the total program-run from 4:58 to 12:30 in the morning. *The Master’s Sun*, meanwhile, is—during the period inclusive of May 20—scheduled from 10:10 to 10:55 p.m. This is still 3.84 percent of the total time per day. For *Secret Love* who, as of July 19, is in the same 10 p.m. slot, the values are not much different.

Data about ABS-CBN Channel 2’s offerings are also available in their online website abs-cbn.com, this time under the Schedules tab. *My Girlfriend is a Gumiho* ran from 5:20 to 5:50 in the afternoon, taking up 30 units of the 1205-minute total program-run. This covered 2.49 percent of the station’s run from 5:00 in the morning to 1:05 a.m. the next day. Looking at the site’s data on July 19, *The Heirs* covers thrice as much airtime—7.47 percent—during its 4:20 to 5:50 in the afternoon run.

In line with this is a fairly recent legislative proposal. Just this March, former Manila City mayor and *Buhay* Partylist representative Cong. Jose “Lito” Atienza Jr. filed House Bill No. 3839, described by Louis Bacani of The Philippine Star as a bill “prohibiting the broadcast of foreign television series, also known as teleseryes, during primetime” (2014). Primetime, the period where most viewers watch television shows, was defined by information and measurement website The Nielsen Company as the time between 8:00 and 11:00 in weekday evenings. However, for the Philippine context, the same journalist suggested that the “peak time slot of television broadcasts” is from 6:00 to 10:00 pm. As stated in the last portion of the news
article, this bill has been forwarded to the House Committee on
Public Information for further review.
Looking at the programming schedules above, it would be easy to
understand Cong. Atienza Jr. He has a point when he said that
foreign television series, most notable of which are Korean ones,
do “eat into the primetime schedules” and lessen the time
available for locally-made shows. Even if majority of the Korean
series mentioned run for only less than an hour, this is still
enough airing time for one or two typical-length local television
program.

The Setting: Place

As seen in the same Manila Bulletin source, the lawmaker said
that foreign series push local goods into “unfavorable timeslots.”
This, then, supposedly discourages local producers from making
productions.

It is not difficult to see the point of this statement. Again, the
first part of the relevant information below was acquired from
gmanetwork.com’s program guide and abs-cbn.com’s show
schedule page last March 19.

Of the five programs that GMA Channel 7 offered in their pre-
primetime GMA Afternoon Prime, one, Villa Quintana, is a
remake of what the website described as a “phenomenal hit
series from the mid-90’s.” Another slot was for the station’s
Sinebabad, a show whose name most likely came from the
Filipino word for cinema and the term Telebabad. The 45-
minute program from 5:05 to 5:50 in the afternoon featured a
wide variety of movies produced in the past.

ABS-CBN Channel 2 had its own version of the Sinebabad. As
part of its Kapamilya Gold block, the station gives its viewers a
chance to watch movies in their Kapamilya Blockbusters. Almost
three times more than that of GMA Channel 7’s, this movie-
showing program ran from 2:50 to 4:20 in the afternoon, a total
of 1 hour and 30 minutes. Another pre-primetime program,
Annaliza, was a remake. In the station’s Primetime Bida, one,
titled Dyesebel, is also a remake of a program that has been shown in the past.

Using data taken from the websites last May 20, it is observable that Kapamilya Blockbusters, Annaliza and My Girlfriend is a Gumiho were replaced with another set of programs. One of this is a re-run of Meteor Garden, shown from 4:30 to 5:50 in the late afternoon. As of July 19, it was The Heirs that took over this slot.

On the other hand, Sinebabad was replaced by Mischievous Kiss: Love in Tokyo and My Love from the Star. The former is Japanese in origin and was an adaptation of a Japanese graphic novel—which was also the basis of the Korean series Playful Kiss—while My Love from the Star, or My Love from Another Star, is from Korea. Ending on May 23, Mischievous Kiss was replaced by a re-run of Jewel in the Palace. During the second data gathering on May 20, the series was being promoted in a GMA Channel 7 television commercial as “the one that started the Korean wave in the Philippines.” As of the third set of data taken, Korean Return of the Wife or Wife Returns is being shown at 10:30 in the late morning. However, Jewel in the Palace is the only non-local program in the pre-primetime block.

These things can serve as proof to the effects of foreign series in the local television industry. The fact that stations often resort to producing remakes or even showing pre-produced movies and re-runs exhibits the impacts of certain series produced outside the country, including those that originated from Korea. Though it cannot be said that one does cause the other, the proliferation of programs produced elsewhere—Korean television series in particular—during the recent years did happen before a notable change in how local stations produce their shows in the country.

The Plot: Rising Action

Reporting on why the lawmaker thinks House Bill No. 3839 is necessary, Bacani’s March 17 article in the Philippine Star reads “Atienza said the State should protect the local entertainment
industry and promote creativity needed to spur production and increase employment” (2014).

Even if it not directly stated, the bill aims to ban foreign series in primetime since doing so will promote the needed creativity in the said industry. However, a better way of seeing foreign series, of which Korean ones can be said to be the leader, is to look at its benefits as a digital form of trade. This way, it would be more evident how shows produced in foreign countries help the local television scene, thus showing how the Philippines benefits from this exchange.

The presence of Korean series—foreign, in general—“raises,” or promotes, creativity and action in the television industry. This could be seen in one of the negative effects that foreign series are said to cause in the television market: pushing local products to "unfavorable time slots."

For one, there are also a lot of other internal television-market factors that affect this push, some of which might be purely subjective. Determined by people knowledgeable enough in their fields, timeslot assignment lies upon the decision of television station heads, depending on the evaluation of relevant data gathered. Information on program ratings, for example, partly dictates which particular show gets aired on a particular time. Looking at data on program ratings available in the internet, it is indeed likely that television goods with high ratings appear in the primetime block. These show that a push to certain time slots cannot be solely caused by the place or country where a competition program was produced.

However, if the proliferation of foreign series—foreign products—do tend take the sought-after primetime slots away from locally-produced goods, then these local producers should strive to create shows that would be as good as their foreign counterparts.

Stations will tend to place foreign series in “favorable timeslots” if they see these as superior to other program options.
Local shows can “claim back” sought-after slots if they would equal, if not surpass, the quality of these foreign series. One way of raising creativity to produce better shows is by utilizing the fact that foreign programs continue to proliferate in the industry. It could be done through innovation.

In one Ateneo de Manila University Loyola Schools Science and Society plenary lecture during the first semester of school year 2013-2014, Matthew Cua of the Ateneo Innovation Center discussed the center’s take on the three steps of innovation. The first step makes use of the image of a copy-cat, where an innovator first imitates whoever is superior in a particular field. This promotes creativity as it enables an innovator to step into the shoes of whoever is leading and see in a different point of view. The local industry has been doing this for a couple of years now. GMA Channel 7’s remake of the Korean show Coffee Prince is one good example. As observed in each episode, the show is notably as close as possible to the original.

The second step involves a piggyback, which can be seen in an innovator “riding” on the good qualities of the superior entity. This promotes creativity as it goes a step further from mere imitation, focusing more on what certain qualities have proven itself effective based on past instances. This has also been evident in the country’s television industry. An example is GMA Channel 7’s version of Temptation of Wife, which, in its aim to fit better in the local setting, is notable for doing a number of drastic plot changes while still staying true to the original Korean themes. These changes involved a lot of creativity from the production team, resulting to a storyline that could possibly be seen as something better than the original.

The last step is related to leapfrog, and is about going leaps further from where the leading entity is. Of the three, this is where one can easily see how the presence of foreign shows brings forth positive effects to the television industry. After being a mere imitator and after utilizing good qualities observed, an innovator can change the game by being the entity on top. By making use of the fact that foreign series in the industry promote
creativity, local producers will be motivated to produce programs that are as good as those produced in foreign countries. When done well, locally-made programs can become better than the foreign shows that viewers prefer to patronize. The proliferation of foreign series promotes creativity; creativity allows producers to create works that are superior. When local shows are of superior quality, they can “reclaim the favorable slots” that were taken away from them.

When done at the right pace, creativity brought about by the presence of foreign series will result to prime time blocks dominated by local shows. This creativity improves not only the industry, but the over-all quality of the local program production as well.

The Plot: Climax

“Foreign teleseryes have been eating into the prime time schedules of television companies, and thereby push the Philippine-produced shows to unfavorable time slots.”

The above is again a direct quote from the lawmaker, as seen in the same Philippine Star article. If their proliferation does negatively affects local program time slot-alotment, then foreign television series should indeed be banned during prime time. This is very similar to imported products that, when proven to significantly “kill” local industries, are banned from entering the market. However, aside from creativity, this proliferation also promotes a desirable economic idea. Foreign series promotes “heightened conflict,” or competition, in the television market.

In the first chapter of his book Principles of Economics, economist Gregory Mankiw discusses how time is a scarce yet valuable resource. The efficient management of scarce resources, of which time is an example, is what economics aims to promote. Shows that reduce the time available for another type of show exhibit how prime time slots are limited resources, resources that producers need to compete for. Given both the scarcity and amount of possible viewers that they have, local producers need
to vastly improve the quality of their works to acquire these prime time slots.

The opportunity to acquire the scarce reward, which in this case is a time slot with a good number of viewers or “buyers,” serves as an incentive for competing parties to improve performances. Banning an external force that contributes to this scarcity will lessen this incentive.

To an extent, it might be questioned if there is indeed a competition between local and foreign programs. This is because the latter have already been fully produced and shown in their source country before they are shown locally. This is true, but this can also pave way to competition in a new market that involves the export of television series. If foreign shows are good enough to be shown outside its origin, then their presence in the country brings forth a much greater benefit. Not only will it promote desirable competition inside the country, it could even extend to more extensive international television markets.

Competition, similar to how creativity works for the industry, shows the benefits of Korean and other foreign series to local television. Because of the concept of competition, foreign television shows drive local producers to improve the quality of their works. Improvements should be made so these productions will be able to “conquer” the prime time slots, so they will be able to compete with series that are worthy of being “shipped out” and shown outside their source country. Again this could result to television companies that offer superior quality goods.

**The Plot: Falling Action**

Since markets aim to liken the television industry to a modern galleon trade, another economic principle might be applied to the latter. The proliferation of foreign shows in the country is a cumulative result of numerous instances of trade between local and foreign television markets. The acquisition of rights to air foreign shows in exchange for a fee is an instance of trade, and there are benefits in trade. As seen in Mankiw’s discussion on
what is considered as the ten principles of economics, “Trade Can Make Everyone Better-Off” (Mankiw, 2012, 10).

The point of this paper is to show how the proliferation of Korean series in local television is similar to the galleon trade of the Spanish era, focusing on the positive effects of this trade on the local end. Another one of these is its more direct effect on the television industry. The presence of foreign series promotes trade—the correspondence of a rise for every “fall”—and trade has positive effects in the television industry.

In an October 19, 2013 news article from Philippine Daily Inquirer, journalist Marlon Ramos reported on Philippine President Benigno Aquino III’s then recent visit to South Korea. In one of her welcome speeches, South Korean President Park Geun-hye mentioned how foreign series play a role in the relationship of the two countries.

The article features the part where Geun-hye’s said that “Filipinos today share similar emotional experiences with their Korean counterparts through Koreanovela.” “Koreanovela” is a term that refers to a telenovela or television series that was produced in Korea. It seems that this sharing of emotional experiences positively affects tourism. After the above quotation, the article proceeds to narrate President Geun-hye’s note on the one million Korean tourists that visited the Philippines the previous year.

As Ramos puts it, “Even the [then] newly elected leader of this rising economic superpower acknowledges how Filipinos’ affection for Koreanovelas … have helped bridge the two cultures” (2013).

Still from Mankiw’s Principles of Economics, “Trade between two countries makes each better off.” (2012, 10) Trade greatly affects the relationship of the parties involved. It also promotes product efficiency, as seen in the positive relationship between quality and trade. It also facilitates a latent exchange of knowledge, traditions and cultures. The proliferation of foreign
series in the local television industry is brought about by trade. Therefore, the television market benefits from these series as it paves way to trade, including all positive effects that come with it.

Again using The Philippine Star’s Bacani in his March 17 report, we see how “Atienza said the State should protect the local entertainment industry and promote creativity needed to spur production and increase employment” (2014).

As discussed above, a promotion of creativity that spurs production is brought about by the fact that foreign series are aired in local television companies. Even a desirable increase in employment is brought about by their presence, very much like the galleon trade and the local workers producing majority of the goods.

Productions that focus on exact remakes of foreign series, of which GMA Channel 7’s *Coffee Prince* is an example, employ almost the same amount of workers that a pure locally-made program needs. Though the story will be exactly the same as the original, writers are still needed for a script that will fit the new context. In fact, employees might be more in number since there are new tasks that need to be done. Translators—who go the extra mile by translating not only the words but the character in every line of dialogue—get employed. For innovative programs that go beyond the leap-frog stage, one of which is the same station’s *Temptation of Wife*, the numbers might be even higher.

Even in the case of programs that manifest the decline in local production, the one where ABS-CBN Channel 2’s *Kapamilya Blockbusters* was used, employment is still not that gravely affected since, again, translators and voice actors are needed. This is also true for Filipino-dubbed foreign television series themselves.

However, how the presence of foreign products makes every economic worker better-off should go beyond all of these. In promoting creativity and competition, it is desired that these
programs improve the over-all quality of local television series. Foreign shows make producers aim for higher quality. This, in turn, should increase production. Higher productivity caused by these programs will increase employment in the television industry, further exhibiting the positive effects of this galleon trade.

The “Ever After”

A bill that seeks to ban foreign television series during prime time has been filed in the Philippine congress. Though not limited to Korean ones, this bill is one excellent tool in looking more closely at how foreign series affect the country’s television industry. Given the number of shows and the extent of their influence, the foreign series referred to in the bill could actually be almost synonymous to Korean series.

The presence and proliferation of Korean series in the Philippines is a digital form of the galleon trade simply because it involves the import of a foreign product in exchange for a local item. This item might be reduced to simply the fees needed to acquire the rights to air a show. However, the part where it might be better to exert greater focus is the positive effects of these on the country’s television industry. Indeed, this paper fails to discuss and elaborate on the negative effects of this trade on the Philippines or how these affects the other end of the barter. However, the timeliness of a legislative bill influenced this paper to focus on its positive effects.

Through the three-step copycat-piggyback-leapfrog innovation, export-quality Korean series facilitate product creativity that can increase not only the quantity, but more importantly the quality, of locally-produced television goods. The presence and proliferation of Korean series also challenges the local industry as it promotes competition for patronization in limited television time slots. This competition works side-by-side with creativity. Scarce resources with desirable incentives push television stations to offer only programs that are good enough to
be consumed in another country, products that are expected to be of superior quality.

Finally, Koreanovelas improve employment especially in the Philippine-end of the barter. The drive to produce better programs brought about by heightened creativity and competition will increase production. This, in turn, will cause television stations to employ more and better workers, improving workers and the television industry as a whole.

It is recognized that the discussions are limited to series in primetime and pre-primetime slots. A better analysis could also be done when one focuses on Korean programs alone. Some of what has been discussed might be seen as subjective claims as well. However, all available research materials were used in order to see the issue as critically as possible. Thus, from the related research gathered, it can be concluded that the presence and proliferation of Korean series in the television industry is a digital form of the galleon trade. Through creativity, competition and other principles of basic trade, Korean television programs facilitate a trade that contributes to the betterment of the television industry of the Philippines.

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Pinay as Subaltern in Korean Cinema

Taeyun Yu

Abstract

The paper presents an analysis of Korean film texts Yangil Choi’s All Under the Moon (1993) and Han Lee’s Wandeugi (a.k.a. Punch, 2011). The discussion of the paper focused on the interplay among nationalism, post/colonialism, and globalization in these films.

Keywords: post/colonialism, hybridity, subalterneity, nationalism

Editor’s Notes: The present paper is an abridgement of the original work published in Kritika Kultura under the title, “Reincarnation of the Pinay Subaltern in Foreign Cinema.”
<http://kritikakultura.ateneo.net/images/pdf/KK%202122/21%20Reincarnation%20of%20the%20Pinay%20Subaltern.pdf>

The current research was conceived to address recurring questions that boil down to the representation of the subaltern¹; that is: 1) Why is it so difficult to speak for the subaltern? 2) What does the image of Pinay in Korean cinema intimate regarding the discursive politics at play? And 3) how do we then represent them without ideological filtering in media praxis? By way of answering those questions, this study will map out the problematic of post-colonial discursive space in Korea by analyzing two film texts depicting diasporic Pinay images – as an entertainer in Yangil Choi’s All Under the Moon (1993) and as a migrant wife in Han Lee’s Wandeugi (a.k.a. Punch, 2011).

The kind of postcoloniality that exists in Korea must be understood side by side with nationalism and globalization. One way of understanding the interplay that gives rise to the postcolonial specificity in Korea would be to take the notion of
glocalization into account, a portmanteau combining globalization and localization. Throughout the compressed version of modernization in Korea\(^\text{2}\) one might argue that there has been constant negotiation between these two opposing notions. To wit, whereas in the Western capitalist model, a linear progress was prescribed for economic development in Korea, cultural nationalism had been also simultaneously called on to preserve cultural values and national identity. In effect, Korea became industrialized enough to join the bandwagon of globalization, all the while equally engendering “cultural nationalism” with the outmoded model of the nation-state (cf. Chungmoo Choi).

If global capitalism catalyzed diasporization, hence becoming a way of including diasporic identities in Korea today, nationalist politics initiated with localization would precisely serve as exclusion of these identities due to its essentialist/totalist actuations in defining citizenship. Such strange coupling of two opposing models clues us as to why the country evinces an ambivalent postcolonial nature when interacting with other nations that fall under the now-anomalous categorization of “Third World.” In such a condition, it would be the voice of women that is being silenced, behooving us to hypothesize that the image of diasporic Filipino women in Korean cinema is predetermined by such complicity, and ideologically reincarnated as the subaltern.

The strong fascination that the diasporic image exerts on the public imagination in Korean cinema has rarely been demonstrated more strikingly than by the film Wandeugi, known as Punch in its international release. Based on a popular source novel, Wandeugi depicts the coming-of-age of an eighteen-year-old named Wan-deuk who is a trouble-maker who yet maintains filial devotion to his hunchback father. Unfortunately, for him, his eccentric teacher Dongju, who is also a church minister, keeps singling him out in and outside the classroom, and even at home as he lives across the street. One day, Dongju, who helps illegal immigrants through his church ministry, finds out and tells Wandeuk that his mother is still alive, and is Filipina. The
The rest of the plot focuses on the process of conciliation between mother and son until the Filipina is successfully reintegrated in the family that she had earlier abandoned.

As insinuated by the narrative, the film seems to envision the utopic multicultural society in its resolution. However, if we look at the same narrative in terms of the paradigmatic viewpoint (by extracting the plotline of the Filipino immigrant wife from the syntagmatic story), the implication would contradict what the text has designed to be perceived. To be specific, the segmented narrative of the Pinay mother can be unfolded in terms of a three-act structure: the atonement for her abandonment of her Korean family, her desire to return to her family, and her successful reunion with the family.

The first act introduces the Filipino character charged with her remorse for abandoning her family. In this initial segment, her sense of guilt and Otherness engender the first emotional signifier, “passivity,” wherein a sense of belittlement and faceless subjectivity is relentlessly built up by the use of the basic cinematic device to render the character less significant. Accordingly, she is constantly positioned in the background, framed within low-angle compositions, and sutured through the eyes of the spectator as exercised by the POV (point-of-view) device. In addition, such passivity is further maximized by her subservient manner toward the other diegetic characters whose gaze over the Pinay subject constantly reminds audiences of her difference, coming as she did from “over there.”

How do we account though for her predetermined passivity? In the context of globalization and multicultural transformation today in Korea, the nation’s attitude toward Southeast Asia seems to be far more ambivalent in so far as it manifests double-faced politics – that is, a postcolonial but Orientalist condition amid a multicultural but homogeneous situation. Marked by different historical and political forces of colonization and the devastation wrought by the Korean War, the formation of the Korean nation would have been a result of the postcolonial trauma of de-territorialization from colonial discourse together
with the industrial project of re-territorialization of its people in the name of reason and progress. It is, therefore, this spatiotemporal confluence between the postcolonial space mobilizing unitary national discourses and the internalization of the Western linear temporality that would have engendered a kind of binaristic consciousness among Koreans, premised on the Eurocentrically homogeneous linear time\(^3\) that registers the Pinay character as cultural Other. So by looking back, it may not be far-fetched to say that the Pinay character’s passivity in this film-text reflects the Korean attitude toward citizens from developing countries.

Marked by another emotional signifier, “self-effacement,” the second act involves her desire to return to the family, taking audiences on a roller-coaster fluctuation from estrangement to embrace and from conflict to climax. In this act, her desire is expressed through her absence. She is now nowhere to be found onscreen but her presence is constantly disclosed through explanatory inserts such as the letter and the dinner box left for the protagonist. In this manner, her wish to nurture her son once again becomes visible and thus her “nowhere” absence becomes a “now-here” presence in the mind of the protagonist as well as the audience that identifies with him, thereby manifesting the pathos in her situation.

It is particularly the bus station scene that signals the start of the final resolution for the character, the successful reunion with the family. Here in the locale, she first utters her son’s name to his face and finally hugs him and cries over his shoulder. This whole tearjerker sequence incites a cathartic as well as dramaturgic release carefully calibrated to draw empathy toward her and asseverate the reason for her to be reintegrated with the family. But thence, her role is over inasmuch as her act of contrition is completed. From here on, her presence is strictly to be confined to the domestic setting, cooking and caring for her son, her husband, and the entire community, thereby bestowing the final signifier upon her of maternalism.
Now if we assemble the mother’s emotional signifiers as a singular whole, we realize how the image of the Pinay is constructed in the film, sculptured as she is with the qualities of passivity, self-effacement, and lastly maternalism acquired through the course of each act. Such representation further affirms the discursive ambivalence I have posited at the onset of the discussion. In these three acts from alienation to acceptance to family integration (symbolically, metaphorical acceptance in the nation), what is suggested is the multi-layered discourses hidden: first, nationalistic exclusion as the Other, and second, patriarchal inclusion as “good” femininity. In short, her voice is translated, rearticulated, and eventually doubly effaced by ideological and cultural filtering and what is left in her now is the ideologically fetishized image of the subaltern.

If Wandeugi affirms Spivak’s classical statement that the subaltern cannot speak, the film All under the Moon would gainsay her statement with the notion of hybridity and third space informed by Homi Bhabha. According to Bhabha, third space is filled with hybridized cultures and multiple identities whose agency eventually undermines colonial discourse. It is this space that the film All under the Moon visualizes, based on early '90s social vistas in Japan when it was also then proposing a multi-cultural society like that of Korea today.

The film depicts Asian minority groups in Tokyo with its central focus on the romance between a Filipina entertainer named Connie and a Korean immigrant who works as a taxi driver. Meanwhile, there is the latter’s Korean mother (called Mama) who runs a bar where Connie works and who is openly against their relationship. The dialogue provided below is the conversation between Mama and Connie in the bar, after which I will discuss the identity politics between these two migrant sub-classes in Japan.

MAMA: Now that you are in Japan, you must act like the Japanese. Connie, translate!
CONNIE (in Tagalog): She said we should behave like the stingy Japanese.
IRENE (whispering, in Tagalog): But how? We’re Filipinos, that’s not how we roll. [Giggles and high-fives with the other girls]
MAMA: Lolita, cut your chat! Make them drink. Japanese men will keep drinking as long as you push them. They are the most generous men in the world since all Japanese men are gentlemen. The more you get drinks from them, the more profit it will bring to the bar and the more your income will rise. Money conquers all! Connie, translate!
CONNIE: Mama, I am not paid to translate.
MAMA (ignoring the complaint): With money, you can build a house in your homeland and make your family happy. So, don’t complain when they grope you.
CONNIE (irritated): We only get paid for singing and drinking with guests, not from the kind of things you are asking us to do.
MAMA: Don’t you forget that I am the one who promoted you as a manager.
CONNIE: Don’t treat me as if I were a prostitute. I’ve been here in Japan since I was fifteen.
MAMA: I’ve been here since I was ten, you cheeky bitch. [Giggling occurs among the employees] I have more experience than any of you. I am your role model so if you listen to me and do what I am saying, it will make your life better. Connie, translate!
CONNIE (in Tagalog): She said her life was a series of miseries. If you don’t follow her, then you will be happy.

Clearly, what’s at play in this conversation is a demonstration of how translation works as mockery. Turning to Bhabha’s postcolonial thinking, we see how he configures the process of translation as a sort of “disjunctive rewriting” (Location of Culture 226) that decenters imperial power in that the colonized subjects can restore their subjectivity by translating imperialist language into their own cultural context. Similarly, the translation performed by the heroine can be articulated as a means of resisting hegemonic language and power. Here, the voice of Mama reflects the capitalist discourse as she uses the
promise of wealth and happiness. But for Filipino interlocutors, such a promise is mere justification of the colonial project in the name of modernization and enlightenment, as experienced in Philippine history. Therefore, when Mama’s language is translated, it is only to be mocked, as Connie points out: “If you don’t follow her [or the wannabe colonizing subject], then you [who experienced colonization] will be happy.”

Concomitant to this, the act of translation does not merely end with restoring Connie’s subjectivity by mocking the authority figure, but goes so far as to displace their Self/Other coordination. If Mama was figured as the Self as opposed to Connie as Other, their subjectivity is reversed upon the act of translation. To figure out such displacement, we need to first redefine their identity in relation to subalternity and hybridity. On one hand, in the context of the film, not only Connie but Mama as well should be considered subaltern – to be precise, the colonized diasporic subaltern in Japan, if we follow Spivak’s categorization. This is due to their shared history which is doubly oppressed by the external colonial power as well as by the internal discourse such as nationalism and patriarchy. On the other hand, they should also be considered hybridized subjects whose agency has the potential to undermine the imperial power.

In fact, the film shares the quality of cultural audio-visual programs in Japan, inviting audiences to its multiple hybrid space fraught with the Korean house, the Catholic church where the Filipino priest preaches in Tagalog, and a wedding hall in which the Korean immigrants in their traditional costume sing a Korean folk song, Arirang. To make it even more conspicuous, the cacophonous use of multiple languages in the film – Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, English, even Iranian – adds another layer to hybridity in the film. What happens then would be the supposedly homogeneous space and time in Japan being questioned as it is consumed by such hybrid elements whose agency transforms Japan, possibly against its will, into third space.
Returning to the question with regard to their identity, we may thus redefine them as the hybridized subaltern in reality, in spite of the theoretical incompatibility where Bhabha’s hybridity is poised against Spivak’s subalternity in theory. With this, the next thing we need to take into account in explicating the displacement is their postcolonial politics being deployed. Aside from the translation performed by Connie, they also display what Bhabha calls mimicry/mockery, from which we may observe both possibilities as well as limitations of postcolonial discourse.

In the case of the Korean mother, it’s clear that her mimicry is meant to reinforce colonial power rather than to mock it. Not only does she resonate Orientalist, borderline-racist logic elsewhere in the film when she denounces the Chinese as sly and cunning and Filipinas as lazy and unproductive, but she also resonates the nativist discourse. For instance, when she finds out that her son is in love with Connie, she reveals her strong opposition due to her anxiety over racial impurity if ever her son will marry Connie. Likewise, she uses mimicry to restore her subjectivity by differentiating herself from other subaltern groups like Filipinas. What she doesn’t realize is that if her project succeeds, it would only wind up silencing her voice further. In other words, she gives in to oppressive structures such as colonialism, capitalism, and nationalism, all of which constrain her freedom. On the other hand, the Pinay subaltern, who was once deemed by Spivak as deprived of material accessibility and agency of enunciation, ironically “speaks” for herself. Here, she uses mimicry and translation to mock the colonial language, thereby finding a means, even within these delimited terms, of restoring her postcolonial subjectivity.

The foregoing film analysis constitutes the bare bones of the interplay among nationalism, post/colonialism, and globalization in Korean films by conflating two critical postcolonial thinking, hybridity and subalternity. Focusing on the ways in which the image of the Pinay interacting with Koreans has been constructed and consumed, I have shown the contradictions in the context of postcolonial politics among Koreans, whether or not they remain in Korea; in spite of its aim
to break away from colonial legacies, the specifically Korean shape of postcolonial politics ironically participates in Orientalist/masculinist colonial strategies for the purpose of its own agenda, which is the restoration of national subjectivity.

In the case of the Filipino mother from Wandeugi, we have first seen how various discourses in conjunction with postcolonial practice in Korea construct the subaltern as a mere signifier without its signified since the film’s construction of her image is no less different from the mechanics of the itinerary of silencing its subject. Then, in seeking to find the lost signified of the subaltern, the study adopted the notion of hybridity and third space to show the ways in which the agency of the subaltern subverts and simultaneously reappropriates the authority of colonial power through a repurposed reading of All under the Moon. Through the reconceptualization of the term, the hybridized subaltern characterized by Connie and Mama, not only does the film suggest the possibilities, it also intimates the limitations lurking in the postcolonial struggle. If the character of Mama was an inappropriate hybridized subaltern who uses her mimicry to reinforce the colonial vocabulary, Connie could be considered the appropriate hybridized subaltern whose mimicry serves to mock the colonial vocabulary. It would be platitudinous to say that one’s freedom is somebody else’s prison in the colonial narrative, but it would be precisely opposite in the version of postcolonial politics narrated by Mama; it was she who locked herself up in a prison whose boundaries are defined by the parameters set by the colonial episteme in the name of capital, progress, and nation, thereby paradoxically resulting in her reincarnation as the “pure” subaltern.

Notes

1. Spivak uses the Gramscian term, the subaltern to refer to the gendered oppressed whose bodies are doubly split as cheap laborers dispersed by global capitalism and as bearers carrying the burden of patriarchy (cf. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” 66-111).
2. The term “compressed modernity” refers to the modernization process that occurred in Korea in an extremely condensed manner that transformed the social, political, and economic structures of modern Korean society. Despite its explosive rate of economic development as its result, its sociocultural ramification is far fetching as Chang puts it: “the phenomena of intense competition, collision, disjointing, articulation, and compounding among traditional, modern, and postmodern elements ... or between foreign/multinational/global elements and indigenous element within a compact socio-historical context” (Chang, South Korea under Compressed Modernity 6-7).

3. In Lim’s temporal critique, she illustrates how the discourse of homogeneous time sets aside “the anachronic” and imposes its linear, progressive, modernized conception to justify Western imperialist expansion. As she puts it: 

an anti-colonial critique of homogeneous time points out that the modern notion of progress and its corollary, the accusation of noncontemporaneity, translate multiple ways of inhabiting the world into a single, homogeneous time. This translation is arguably a deliberate mistranslation in that the allochronic gesture – the appraisal of the other as an anachronism – served as a potent temporal justification for the colonial project (83).

4. In Bhabha postcolonial thinking, the colonial discourse evinces ambivalence due to the fear of the colonizer. It is the fear that restrains the colonized subjects from becoming the exact replica of the colonizer in order to maintain a seemingly essential cultural difference between the colonizer and the colonized. Subsequently, this enables the colonized Others to resist the dominance of power through performative “mimicry” thus become “mockery” as he describes it “exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare” (Bhabha, Nation and Narration 121).

5. Refers to the production of the subaltern as “a seemingly freely speaking subject/agent in the discourses of the dominant order” (Schwarz and Ray 452).
References


Yu Taeyun, a scriptwriter and Korean film scholar, recently finished his course works for graduate studies at the University of the Philippines Film Institute, where he had also finished his B.A. in Film (cum laude) and where his thesis on Sadomasochism in Korean Cinema won a special award. He was originally an exchange scholar from Hallym University in Korea and had presented papers at several international conferences including at the Society of Cinema and Media Studies. His works were published in a number of journals including Kritika Kultura and Plaridel Journal.
Synthesis of Panel 2

Mary Jessel Duque

The first two [papers] dealt with television and the first paper, Louie Jon’s paper wherein we have the offering of our current television landscape wherein the Koreanovela functions as the country’s newest fantasy, imaginary. We see ourselves in Korean image of what we want to be. He traces the current iteration of the Pinoy teleserye starting from the 1986 “A Dangerous Life” which functions as where we have the story of the national grief and mourning and the emphasis on suffering and martyrdom in our soap opera characters. Then he gave us three examples, “Princess and I”, “A Beautiful Affair” and “Kailangan Ko’y Ikaw” in which they displayed the diasporas in the three text. As a summary, the “Princess and I” looks at the failure of creating the nation of young dons, it wasn’t successful in creating that fictional kingdom. In “A Beautiful Affair” you have the indulgent tourism of its leads and in “Kailangan Ko’y Ikaw,” you have the Korean turn gone wrong.

Then in Carlo Jejomar Sanchez’ “Once upon a Time: Koreanovelas and the Galleon Trade of the Digital Age”, he looks at the proposal from the Lito Atienza in banning Koreanovelas and other foreign series from our television landscape and what he wants is to focus on producing more local products. Carlo Sanchez traces how we can use the model of the Galleon Trade into producing a livelier television landscape.

For our third speaker, we talked about two films facing the Pinay subaltern in two foreign films. In the first movie, Punch or Wandeugi 2011, we have the figure of the Pinay displaying passivity or the idea of the double-faced politics, the post-colonial but orientalist. We’re also looking at the multi-cultural and yet homogenous culture. In that film we have two ideas, the passivity and the self-effacement of the figure and how they are confined mostly in domestic spaces and the fulfilling part for the character has to do with maternity or the reunion with the family and the presence is confined, as we said, in the domestic setting.
Then that narrative flow for the Pinay subaltern comes from alienation going to inclusion. With the second film, we have “All Under the Moon” wherein our author poses two opposing ideas so Spivak’s subaltern vs Homi Bhaba’s third space.

[In the first paper], one has the idea of remakes and importing franchises, what we have actually is when you import a title, you are tied to what is called a series or a franchise bible. So you really cannot change too many elements of the narrative because you have to hit the lamppost. There is also the difference in production values because Korean series have normally 20 series, it’s normally how many episodes it has and it is shown in a two-hour or one and a half hour chunks. And then we see it daily in 30 or 40 minute installments so the creativity there has to do with translating that original Korean. You don’t get the script for it but for the translated series, you need to translate it based on phoning and how to open your mouth. They attempted at one point to make the actual writers to do the translations but what happened is we cannot fit what dialogue they want with the timing so the act of translating Koreanovelas actually goes with the translators themselves and they are quite good. But they kind of offer a mediating space because of the ideas of the scene. So, the translators are actually doing a kind of cultural exchange also.

With the second paper, the spaces wherein we see all these Koreanovelas and pelikulas translated to Tagalog are actually there because these timeslots are pre-primetime and these are the times that not a lot of people actually watch TV. Eto ‘yung lowest rated always so if you’re coming from a TV station point of view, you don’t want to sink in the 6 million or how many million pesos for that just amount of media share so that’s the economic viability behind having a lot of Koreanovela translations. From the marketing point of view, they are cheaper to me.
Mary Jessel Duque writes for television. Her scripts have been produced in the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia. She graduated with an MA and BA in Creative Writing from the University of the Philippines-Diliman. Her short story "Outlaws" was a finalist at the Philippines Free Press Literary awards and anthologized in Hoard of Thunder, Volume II. Her research interests include comic books, visual culture, film and media studies.
Panel III
Gender, Taste and Identity: The Hallyu Connection

Immersion in cultural products brought about by Hallyu brings with it an external pressure for Filipinos to reflect on their own societal and cultural positions as members of a globalizing Asian community. Far from being passive consumers, Filipinos have started to appropriate certain features of Hallyu (among other global movements) into their own taste and identity into creating a Filipino for this century. There is no denying that South Korea is an emerging taste-maker in the Filipino's consciousness; papers in this panel reflect on the negotiation manifested between Korea's cultural influences and the Filipino identity.

Papers for this panel are Alona U. Guevarra's “Creating a Safe Space for Queer Teens?: Some Initial Findings on Queer Teens in Kpop Cover Groups and Fan Community;” and Arnel Joven's “Hansik and Hallyu: An Analysis of the Filipino Appropriation of Korean Cuisine as a Function of Imagining Korean Culture.” Cherish Aileen Brillon acted as Panel Chair.
Creating a Safe Space for Queer Teens?: Some Initial Findings on Queer Teens in K-pop Cover Groups and Fan Community

Alona U. Guevarra

Abstract

In his article on emerging gay communities in the Philippines, Michael L. Tan emphasized that there is no such thing as a homogenous gay and lesbian community; however, he noted that “the emerging ‘gay’ movement is fluid and includes some middle class bakla as well as the parlorista bakla—plus [the] so-called yuppie gays…”(128). In short, gay communities in the Philippines, however slowly, are being transformed by global and local (glocal) socio-historical forces that push the diverse members of Filipino gay communities to interact with each other and with the members of the dominant straight communities in more frequency and in different scenarios. An example of such a scenario is created by the glocal opportunity is in the area of K-Pop community whose participatory fan activities (such as the K-Pop Cover Group) has created a space of interaction and a common identity for both Filipino straight and queer teens. This preliminary study on queer teens in K-Pop Cover groups touches on the following intersections: performed sexuality, fandom, Hallyu in the Philippines, gender representation in popular media, global Hallyu and an emerging gender equality in the local teenage community. Through on-line research, textual analyses and email interviews, this preliminary study uncovered the dynamics of queer teens interacting in a still dominantly heterosexual K-pop community.

Keywords: Queer teens, K-Pop cover groups, reverse K-Pop cover groups

Introduction

In October 2013, the T.V. station ABS-CBN through its noontime variety show “It’s Showtime” launched the first–ever
lesbian beauty pageant in the Philippines (and possibly in the whole wide world) in the form of the segment “That’s My Tomboy.” The segment generated attention not only locally, but internationally. The website Afterellen.com, a website “dedicated to the representation of lesbian/bi women in popular culture” featured an article on this T.V. show segment and stated that it: “isn’t just about tapping the boundaries of traditional femininity; it’s normalizing lesbian experiences through visibility, allowing millions of Filipino audiences to see that being a dyke doesn’t make you an alien, or ugly or undesirable.”

The article also reports that: “[b]y the end of the month, the segment was an internet sensation. Hashtag #thatsmytomboy trended on Twitter internationally and LGBT advocates praised the show for finding an innovative way to entertain and educate audiences who likely had very little previous exposure to lesbian culture.”

Indeed the segment was newsworthy because it provided a glimpse of some young Filipino lesbians, an often unrepresented/underrepresented part of the queer population in the country. In the contest proper, each contestant was given time to introduce one’s self (with this introduction, a witty line or “pick-up line” included), show her talent and answer a question. What makes this contest of interest to this Hallyu conference is the inclusion of one contestant in the pageant who was not only able to bring a facet of her chosen gender and sexuality on stage but was also able to present her passion for K-Pop, in particular, her passion for the K-Pop Group Exo.

19 year old, Nicole Lauren Escalderon who also goes by the name of Nicky Song, is an avid fan of Exo and copies the fashion and dance moves of one of its members called Kai. Nicky Song herself is part of an Exo Cover Group called Exzone Planet which has been featured and competed in K-Pop Dance Contests.
This paper took initial inspiration from the K-Pop fan and “tomboy” Nicky Song’s exposure in Philippine mainstream television via her participation in “That’s My Tomboy.” The mostly positive reaction that Nicky gathered in social media both as a proud lesbian teenager and as a proud K-Pop fan who
channels her sexuality through K-Pop performances raised the interest of this researcher to find out if there are more “Nicky Songs” in the Philippine K-Pop Cover Group Scene and whether they too are receiving positive reception by other members of the fan community. To re-state, this paper’s focal question is: does the local K-pop community isolate or integrate queer teens? This broad question was addressed by analyzing the following two sub-questions: first, what observations can be deduced from the reception of the local fan community to the queer teen performers in the physical and virtual spaces of the local K-pop teen subculture? And second, what perceptions did the performers have of themselves as queer teens who are members of cover groups and members of the local K-Pop fan community?

Some Terms Defined

The first term for definition is the term “Queer” which I use to describe the teen members of cover groups I sampled. “Queer,” whose definition I take from the LGBT Resources from the UC Berkeley Gender Equity Resource Center, is defined as:

- An umbrella term to refer to all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexual and Queer (LGBTIQ) people;
- A political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking Binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid;
- A simple label to explain a complex set of sexual behaviors and desires. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer;

The definition also noted that: “[m]any older LGBT people feel the word has been hatefully used against them for too long and are reluctant to embrace it.” I would like to emphasize that in this paper the term “queer” is chosen to describe the group of teenagers I studied because of the fluidity of sexual orientation.
espoused by the term. I do not seek to use the term in any derogatory way.

The second term for definition is “K-Pop.” The On-line version of Oxford Dictionaries (oxforddictionaries.com) defined K-Pop as “Korean Pop Music that mixes European music.” Although the definition captures the transnational quality of this type of music, clearly the definition is simplistic. To expand this definition I turn to Crystal Anderson’s definition of K-Pop which she states to be a:

type of post-1990 South Korean popular music that fuses Korean and global musical styles, particularly American, and redirects that hybrid music back onto the global stage. The transnational nature of K-pop manifests itself in a variety of ways, including actively seeking global popularity, using Internet and social media to target and engage global audiences and participating in other cultural production with global appeal. This does not mean that Korean popular music did not exist before 1990, but the term Kpop refers specifically to this unprecedented cultural fusion in post-1990 Korean popular music (2012).

It is by no accident that K-Pop emerged during the time that South Korea’s economy peaked and became one of the world's G-20 economies; it is no secret after all that the export of popular cultural products such as K-Drama and K-Pop continue to help fuel the south Korean export-driven economy. It is known that K-pop is one of South Korea’s biggest cultural exports. K-Pop’s effective cultural hybridization is a means to meet “the complex desires of various consumer groups, which maximizes capitalist profit” (Jung 2011).

CNBC shared that that “[t]he industry’s revenues hit about $3.4 billion in 2011,” according to the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), a government group that promotes the country’s cultural initiatives. K-pop’s exports also rose to $180 million last year — jumping 112 percent compared to 2010. Exports have been growing on an average annual rate of nearly

106
80 percent since 2007” (Naidu-Ghelani). *Hallyu* clearly is Korea’s soft power and that K-Pop as an example of such soft power is at the forefront of a socially and economically globalizing Korea.

The third term for definition is “**Cover Group.**” Sung Jung shares that “[t]he term *cover* usually means a version of a song sung by an artist different than the original singer. However, in the case of fan activities, *cover* refers to a version of a song or dance performed by fans” (2011). Cover group performances are also of two types: first is the conventional cover group wherein let us say, a male K-Pop group will be covered by a male dance group. There is also a “reverse cover group” wherein a K-Pop group will be represented by a different gender. Images 3 and 4, for example, show originally all female groups represented by all males.

The fourth term is “**bias**” which KPopKollective.com defines as “someone’s favorite from one particular group. It is a singer that you like everything about: their singing, dancing, unusual quirks, and other activities such as acting and modeling. An ultimate bias is a person’s favorite out of all the Kpop groups.”

The last term is “**Fandom**” which is a blending of the words ‘fans’ and ‘kingdom.’ Henry Jenkins (1992; in Chaplin) believe that fandoms are not passive consumers, and with the increase of an online culture of fandoms, there is an increase of “people/fans taking media in their own hands” which both critiques and re-defines consumerism today. An off-shoot of fandom interaction is the creation of participatory fan activities that may take the form of charity work, fan fiction, cover dance groups, etc.

**Methodology**

Data for this paper on initial findings on the presence and reception of Filipino queer teenagers in K-Pop Cover Groups and Fan Community were gathered from the following sources: email interviews with three queer teenagers who are active in performing with their K-Pop cover groups, an email interview
with Hallyu scholar Dr. Sun Jung of National University of Singapore, textual analysis of Facebook news feeds and comments that are in public setting of Philippines’s K-Pop minor celebrity, Nicky Song; video uploads of performances of select K-Pop cover groups on YouTube and discussions with K-Pop fans.

![Image of girls in pink dresses](https://www.facebook.com/pages/KPOP-Cover-Groups-Philippines)

**Image no. 3** “Boy's Day,” the reverse cover group of the group *Girl's Day* (photo from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/KPOP-Cover-Groups-Philippines)

![Image of group sitting](https://www.facebook.com/pages/KPOP-Cover-Groups-Philippines)

**Image no. 4** “Queen A”, the reverse cover group of *Miss A* (photo from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/KPOP-Cover-Groups-Philippines)

As much as this study would like to present a picture of true equality amongst genders, like all studies, it is limited by the collected data, and for this initial venture, let me point out that this study cannot provide and does not aim yet to provide a solid conclusion of what can be derived from the presence of queer teens in the Hallyu scene and how truly beneficial the connection is in the long-run. What this study attempts to do is to share
these early data to stimulate more interest and discussion on this area of inquiry.

This study explored the space occupied by Queer teens in the local K-Pop community’s dance cover group interactions in the form of performances made in the programs of their fandoms and the highly competitive cover group contests. The study focused on the selected Queer teen performers in the local K-Pop community and is limited to it.

**Significance of the Study**

Very little has been written about Queer teens in the Philippines, with most of the studies focusing on the male homosexual teen. Studies about Filipino lesbian and bi-teens simply do not exist yet. This study attempted to address this lack by opening an opportunity for discussing this silent, yet equally important member of the Filipino youth—those that see themselves with fluid sexuality or that of Queer. K-Pop Dance Cover groups provide both queer and straight teens opportunities to interact and perform their sexuality on stage with the support of their respective fandoms and perhaps even the entire K-Pop-loving local community whose on-line presence is emerging to be a tight-knit, organized community.

**Results**

*Inside the Fandom: Interview with Three Teen Members of Cover Groups*

The three respondents I interviewed for this paper are three queer, Filipino teenagers whose ages range from 16 to 18 years old. All three of them have been performing with dance cover groups for the past two years. The type of dance cover group they are performing in are reverse dance cover groups. Their friends are all into K-Pop and they said that their friends encouraged them to perform in cover groups. One respondent even said that it was his boyfriend who encouraged him to perform in a cover group. Outside of their fandoms, incidentally, all of them are
pursuing their college education and they come from middle-
class backgrounds. You may be wondering why I have chosen
only three respondents for my interview. This is because, I pre-
selected the respondents through the following criteria: first,
they should be truly active in the local K-pop scene (e.g. they
have already joined fan performances and competitions). I also
selected respondents who are active in their on-line fandoms,
such as those found in Facebook or YouTube. This second
criterion is necessary to also check feedback that viewers of video
uploads give, or the comments that are provided in posts by
these queer teen performers. And third, all of them are queer.
Our interview was conducted via email exchange between April -
May 2014. I told the respondents to just select and answer the
ones that are applicable to them and those that they feel
comfortable answering.

Let me now share with you a summary of our interview.

a. The respondents enjoy the products of Hallyu, especially of
course K-Pop, because of its uniqueness, the effectively
entertaining K-Pop talents with the exciting songs and programs
that they have. One respondent gave an interesting response:
“Para sa akin kse ang mga KPop or KDramas ay parang
inspirasyon dn na maituturing like sa aming 3rd sex, hindi
maitiwasang walang magmamahal sa amin. We are happy that
there are Kpop that we can watch and laugh with [sic].” (For
me, KPop and KDramas are inspiring for us members of the
“third sex” (i.e. queer); it cannot be helped that it is difficult to
find someone who will love us. We are happy that there [is] Kpop
that we can watch and laugh with).

In this answer, it is suggested that Hallyu, particularly Kpop
provide an outlet for affirmation for this teen.

b. They shared that they get a lot of benefits from joining fandom
activities (whether on-line or actual ones). Some of these benefits
are fan-benefits such as getting information about their favorite
groups. Fandoms they say also boosted their self-confidence,
created a bigger network of friends and support, especially
during competitions. One respondent claimed that joining a fandom allows one to truly be united with the other fans because in the end you only have what he refers to as “one desire” and that is to be with your “bias” group or group member.

c. As for the question “do you think there is gender equality in fandoms?” All three respondents gave a resounding answer of “yes” to that question. As one respondent said: “Super equal dto sa Philippines. Walang girl boy beki tiboom or whatsoever. Ang bongga!” (We have “super” equality here in the Philippines. No one cares if you are a girl, boy, gay, lesbian or whatever. It's cool!)

d. All the respondents also felt that Hallyu or KPop fan activities empower the local LGBT community as well because all of them are fans who are united by a common cause that to them transcends the differences brought about by gender. They all feel that they are equals and are respected in their fandoms.

**Crossing-over to Mainstream TV: Nicky Song**

Let us now go back to my earliest example, Nicky Song. Her case is a bit unique because she tried to introduce into the mainstream two aspects of her person that are still considered to be “marginal” to a certain degree. Although I must emphasize that the changing times might make these marginal aspects of Nicky become part of the norm in the Philippines very soon. First is that she is a Queer and second is she identifies herself as part of the local K-pop fandom which is still largely a predominantly heterosexual teen subculture.
Nicky’s exposure in the local noon time show has made her minor celebrity which can be attested by the thousands of Facebook friends and Instagram followers she has. Some of her posts are in public setting and it is from these posts that I was able to get data about her experience as a queer teen cover group performer. In a February 20 Instagram and Facebook post she shared how she felt lucky to be part of a cover group that accepts her sexuality:

*Dami nagtatanong kung ako lang daw ba Tboom sa cover group namin. Yes ako lang, 2 years na po kami magkakasama at wala akong naging problema hindi naiba ang tingin nila sakin, tinuring nila ako na one of the boys talaga minsan nalilimutan pa nga ng iba na Tboom parin ako, hahaha. #exzone #exocg*  

(“A lot [of people] have been asking me if I am the only Tboom [Filipino slang for lesbian] in our cover group. Yes, I am the only one, we have been together for two years and I never had any problem. [T]hey did not look at me differently, they really treated me as one of the boys, sometimes they even forget that I am still a Tboom, hahaha. #exzone #exocg”)
Nicky finished 4th place in the contest that attracted more than fifty contestants. In another post she shared that she also valued her experience of joining the contest because it was the first time she claimed that she had as much exposure of interacting with other Queers (Facebook post dated February 2). However, the other group she represents, that of the KPop community had a mixed reaction to her inability to bag the crown. In one of Nicky’s posts she addresses one particular member of the local Kpop community who apparently got dismayed with her performance during the grand finals of the contest:

“...Sorry if I am a big disappointment to KPOP Ph. I had difficulty yesterday with my talent [presentation] because I didn’t get to eat and sleep. ...While I am content. I am so sorry that I am low in the ranking. Hahaha. I am not mad, just saying :))

From this comment posted by Nicky in her account what can be observed is that Nicky felt she was made to represent the Kpop subculture in that show and that winning the top prize is perceived to be synonymous to the Kpop community’s growing power and acceptance in mainstream entertainment. Some supporters of Nicky Song did feel that way that later resulted to the comment above. Interestingly, there was never comment from the entire Kpop community during the entire duration of the show that was derogatory to Nicky Song’s sexuality. All posts in Nicky Song’s account were in support of her bid in the contest. It can be deduced from such reception of the local fan community to Nicky Song is that of acceptance and with that acceptance is that equal treatment within the group. Her exposure in local media was perceived positively because it provided a possibility of legitimation for the Kpop subculture.
Results

Following Michael Tan’s discussion on gay communities in the Philippines, I agree that there is no such thing as a homogenous gay and lesbian community, however as he noted “the emerging `gay’ movement is fluid and includes some middle class bakla as well as the parlorista bakla—plus so-called yuppie gays...(128). Today’s generation of Filipino queers practice what Tan discussed to be an act that is “courageous in taking over space, and yet...cautious by carving the space within a straight world and by conforming to some of the straight norms” (135). That is to say, queers “come out” with their sexuality in society but are still very careful to follow rules that are set forth for them by the predominantly “straight” society. Thus, what can be observed in practice today in most contemporary societies is predominantly tolerance and still not equality. However, in my initial experience of studying queer teen performers in KPop cover groups in the Philippines I have come to realize that an emerging place for equality for queer teens can be found in this teen subculture.

In the case of the four individuals whose cases I studied, it can be seen that the local K-pop community is an accepting and supportive community of predominantly young people who are bound by their common characteristic of being part of a fandom. Gender and sexuality are treated as non-issues in K-pop fandoms as seen in the reception of reverse cover dance groups whose members are queer. As Jung (2011) stated in her study of reverse cover groups with female members in Indonesia: “[i]t can be argued that their cover dance practices epitomize the ways in which the fans attempt to deconstruct normative gender representations, which in turn reinforces the construction of new Indonesian femininity;” the case of queer teens in reverse cover groups or cover groups (as in the case of Nicky Song) has shown that these groups have successfully deconstructed gender representations in the Philippines as they are given support and acceptance by their K-pop fandoms. Thus such groups have become a vehicle for social integration among the youth in the K-pop fandoms.
Conclusion

Indeed, imitation is still the best form of flattery and for hundreds of K-Pop fans in the Philippines, the creation and support of K-Pop dance cover groups are acts that show reverence to their K-Pop idols. With the aid of social media, teenage fans are now able to form cover groups with other fans they meet on-line, get informed on possible performance venues for them, upload their performance videos and communicate to a virtual fan community or fandom that is generally appreciative of their efforts. There is no denying that fans (which include members of the cover groups) have created a strong virtual space for themselves that help translate to a congenial physical interaction during actual K-pop events. That is to say, members of one fandom generally treat each member with respect and friendliness.

It can also be argued that the rise of technology and the use of social media have also become instrumental in the rising gender equality in the Kpop subculture in the Philippines since the internet is a medium that allows queer teens to form a virtual community not only with other queer teens but teenage fans regardless of sexuality. While the internet community allow queer teens because “it is an anonymous and safe space in which they can practice aspects of same-sex sexuality” (Hiller and Harrison 95) the active K-Pop fandoms emerging in different places in the world which includes the Philippines, allow some of these queer teens to “perform” their sexuality on stage as they join cover groups and compete in cover group competitions. The competitions are not just restricted to queer teens but to all fans. The fandoms allow queer teens to safely transition from their online gay selves to the physical gay selves without any fuss. The bottom line in a fandom is that what matters is the reverence to the K-idols, fans do not make an issue of the sexual orientation of its members.
References


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Starring Kopinos: From Quest of the Korean Dream to the Making of a Hero: *Korean Films as Commentary to Philippine Life and Issues*

**Helweena Sadorra**

**Abstract**

The term “Kopino”, referring to children born from Filipino unwed mothers to Korean fathers, has become popularized since the founding of Kopino Children Association, Inc. in 2005 and its wide exposure in both Korean and Philippine media in 2008. Since then, various commentaries and calls for action have been raised. The use of the term has also expanded in many ways. This phenomenon has brought into the limelight issues on multiculturalism, family values and sense of responsibility in both countries.

Through examining the plight of the young Korean-Filipino characters of the films My Little Hero and Wandeugi, this paper aims to discuss issues surrounding identity and integration of the Korean-Filipino child in the context of a nation trying to advocate for multiculturalism yet still highly homogenous in the social construct of its people. In the process of looking into the cultural references in the film and their production history, we can gain insights on the power of popular culture either to educate or mislead and strengthen or impair cultural diplomacy between two nations.

**Keywords:** Korean-Filipino (Kopino) children, Korean films
Helweena Sadorra  (BA, Philippine Studies) took up Philippine Studies major in Filipino language and Psychology from the University of the Philippines Diliman and was an exchange student at Korea University of Technology and Education (2008-2009). She is currently a graduate student, specializing in Korean Studies, under the M.A. Asian Studies program of U.P. Diliman's Asian Center. She is a member of the Alyansa ng Manggagawang Pangkultura sa Kamaynilaan at Karatig-Pook, Inc. She is a founding chair of the Korean Drama Society in the Philippines.
Hansik and Hallyu: An Analysis of the Filipino Appropriation of Korean Cuisine as a Function of Imagining Korean Culture

Arnel Joven

Abstract

Before the year 2000, Korean cooking, let alone Korean restaurants were practically unheard of in the Philippines. It took television, specifically the Korean drama Jewel in the Palace to introduce what Korean cuisine is all about. The gradual opening of Korean restaurants was originally intended to cater to Korean expatriates in the Philippines. However, as curiosity among Filipinos brought them to Korean restaurants, the general shock brought by spicy fermented vegetables or kimchi created the imagined concept that “Korean food is altogether spicy.” While it created an ‘othering’ exoticisation of Korean culture, it created at least two divergent attitudes among Filipino consumers: (1) dilution, or the search for toned down or Filipinised version of Korean cuisine, and (2) authenticity or the desire for “authentic” Korean cooking. From these attitudes can be derived the opening that Korean culture can be understood through by Filipinos through a sustained fascination towards this foreign culture. Hansik is a product of millennia of cultural ecology in which Koreans created thousands of recipes based on topographic-environmental, religious-philosophical, and socio-economic realities. This historical reality however lacks the necessary cultural interpretation and explanation. It is at this juncture that this paper explores the transmission and reception of hallyu through food production (cooking), presentation, and promotion in commercial restaurants, popular media, and government agencies such as the Korean Cultural Center in the Philippines and the Korea Tourism Organization. This paper looks at the Filipino imagining of Korean culture through the consumption of Korean cuisine, diluted or authentic.
Keywords:  

**Hansik**, Korean cuisine, Korean Cuisine in the Philippines

**Introduction**

*Hansik* as a product of millennia-old Korean cultural ecology, inclusive of historical and anthropological developments, nuances, etc. It also embodies the corpus of Korean cultural identity. As such, it is not surprising that *Hansik* is an integral vehicle in the development and delivery of *hallyu* in the world. The very development of the *hansik-hallyu* partnership comes as no surprise, especially its popularity in the Philippines. However, within the context that Korean food culture has arrived in the Philippines only within the recent decade/s includes a significant number of questions, meaning curiosity on the part of Filipinos. Historiographically, it is doubtful if there is any indication of Korean cuisine having been even been brought to the Philippines before the turn of the twenty-first century.

As such, this paper looks at *hansik* as a vehicle, albeit state-sponsored, of the production and development of *hallyu*. The second part looks at two trends in the reception of *hansik* among Filipinos: (a) search for the authentic, and (b) dilution, localisation, or ‘Filipinisation.’ In understanding the anthropological context of *hansik*, its historiography must be understood. Without necessarily identifying the periodic developments or individual histories of each Korean cuisine, the study looks at the general historical context and significance. At the same time, this context is superimposed into a state-sponsored-and-mediated promotion of globalised Korean culture. In this, three important premises must be taken into consideration: (a) that Korean cuisine is a product of local and national Korean social historical developments, (b) that Korean cuisine is dependent on the cultural ecology of its natal geography, and (c) that Korean cuisine is subject to foreign palate judgment as gatekeepers of inter-culturally subjective acceptance.

The second part of the paper looks at how *hansik* has successfully served its function as vehicle for Filipino...
imagination of Korean culture. For this, two specific qualitative methodologies were used: (a) random sampling, which reached a total of 32 respondents, and (b) direct participant observation in both the consumption and production of hansik. From both data gathering phases, two results were observed: (a) a significant sector of Filipinos seek to ‘taste’ Korean cuisine in its authentic form without necessarily travelling to Korea, and (b) an equally significant sector are willing to ‘taste’ Korean culture, but consumption is dependent on its ability to “tone down” or “blend” into the local ‘taste.’

The significance of this study is that it seeks to take a primary survey into the anthropological and social historical context of hallyu, specifically as a vehicle of hansik in the Philippine setting. Unfortunately, locating a significant body of literature on either hansik or its reception in the Philippines is at the moment limited or non-existent. Nonetheless, the study intends to expand the academic awareness of the significance of food within a culture. Although the question of the so-called “Filipino taste” is subject to numerous interpretations and debates, Filipino reception of foreign culinary culture becomes an unlikely self-reflection. In analysing Filipino reception of Korean cuisine, it becomes a potential method by itself for understanding Filipino cultural biases.

**Frameworks from Medical Anthropology and Cultural Ecology**

In order to understand and analyse the integral role of hansik as a vehicle of Korean culture, as well as Filipino perceptions of Korean culinary culture, this study borrows frameworks from medical anthropology. Cultural ecology refers to the development of material culture based on the ecological or environmental realities present within a specific location. Oftentimes, cultural ecology is used to explain linguistic nuances such as the presence of certain terminologies, which refer to unique patterns or usages within a particular locality or community. For this research however, cultural ecology is used to understand the presence of certain ingredients that are
indigenous to the Korean peninsula. At the same time, cultural ecology also explains climatic realities which affected the development of specific cuisines. While there are ingredients and climatic patterns which are similar to the Philippines, Korean cultural ecology presents a unique culinary culture that is a product of its ecology and geography.

One example of this application is the fact that kimchi production and consumption is historically related to the need for vegetables preservation in the absence then of modern technology to do so. Though chili and its derivatives may not be indigenous to Korea, it is however, a product of historical economic and political developments that has attached itself towards the need for food preservation. The tolerance, or rather the affinity for spicy foods may be said to be a consequence of this development. However, frequent usage of certain ingredients, such as ginseng root, jujube, and sesame seeds may be directly connected to ecologic causality.

**Phenomenology**

The other anthropological framework used is phenomenology or interpretivism. As it is, Korean cuisine is viewed in one prism by Koreans themselves. Although it may be argued that there are local or regional cuisines – for which Koreans from different areas of the peninsula may have a different outlook or opinion towards it, there is nonetheless a binding cultural perspective among Koreans. However, there is an entirely differential cultural phenomenology when it comes to a totally foreign people perceiving an equally foreign culture. In this case, Filipinos who possess millennia of culinary culture from indigenous to colonial influences still belong to one perfectly alien group vis-à-vis hansik. As such, this study picks up on the various nuances that arise from how Filipinos receive, let alone perceive, Korean cuisine. In addition to this, the ancillary role of direct visual accompaniment to hansik is also factored in.

Together, this paper evaluates the development of hansik as a vehicle of Korean culture, specifically on its integral role in the
global promotion of *hallyu*. Indeed, it is difficult and sometimes
doubtful to actually qualify the evaluation of taste, Filipino or
Korean, yet this paper seeks to scratch the surface of this, which
will certainly require future studies and better scholarship.

**Phases of Hansik in the Philippines**

*First Wave: Hansik for Koreans*

There is no definitive date as to when *hansik* arrived in the
Philippines. It is certain that the massive arrival of Korean
nationals in the Philippines which coincided with global *hallyu*
also brought in *hansik* into the Philippines. Nonetheless, it is
surmised that there have been Korean nationals already in the
Philippines before the turn of the twenty-first century. It is also
surmisable that not all of them were able to adapt to Filipino
food customs for their diet. As such, this becomes the first phase
of *hansik* in the Philippines – the informal bringing in of Korean
cuisine directly from Korea, particularly kimchi, and the search
for replication of Korean cuisine specifically catered to
expatriates working in the Philippines. The initial opening of
Korean restaurants was meant to serve Koreans working and
living in the Philippines.

*Second Wave: Hansik for Filipinos*

The second phase came through within the *hallyu* explosion
as Korean restaurants multiplied within Metro Manila and other
major cities in the Philippines. From initially catering to
Koreans – by then a mixture of professionals, businessmen and
women, students, and tourists, *hansik* was offered to curious
Filipinos. For this however, one can only imagine the first
impressions that the first Filipino tasters of Korean cuisine had,
specifically ‘authentic’ kimchi. One may argue that there are
regions in the Philippines that appreciate spicy food on a regular
basis, but Korean spiciness is rather unique and difficult to
characterise. For this phase, the study looks into (a) attempts by
some sector to ‘negotiate’ the taste by toning down certain taste
qualities, and (b) the conservative yet daring sector which has
sought to taste authentic Korean cuisine in its indigenous form. Nonetheless, however the turnout is becoming, the popularity of Korean restaurants in the Philippines has set itself on an irreversible track.

*Third Wave: Jewel in the Palace Effect*

The third phase comes in aid of the second phase. That is, state-and-media-mediated *hallyu*-isation of *hansik* in the world was necessary to manufacture ‘the exotic’ imagination of Korean cuisine in order to ensure its marketability. The hit television drama 대장금 or *Jewel in the Palace* comes as no surprise. Popular media was used in order to promote the popularity of Korean food everywhere. At the same time, it must be understood that Korean cooking was by this time necessarily standardised as a package for the successful promotion and marketing of Korean cuisine. There even is an on-going attempt to supplant the popularity of Japanese cuisine in the process.

*Fourth Wave: Professionalisation*

The fourth phase comes into the fore as the need to train or educate Filipinos to cook Korean cuisine becomes necessary. This phase is about Filipinos themselves replicating Korean cuisine according to the Korean framework. For one, Korean restaurant, business, or household owners eventually saw the need to employ local labour in the form of Filipinos willing to work as cooks or chefs for them. Another is the evolution itself of Korean cuisine in the Philippines in the form of localised or ‘fast food’ version do require local labour and local knowledge. Third is the fact that Filipino entrepreneurs themselves have begun to recognise the business potential of opening Korean food outlets. Fourth is the practical urgency on the part of would-be Overseas Filipino Workers or even immigrants who foresee locating themselves in Korea in their future.
Hansik as Korean Historical and Cultural Expression

It is indeed quite easy to imagine that Korean cuisine has been static for ages – meaning that it has been like that since the beginning of time. The popularity of Jewel in the Palace adds to this myth-making machinery in creating an imagined exotic characterisation of hansik. If one does subscribe to this historicised imagination, thus the state-sponsored hallyu production scheme is indeed a resounding success. Nonetheless, there are historical and cultural authenticity to current-day Korean cooking. However, cultural ecology and history must come into play in order to further analyse its trends and developments.

Culture, Geography, and History

First of all, as already mentioned, there are ingredients which are indigenous to the Korean peninsula, or perhaps to the East Asian region which developed into certain unique qualities of Korean culinary culture. At the same time, it was also mentioned that climatic conditions equally bear upon the development of certain types of cuisines, not to mention for seasonal changes within East Asia.

Second, the notion that present-day Korean cooking seems to be a staple for each and every Korean in the past should invoke obvious and curious doubt. What is certain is the fact that Korean food offered in most Korean restaurants were considered “royal food” or at least food for the 양반 or aristocratic class. There were certainly differences between what was considered ordinary culinary set up for the lower class citizens in pre-modern Korea as compared to that of the upper classes. For this, it must be understood that strict yet utilitarian interpretations Confucianism has produced historical Korean periods in which society was rigidly economically stratified. This most certainly affected the development of variations in Korean cooking.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, Korea has in fact suffered from severe and multiple periods of famine – a
phenomenon that stretched well into the early twentieth century. While this may be the subject of an entirely different study, the value of this for this study is in regards to the historical fact that Koreans could not have consistently produced the ‘royal presentation’ that seems to be staple in Korean restaurant food presentation.

As such, the modern-day Korean cuisine presented in all Korean restaurants as well as in the popular forms of media have undergone re-packaging and reformulation under state-mediated auspices. The development of the hallyu explosion of the late 1990s and early 2000s required a re-packaging of Korean material culture in order to market them to a world increasingly obsessed with everything Korean. The globally-presentable and market-competitive hansik was necessitated in aid of hallyu production and distribution.

A typical food presentation set up in any Korean restaurant

Third, it must be understood that present economic and cultural prosperity in the Republic of Korea has only quite recently been enjoyed by the Korean people since the beginning of their natural history. As such, the argument that repackaged hansik aided by mediated imagination requires further analysis. For one, modern and foreign elements must be taken into consideration in the cultural imagining of hansik. Another is the
need to understand how Korean cooking has become an indelible part and parcel of Korean cultural expression.

**Hansik as a Product of Cultural Exchanges**

Korea may have been once referred to as the “hermit kingdom,” but certainly was far from being one contrary to the judgmental biases of nineteenth century western European imperialists. For many centuries, Korea has been borrowing droves of cultural aspects from China. Chinese influences in Korea have been the subject of thousands of academic studies and needs no further elaboration. However, most scholars tend to ignore the fact that cultural elements in East Asia was not always on the “from-China” framework. Instead, China has also borrowed numerous cultural elements from almost all parts of the world, even from far away Europe, thanks to the Silk Road.

Historical Korea has also done the same for many centuries. There are material cultural borrowings also from Japan, Southeast Asia, and Russia. It was indeed anthropologically plausible that for Korean civilisation to thrive, it was necessary to stay in economic or political contact with its neighbours – for better or for worse. This most certainly drove the cycle of cultural movements that made it systemically fluid and evolving.

One specific example of this is chili. It is not indigenous to Korea not even from any part of East Asia. One accepted hypothesis is that during the Hideyoshi invasions in the sixteenth century, the Japanese brought chili to Korea. However, there are also claims that it was the other way around. While it might not be easy to definitively trace the origins of chili in Korea, it must be understood that chili is more indigenous to Latin America than anywhere else. How Korea fit in the Columbian exchange will certainly require elaborate explanations. Nonetheless, the clues are in the facts that sixteenth century China and Japan were indirectly involved in the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade.
Regardless of its definitive origins, chili has become an integral part of Korean cuisine. Yet, chili powder’s usage for the creation of kimchi has become necessitated for people to be able to eat vegetables during winter time. The fact of the notion of making hundred heads of cabbage for kimchi should lead to the idea that kimchi is consumed well beyond the winter season. Kimchi is after all a side dish, a staple food, yet still not the main dish on the Korean table. To say that kimchi is emblematic of Korean cuisine is a fallacious notion created by the multitude of kimchi served in the “royal setting” presented in all Korean restaurants.

**Koreans’ Actual Main Dish**

True enough, for Koreans the main dish is white rice, almost ignored because of the grandiose presentation of protein dishes and soups. Unlike Filipino culinary set up, the main dish in a Korean table is not the chicken, beef, or fish dishes – no matter how elaborate, massive, or quantitative they are. However, marketability comes into play. How can one sell Korean food if the claim is that the plain steamed white rice is actually the main dish? For Filipinos, the phenomenological gateway comes into play. As such, the focus is re-directed or re-oriented towards the expensive-looking protein dishes.

**The Food-Medicine Framework**

Another seeming uniqueness in Korean cooking is ginseng – a medicinal root quite indigenous to peninsular Korea and northeastern China. The perception cannot be denied to have originated from, again, *Jewel in the Palace* as it seems like the rest of the world was introduced to Korean ginseng only through that television series. Yet, there are very limited dishes that actually use ginseng, like ginseng chicken soup or 삼계탕. In fact, ginseng is marketed in Korea in the form of medicinal teas and beverages than anything else. To complicate the problem, even modern western-trained physicians are in fact in doubt as regards the medicinal or even the vitamin value of ginseng. Of
course such a phenomenon is explainable by the very competition in the medical traditions.

Lastly is the fact that it seems that Korean consumption of certain foods is directly connected to medical purposes. In simple terms, the television drama 대장금 presented the idea that there are certain foods that may not be taken during a particular syndrome or that certain foods can be medicinal for certain specific illnesses. Fact of the matter is that though this seems like part and parcel of Korean Oriental Medicine or the indigenous medical tradition in Korea, it is not the totality of it, but merely a part of it. Rather, a relatively twentieth century medical tradition that derived from KOM is Sasang Constitutional Medicine that was developed only in the first decades of the 1900s. Simply put, SCM focuses on the food-medicine framework – something that was not really the focus of KOM. Again, the hallyu marketability of hansik required this imagining of the medicinal value of each and every Korean food. Although there is nutritional value attached to Korean food ingredients which may be validated by western medical science, such cannot be projected back to pre-modern Korean imagining of their food.
**Hansik and Hallyu**

Given the cultural, geographic, and historical background of Korean cooking, it must be understood that *hansik* is and has become an integral part of the *hallyu* explosion. As such, Korean cooking had to be repackaged in order to fit the marketable level required for it to be consumed by a prospective global community. After all, Korean culinary culture and its marketing development merely followed the examples of its neighbours the Chinese and the Japanese. The ability of Chinese food to enable anyone to imagine Chinese culture or how sushi can indelibly direct one to imagining Japanese civilisation – these are key examples that the Koreans needed to re-create. In order to successfully enable the Korean culture imagination, there must be a direct connection between Korean cuisine and Korean culture.

This is where this study critiques the overemphasis of the so-called popular Korean cuisines. For one, though these Korean cuisines are popular as Korean staples in the rest of the world, they are not by themselves necessarily staple within Korea itself. There are in fact selected popular Korean dishes that are readily or popularly marketed in Korean restaurants. These select few are notably different or at least identifiably different from cuisines from other cultures. Yet, it must be known that there are many Korean dishes that share similar ingredients or even presentation, coincidental or not, with other dishes in the world.

Examples of Korean dishes that may not at all be recognised as “Korean”
De-Mystifying Dae Jang Geum

As a side note, yet important one, on the television drama *Jewel in the Palace*, the following must be noted on the historical *대장금*. First of all, the historiographical basis for the historical knowledge of the great woman physician is contained within half a page in the methodically written historical Joseon court records. The Great Jang Geum was never a chef or a cook contrary to what the popular television series portrays. There is no historiographic evidence to point to this.

The real historical Jang Geum was phenomenal as having broken the Confucian taboo in the royal court. Women physicians were allowed to treat women members of the royal court, while male physicians to their male patients in the court – from the king to the ministers. Given Confucian cultural and social norms in the Joseon dynasty, women physicians, as all women anyway, were considered second in rank to their male counterparts. As such, it was indeed phenomenal, yet not elaborated on by the historiographic record, as to how this woman physician managed to become appointed as the royal physician, a post supposedly inviolably held by a male court physician. Dae Jang Geum’s prowess in handling epidemic diseases though is noted, apart from exceptional medical skills.

So, where does the concept of Jang Geum being a master royal chef come from? That indeed is a good question that will be an admission of limitation for this paper’s lack of access to the creators, i.e. scriptwriters and director of the hit television series. Yet, one can readily extend the hypothesis that riding on the hallyu phenomenon, it was equally necessary to launch the popularity of Korean culinary culture. Indeed, the best way to popularise Korean cuisine is through visual television. Nonetheless, as mentioned earlier, there indeed is a correlation between food and medicine in old Korean medical traditions, particularly that of Sasang Constitutional Medicine. It is also true though that traditional Korean Oriental Medicine also looks into the effects of food on one’s health or prognosis. As such, the very portrayal of a Jang Geum as an embodiment of the food-
medicine framework is indeed an ingenious method used by the tv drama’s producers in introducing hansik – by riding through visual hallyu.

**Filipino Reception of Hansik**

For this particular part of the study, the intention is to assess Filipino’s perceptions of Korean culture. It is admitted of course that further more extensive and elaborate study is required to fully assess this, rather than the simple survey conducted. For this part of the research too, the author will be discussing also state-mediated hansik replication as part and parcel of hallyu production and distribution.

**Common Perceptions about Korean Cuisine**

Of the 32 respondents directly interviewed, surveyed, or otherwise contacted online, there are many interesting responses elicited to questions pertaining to how they perceived Korean cooking. The prevalent perception which seems to embody most Filipinos’ perception of Korean cuisine is that it is “maanghang” or spicy/hot. Apart from this which obviously refers to all types of kimchi in Korean cooking, the second most popular Korean dishes mentioned in the interview/survey were bulgogi and bibimbap.

The following summarises the reasons why these dishes were easily recalled by the Filipino respondents:

I. Kimchi – because it is [in fact] the #1 side dish  
II. Bulgogi – because [everybody knows] barbecue/grilled meat  
III. Bibimbap – because it’s [just another] tasty rice bowl  
IV. Japchae – because [it looks like the] Korean “version” of bihon or sotanghon  
V. Kimbab – because it looks like sushi

From the responses elicited above, it is quite conclusive that there is the element of locating for familiarity in common or local dishes. Kimchi is indeed unique to Koreans and it is also
the most notable among all Korean dishes. Yet, the rest of the
dishes were recalled because they seem to resemble previously
familiar dishes. It must also be noted that in dishes from
number 2 to number 5, none of them are spicy or hot. Only dish
number 1, kimchi, is the only spicy dish to be ever recalled by the
respondents.

Where did the concept of Korean spicy dish come from? Of
course, apart from kimchi, the local branch of Nissin Corporation
produced their own version of the originally-Chinese Korean
noodle soup Jjampong – a development which unfortunately
bolstered the spicy identity of Korean cuisine. Apart from this,
some of the respondents contacted did mention having
consumed spicy stews in Korean restaurants in the Philippines or
in Korea. Unfortunately, not one of them could properly recall
the name of the spicy stews they have partaken. To straighten
out the facts, not all Korean dishes are obviously not spicy.
Though chili powder and chili pepper paste are used in Korean
dishes – but only in selected dishes. All other dishes do in fact
resemble Chinese, Filipino, and even American dishes.

However, what needs to be taken into serious attention is the
fact that the phenomenological perception of Korean cuisine as
hot/spicy. Due to the fact that kimchi seems to have caught the
attention of the hallyu-hungry world, the Korean-food-is-spicy
context is manufactured and embedded into the unsuspecting
global consciousness. The problem here is that in one stroke, the
hallyu producers swiftly monopolised and interlaced with
Korean cultural identity the concept of spiciness. All of a
sudden, the spiciness attributed to Bicolano, Indonesian, or
Mexican cuisines were all of a sudden conveniently
overshadowed by the Korean brand of chili. Indeed, the author
admits that more studies need to be done on this, but the 32
respondents do conclusively point to this phenomenological
perception: the manufactured view of Korean cuisine in the
global imagination, which later on, points to Korean cultural
identity.
Search for the Authentic versus Localisation

The second part of the interview-survey concerned the desire of the respondents to continue the consumption of Korean cuisine in its pure “unadulterated form” or something else. That “something else” came in the form of a desire for some to lessen the supposed spiciness level of some of the dishes that they have partaken. As for other dishes, there were some who expressed desire for the ingredients used to be familiar to them. What it means is that they would be more comfortable if some, if not all of the ingredients used were familiar ones used in the Philippines.

For the first half of the respondents desiring a compromised version of Korean cooking, it is important to take note, especially from the list above that dishes numbered 2 to 5 was made possible because of familiarity recalled from certain Filipino or popular dishes. It is also not surprising that kimchi sold in most large grocery chains are displayed within the same shelf as other bottled preserved delis such as atchara. Well, the fact that Korean instant noodles being displayed with all other instant noodles need not be explained in this way though. However, familiarity is key to understanding the consumption patterns of some people, or at least the ability to be able to compare it favourably with certain local delicacies.

A trivial and ancillary matter for some of the respondents interviewed is the immediate lack of the familiar spoon-and-fork on the dining table. Although indeed many Filipinos use chopsticks, it is another thing to use metal chopsticks. In one of the restaurants visited, the attendants normally displayed the metal chopsticks, but they routinely asked the customers if they preferred wooden chopsticks or spoon-and-fork instead. These routine questions are indicators that many Filipinos have in fact visited their or other Korean restaurants but were quite unaware or unfamiliar with the use of metal chopsticks.

On the question of whether Korean cuisine is being led towards localisation or Filipinisation remains to be seen. The
concept of fusion dishes may be popular for some, but it has not really taken off for the vast majority of Filipino consumers. At this point, the type of fusion as regards the localisation of Korean cuisine is so far more in terms of the need to “tone down” what is perceived to be radically spicy dishes. Apart from this, substitution has been happening, though this is not necessarily an indicator of fusion or localisation. There are certain ingredients which may not be locally available, yet may be substituted by local equivalents. Examples of this are certain types of vegetables, and fishes – such as galunggong for pike mackerel.

Yet, a smaller yet significant percentage of the respondents did argue in favour of retaining the supposed authentic Korean original. Some of the respondents have in fact previously travelled to Korea and have seen and tasted for themselves Korean cuisine in its native homeland. Whether such an experience was mediated by the hallyu effect is beside the point. Nevertheless, although it is true that many Filipinos would like to experience Korean cuisine in a more “moderate” or Filipinised mode, there are some who would prefer to taste the “original” form as it is in Korea itself. As for the second type, there is a point to the cultural purity being argued. Yet, the usual counter-argument is predictably that of culture being a product of foreign influences.

The tug-of-war between localists and purists should not be oversimplified and trivialised though as both are valid indicators that indeed the hallyu value of hansik has successfully been delivered by their Korean originators and promoters. After all, though such a diverging debate has not really plagued Chinese or Japanese culinary culture in the Philippines, it has entered very similar paths as any other foreign culinary influences in the country.

**State-Sponsored Hansik Education**

The fourth wave of hansik as hallyu in the Philippines mentioned earlier refers to the professionalization of Korean
cooking in the Philippines. The Korean Cultural Center in the Philippines offers one of the very limited official Korean cooking classes in the Philippines that is officially sanctioned and promoted by the Korean government. Though it may be true that there are certainly other cooking schools throughout the Philippines that may offer Korean cooking, the desired effect is the same. In KCC in particular, the official policy is that no Koreans are allowed to be enrolled as students, though some foreigners, Japanese in particular, are able to avail of the offered cooking classes.

A typical cooking class session at the Korean Cultural Center in the Philippines

On the part of the Filipinos studying in the cooking classes, some of the motivations strike a chord in the familiar Filipino socio-economic phenomenon – as preparation and training for a future employment in Korea. For some others, it is about Korean employers in the Philippines sending them to study in order to recreate authentic Korean dishes in existing or planned restaurants. Others are simply entrepreneurial enough to plan for opening a future Korean restaurant in their respective localities.

Regardless of the motivations, the fact that KCC, a branch of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Philippines is regularly offering cooking classes attests to the persistent state-sponsored policy of Korean cooking to be promoted in line with Korean cultural wave. As of recently, the nation-wide contest
Global Taste of Korea with all of its promotion and tempting lucrative prizes, is yet another strategy to sustain Filipinos’ interest around Korean culinary culture.

In another perspective, the very professional education in Korean culinary arts is an indication of *hansik* having reached another complex level – that of training or educating foreigners to cook Korean dishes. Unlike the form of localisation mentioned previously, this new level enters as a localisation of the authentic Korean cuisine. For indeed, it is crucial, regardless of the actual motivations, for Filipinos to be the ones cooking Korean cuisine. This by itself is also an indication of the unprecedented success of *hansik* as *hallyu*. If before, it was understandable that Koreans were the very bearers of Korean cooking, it is now a resounding and desired development that non-Koreans be the co-creators of *hansik*.

**Imagining Korean Culture through *Hansik***

This study admits extensive limitations to actually start plausible conclusions. Rather, this paper seeks to discuss summaries and open conclusions as open invitations for future scholars to explore the topic as well and expound more profoundly on it.

First of all, the paper looked at Korean cooking as a vehicle and expression of Korean culture. However, though Korean cuisine visually looks unique, it is also a product of regional influences from China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. *Hansik* is a very tangible and powerful vehicle of Korean culture. In the same way that the Chinese and the Japanese used this strategy in order to promote or idealise their respective culture, so do the Koreans in the context of culture imagining. However, this cultural imagining through Korean cooking is manufactured and reconstituted rather than a historically uninterrupted series contrary to what popular media may invite people to believe.

Although localisation or Filipinisation is tolerated, as it still serves the function of preserving the “exotic” behind Korean
culture, it warps the “authenticity” of Korean cuisine. It is of course impossible to replicate Korean cuisine completely in the Philippines due to cultural ecological reality: some ingredients grown in Korea, cannot be found in the Philippines. Localisation balances the problem by providing close substitutes – but this is more of an exception in Hansik, rather than the rule. In this case, localisation enters two forms: that of allowing changes in the dishes themselves to suit the local palates, or deputising locals as professional replicators of Korean cooking. In both cases, the highest level of Korean culinary culture reaches its apex of success in the delivery and promotion of Korean cultural identity to the world.

References


Publications, Limited.
Arnel E. Joven, Ph.D. (侯敏喬) is an Assistant Professor in the History Department, College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Asia and the Pacific (Manila, Philippines). He wrote his doctoral dissertation on the history of medicine in the Philippines during the Japanese occupation period, 1942-1945. He is currently conducting research on the history of medicine and medical anthropology in the Philippines, Japan, Korea, and China. He was a recipient of the Asia-Phil research grant from 2012 to 2013, for which he conducted research on health perspectives and practices in Japan. He is also currently a recipient of the Academy of Korean Studies Overseas Korean Studies Incubation Program (AKS-OKSIP) research grant, for which he is conducting research on East Asian medical traditions.
Synthesis of Panel 3

Cherish Aileen A. Brillon, Panel Chair

Ms. Guevarra talked about a relatively unexplored topic on K-pop gender queer cover groups and how they define themselves vis-à-vis their favorite K-pop performers and how they are accepted supposedly by this teen subculture despite their gender identification. Some notable highlights, the findings of the study have something to do with how K-pop groups give them an inspiration as a member of “third sex”. For Nicky Song, it has become a way for her to be recognized as a celebrity though sabi ni Maam just a minor celebrity but still it’s celebrity nonetheless. And of course the role of social media in the formation of the fandom or a community of K-pop fans. Dr. Joven actually looked at the connection between Hansik and Hallyu and he talked about the role of Korean cuisine in promoting or propagating a Korean taste and how Filipinos have appropriated Korean cuisine to imagine a culture but of course this appropriation is not one way because as he also discussed, the localization or hybridization actually play the big part on it. The last one has something to do with the Kopinos. Ms Sadorra talked about popularity of Korean films in the country and how it has provided for us a context by which to interpret Korea’s concept of a multicultural society especially as it pertains to the Kopinos or to put it in another term, the Kosians because Kopinos has become a highly sensitive and debatable term in Korea and in the Philippines.

The concept of the k-pop group is introducing an androgynous or the ambivalence of sexuality, which is very important in terms of the idea of sexual expressions and gender expression so you also have that concept. I do hope it gets to be explored more.

A lot of Filipinos are looking for what is a Filipino taste. But the question is should we look for what is a Filipino taste or rather should we accept that the Filipino taste is a hybrid of our colonial and our precolonial history.
The reason you are so drawn to Korean films (mainstream) is because it is the same as the structure of the Philippine romantic films. It’s just that the Koreans try to approach it in a comedic, light hearted manner and we do it in a melodrama, which is very much rooted to the Filipino culture.
Cherish Aileen A. Brillon is the current Program Head of the Department of Communication of Far Eastern University and the adviser of the FEU Film Society. She finished her MA in Media Studies major in Broadcasting at the UP College of Mass Communication with a specialization in political economy and is now taking up her Ph.D. in Philippine Studies, Tri-College Program at the Asian Center this time focusing on spectatorship and space studies. She has already presented in various conferences on such topics ranging from gender, new media, sentiment analysis of social media, urban studies, and the analysis of spaces and nostalgia in migrant cinema.
Special Panel
Hallyu Experiences from Southeast Asia

The Hallyu wave has definitely influenced Southeast Asia’s popular culture as manifested in the areas of youth culture and popular media. As these interactions strengthen, new forms of identities and issues are being created. This panel presents two papers wherein such interactions are made apparent; first is Mary Jane Ainslie’s “Imagining East Asia in Southeast Asia: A case study of the reception of Korean TV Dramas amongst Thai viewers,” and Phan Thanh Thanh’s “Asianization, imagination, fan culture and cultural capital of the Vietnamese youth: A case study of KPop cover dance.”
Imagining East Asia in Southeast Asia: A Case Study of the Reception of Korean TV Dramas Amongst Thai Viewers

Mary Jane Ainslie

Abstract

This paper is part of a wider project which aims to address the cultural relationship between the Southeast Asian region and the very problematic and abstract label of East Asian Popular Culture. This paper aimed to investigate how such products have been received within a nation that is separate from East Asia yet still a part of Asia and heavily connected to this region in various political, geographic and economic ways.

Keywords: East Asian Popular Culture, Southeast Asia, reception, TV Dramas

Editor's Note: The full-length manuscript of this presentation is unavailable for publication in this conference proceedings as it will be published elsewhere.
Based in Kuala Lumpur, Mary J. Ainslie, Ph.D., is Head of Film and Television Programs at the University of Nottingham Malaysia campus and specialises in Thai cinema. She is co-editor of the forthcoming volume The Korean Wave in Southeast Asia: Consumption and Cultural Production and a contributor to Asian Cinema Journal. She is currently the Malaysia and Thailand regional president for the World Association of Hallyu Studies (WAHS) and a fellow of the Dynamics of Religion in Southeast Asia (DORISEA) network. Her current research is focused on using the Thai film archives to display and write about significant yet unexplored Thai films. This also includes investigating Hollywood interests in Southeast Asia during this period and the impact this had upon the development of indigenous film industries.
Asianization, Imagination, Fan Culture and Cultural Capital of Vietnamese Youth: A Case Study of K-pop Cover Dance Groups in Hanoi Vietnam

Phan Thanh Thanh

Abstract

This research explores the influence that economic integration, flows of capital and information, the media and popular culture - specifically Pop Dance Culture from South Korea - has led the changes in the identity of young Vietnamese people living in urban areas. The aim is to study the cultural phenomenon of a cohort of teenagers born in Hanoi after the economic reforms of the late twentieth century, and their practice of K-Pop dance covers using their bodies to convey their aspirations in terms of who they want to be in a post-Socialist society. K-Pop cover groups first sprang up in 2011 in Vietnam, after such groups won the international K-Pop dance cover contest. This contest utilizes social media to promote and disseminate Korean music culture, and young Vietnamese people have made use of it to form their own cover groups, and have used social internet sites such as YouTube and Facebook to display their hybrid identity and leverage their social status as middle class young people born after Doi Moi and living in urban areas, and in the capital city of Hanoi in particular. The target groups in this study are two K-Pop dance cover groups in Hanoi, each with members born in the 1980s and 1990s. The groups studied are, first, ‘YG Lovers Crew’ (YGLC), who cover K-Pop dance acts belonging to YG Entertainment, a mostly hip hop focused label, and ‘St.319’, who cover all the hit music videos from South Korea, and aim for a pop style. These groups were chosen for this study because of their fame in terms of performing K-Pop covers, of having a domestic and international fan base, due to the competition between them, and the strategies they use to move of the shadow of K-pop and create their own, new identities. Much of this research was based on face-to-face interviews with YGLC, St.319 and their fans, as well as the bands’ videos. Social networking sites such as
Facebook and You Tube, and online newspapers, were also important sources of information for this study.

Keywords: K-Pop cover dance groups, youth culture in Hanoi, Asianization

Introduction

This paper examines changes in Vietnamese youth’s identity and their daily life that become more engaged with internet, variety of entertainment including K-Pop. Ethnographically, I will explore ‘K-Pop Dancing Culture’ which has recently emerged and become popular among Vietnamese youth. Based on qualitative research with deep interviews and to participate closely in everyday activities of the group named YG Lovers Crew with its 12 official members from 18 to 23 years old and St319 with its 20 official members from 15 to 25 years old who were born after Doi Moi (the Vietnamese economic renovation policy), and practicing K-Pop Dance Cover in Hanoi and their fans to answer the following questions: How young people (teenagers) in Hanoi, Vietnam form themselves in social space to contest the meaning of youth identity to be both Vietnamese and K-Pop fans. Hence, in my research, I propose to study this cover dance group YGLC and St319 from the approach of fan culture, emphasizing youth perspectives in relation to both the nation-state and the global cultural capital.

YG Lovers Crew and St319

In Vietnam, a number of groups perform K-Pop dance music, mostly in the big cities such as Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City and Hai Phong. In total there are about 20 such groups, but the number varies a lot, and there are many small and little known groups at local high schools and universities, and also fan club dance cover groups all over the country. In Ha Noi, the most famous groups are St.319, LYNT and YGLC, and they faced strong competition at the beginning in 2011. While other groups still remain, St.319 is the most successful K-Pop cover group in Vietnam, as its fan base outnumbers other groups’ and it is known among the
international K-Pop fan community. The group is even ranked as one of the most influential and leading K-pop dance artists by social media, based on the number of views and subscribers on YouTube (Hellokpop 2013).
YG Lovers Crew is a dance group based in Hanoi, it was formed in 2011 by Doan Nhat Anh as part of the K-Pop Global Contest in Vietnam, and now performs many different kinds of dance, such as Hip Hop, modern dance and K-Pop cover dance. YG Lovers is one of the K-Pop cover groups in Vietnam which has risen to fame, particularly among Vietnamese young people, and has gained a following through online media outlets such as YouTube. Currently, the group has 12 members, all of whom are fans of Big Bang and YG Entertainment.

St 319 was also formed in 2011, and at first had only two members. St.319 has since grown, meaning there are now over 20 people in the band. The groups cover videos have received two to three million viewings on its own YouTube page. The group has won contests staged all over the world, and has performed alongside some renowned artists. In the future, St.319 dance group will continue to develop its own brand of K-Pop covers, and continue to produce self-choreographed products, to assert its own brand. In particular, the group is moving away from its St.319 dance group core, to become the first entertainment group model in Vietnam, with members from different areas. In December 2014, the St.319 Entertainment label released its non-St.319 record, performed by MIN, with a debut digital single called ‘Find’.

K-Pop Cover Dance

Cover dance is the copying of choreographed dance movements and other gestures to create the feeling for audience as watching a dance performance in a concert or music video. Movements are learned by watching official music videos and dance tutorials. It is Korean media mega-agencies that are omnipresent dominant powers that created these Cover Contests. Moreover, the phenomenon of cover videos by fans over the world has been popularized through the inception of
Transnational flow of K-Pop music in Vietnamese Society

The purpose of this part is to examine the Korean wave which has been emerging and countering to Vietnamese media flows. However, in Vietnamese society, this ‘Korean Wave’, which includes K-Pop, is considered to be only for the teenagers who are young and materialistic, who love music without meaning. In this first part, I will explore different opinions and controversial dialogues from both the older and younger generations, as K-Pop has become popular among Vietnamese young people plus its impacts on their lifestyles and tastes.

The year 2011 marked the entering of K-Pop cover dance into Vietnamese K-Pop fan society. Coincidentally, it was also the year that National examination for university entrance by Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training addressed students sitting in literature subject with the question about K-Pop fandom (www.Vietbao.VN 2012). The question was ―Admiring idols is a good culture but being crazy about idols is a disaster, what do you think about this?‖ This shows both the influence of K-Pop stars on Vietnamese fandom and the concerns of the Government on the changes in urban Vietnamese youth identity. That was also the first time, Vietnamese K-Pop Dance Cover groups won prizes (including first prizes) of K-Pop Global Dance Cover contests internationally organized by SM Entertainment, JYP Entertainment and YG Entertainment on YouTube (Facebook Pages of YG Lovers Crew, St.319, and LYNT).

Thomas Mandy spoke about the Vietnamese Government’s attitude as Korean culture has come to Vietnam. She argued that the enjoyment of East Asian (specifically Korean) cultural productions in Vietnam is maybe viewed as an act of resistance and negotiation to the regime, because the nation fears political instability due to this new post-communist media revolution.
Moreover, there is also competition in the domestic music market for external cultural influences, because the State realizes that local programs do not meet the needs of consumers. However, this represents a rich and creative area for Vietnamese artists to move into; to develop new themes, from the old nationalistic and patriotic theme (based on war and propaganda songs), to a new material pop culture (Thomas 2004).

The reason Vietnamese consumers have greater choices in terms of consuming international cultural products is because the country has opened its markets and entered the world economy (Lee 2013: 99). However, there is a paradox with respect to Vietnamese Government policies, for on the one hand there is a fear of losing a grip on the ideology of the regime, while on the other, the Government wants to open-up and compete on the world stage (Nguyen-Vo 2008).

In the meantime, the older generation’s opinion of K-Pop is relatively negative. In one online Vietnamese newspaper, a mother revealed her concerns about her children, who are fanatical fans of K-Pop:

"If there is any information about a band, or a Korean singer has plans to perform in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh city, there will be an extremely strong undercurrent of excitement among young people and children, who will use any method to get a ticket to see their idols. Soon, one Korean girl band, 2NE1, will perform in Hanoi, and my daughter has asked for a ticket. When the performance comes closer to the actual date, her attitude and determination will go as far as threatening to quit school if she cannot see the band. I asked a lot of students waiting outside the Korean show, "Why do you love K-Pop bands like this". One fan said, "If I can get to Korea once, I will die without regret. For me Korea is paradise." For me, this is painful to hear; my national pride is hurt so much" (www.WWW.Vietbao.VN 2012).

In response to what the older generation has expressed, as above, young people consuming K-Pop have also expressed their
views as to why they like K-Pop so much. The main reason is that the nation’s own pop music is not attractive enough for them, and they feel they are living in a time in which they want to open space on the internet and have more choice; to choose the most suitable music for their tastes. As fans said:

The problem is when Hallyu wave develops everywhere in the world, no one will have negative thought about that... No country has published a critical article about Hallyu wave negatively affecting young people. But why, in Vietnam, so they criticize? The Vietnamese perspective on Korea is too negative... On many pages of the ‘Vietsub’ online website opened by young Vietnamese, you can see that, besides Korean movies, drama and music, they also have zone for Japanese, Thai, Chinese, US and UK films and music.

The fact is that youth-led Korean music or the Korean style is not superficial; the young people want something new, they want to break out of the old ways, to learn about cultures outside...In fact, people now have a new concept called the ‘global citizen’, due to the development of the internet, and the development of new cultures, especially Hallyu wave and Korean Wave... (Thao 2014). I am a K-Pop fan, a fan of 2NE1, Big Bang and YG Entertainment...Did you ever find out why your daughters love them so much?
1. South Korea's entertainment industry is developing very much! It is affecting not only Vietnam, but the entire world. Eastern cultures have little in common; they catch trends and audience tastes and of course they have won sympathy;
2. The entertainment industry in our country is not competitive; please look and compare...I am a fan and according to you and many other people, I am a “crazy fan”! I’m prepared to go to Ho Chi Minh City to see Big Bang, the band I long to see even once in my lifetime...You should ask yourself first: ‘Why do Vietnamese singers not attract young people?’ It is your responsibility to answer this. For me, the phrase ‘meet one day, die satisfies’, is not about living and dying, but
really means: In this life, we must see the people who we have a lot of feelings for... (Ziu’s Facebook 2012).

Therefore, in the minds of young Vietnamese, they consume cultural products mainly according to their own tastes, regardless of the products’ nationalities. Moreover, the cultural tastes which the young people are living and experiencing have changed to reflect the advanced standards of living and cultural modernity they are experiencing. Before Doi Moi, it was only propaganda music that dominated the Vietnamese music scene; however, now young people are concerned with the quality of cultural products, such as their refinement, creativity, individuality and diversity. Therefore, Vietnamese nationalism has surged, suggesting an alternative globalization process is developing among the younger generation in terms of its identity.

**Asianization: Consumption and Reproduction**

In this section, I will show how K-Pop cover music has expanded the range of identities people use to think of themselves beyond the nation. In my view, this practice does not simply represent resistance to the state, but also the fact that international dance contests and the globally available YouTube channel have become unprecedentedly available in Vietnam, providing a ways for young Vietnamese people to break-out and become part of the globalized world. This development needs to be looked at from the perspective of technology and youth culture.

The term “Asianization” was coined by Iwabuchi in 2002, and the terms “Asian values” and “Asia sentiments” by Chua in 2004, as a means to counter to Western hegemony and Western cultural influences in Asian societies. Moreover, Asianization represents the new flows of cultural products within the East Asian region. The growing trans-Asian cultural flow that has emerged since the 1990s, and the alliances developed within it, have decentered or reversed, and recentered the previous direction of globalization (Iwabuchi 2002). Moreover, I should
also refer to Appadurai’s work from 1996 on the new imaginary landscapes of cultural globalization; cultural products which reflect modern life and the experience of globalization while living in metropolises (Siriyuvasak 2008).

After the drama of the Asian economic crisis, there was an Asian economic miracle, and since then, an emergence of popular Asianization and Asian dialogues whose main feature has not been Asia values or traditional culture, but capitalist consumer/popular culture. I borrow the term “Asianization” to highlight the reproduction created by young Vietnamese people, who want to be a part of Asia and learn from role Korean role models while consuming Korean cultural flows, and this helps shape the idea that Asians are living in the same, imagined transnational space. Young Vietnamese people have responded to the global spread of West-dominated capitalist modernity that has given a new momentum to the meaning of being Asian in the new millennium. Although it is not a new trend, it should be recognized as a different type of global flow, one in which “Asianness” is emphasized, and one that is affected by the accelerated speed of the cultural movement through new technologies (Iwabuchi 2002).

In the Vietnamese case, because of the growth in advanced technologies, fast internet speeds and cable/satellite, since the 1990s (The Enemies of Internet n.d.), people in Vietnam, and especially the young, who are main internet users (around 95% are those between 15 and 24 and live in urban Vietnam; Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) access the internet (Cimigo 2011). I would argue that the internet has raised the speed of cultural flows and created new kinds of globalization. In this process of proliferation, consumers can enjoy increasingly diverse choices regarding what they watch or listen to.

“I and St.319 often listen to and enjoy both K-Pop and US/UK music, because they are the two kinds of music which dominate the world music market...” (Kevin, leader of the St319 fan club, 2014).
The music taste of young people today is very diverse; there are many genres, many more international genres. Due to technology and the internet, the integration of cultural exchange is obvious.

“I like both, but I feel I am closer to South Korea music” (Tommy, a dance member of YG Lovers Crew, 2014).

“Because each entertainment industry has its own strengths and weaknesses, when I listen to many genres and approach more music styles, I will select good points from each to learn from them. So Korean music and American music also affect my lifestyle, but I see this as no problem; I feel comfortable because when I change, it is merely make-up, such as a way of speaking. Of course, when I meet older people, my communication is still pure Vietnamese, so I think it does not affect me so much, just a little bit of my style and manner (Zoie, a dance leader with St.319, 2014).

I also argue that Korean cultural products are closer in a style sense to Vietnamese young people rather than Western products. Straubhaar proposed that audiences are becoming more comfortable with receiving products from countries with which they share cultural ties, and this encourages the regionalization of media and the dynamics of media exports within particular geo-cultural regions, rather than the pure characterization of globalization - as the spread of Western (American) popular culture (1991). To continue with this idea, Iwabuchi has provided the term “coevalness” (2002:154), suggesting that non-Western countries believe it is impossible to catch up with Western US led cultural domination, due to the political, economic, technological and cultural lag that exists. Rather than copy the US style directly; therefore, young Vietnamese people have chosen to copy K-Pop - which has some of the US elements - to bridge this development gap:

“I think our style is more American than K-Pop. When we do K-Pop covers, we think we are more American. I started with Hip Hop, but the YG Lovers started with K-Pop, and in this way K-pop
represents Asia. Actually, YG artists write the music, and it is based on R&B and jazz, but to be as good as Americans I think there is a long way to go. Maybe because they are Asian groups who like Hip Hop and the American style, bans such as Big Bang and 2NE1 are like role model dance groups for us. They are also Asian, but they love the American style” (Nhat-Anh, leader of YG Lovers Crew, 2014).

Moreover, the style, fashion and dance produced by Korean artists are also easier for young Vietnamese people to adapt to during their everyday lives, meaning they can copy the style. The value of K-Pop does not necessarily lie in the distinctive singing ability of the artists. The main feature of what is called the Korean idol system is the creation of an intimacy between the stars and their audiences, and the closing of the gap between professionals and amateurs, which is different from the Hollywood star system. Instead of being a dominant cultural form (like American popular culture), K-Pop and its entertainment industry “have tried to exploit and produce [a] desire among the people to be members of the middle class in a modern capitalist society” (Iwabuchi 2002:103).

“...if you watch Korean music...it is very nice, very teenage; well-suited to the song content. US music has a very strong choreography. US artists can sing and dance Hip Hop perfectly, and it is also very physical. But here, K-Pop is gentle dance; it is very close to young people, and even if people do not know how to dance, they still can follow the acts. The K-Pop videos are very easy to cover, because they have dance clips, to guide the fans; usually just a one shot clip and no edition, meaning one can track the movement very easily” (Nhat-Anh, Leader of YG Lovers Crew 2014).

Directly copied through observation, Korean songs, dance, hairstyles and clothing have become popular among young people in Vietnam; they have even changed their names to foreign sounding English and Korean names. For example, some group members have Korean names, such as “Min” from St319
and “Sal Park” from YGLC, while others have English names, such as “Zoie” and “Ethan” from St319, and “Tommy” and “Jemmy Lucas” from YGLC. However, this is no different between the way Koreans have copied Western music and technology, and Japanese styles and Vietnamese have copied Western and K pop. The imitation of Korean pop can be considered a national hybrid identity, highlighting the fact that skillful hybridization is not unique to Korea, but is quite common among subordinated nations (Appadurai 1996).

Fan Culture

In this section, I will argue that we cannot equate dance reproduction - which is one of the new, emerging cultures among the Vietnamese youth - with the original products from South Korea. While the members of the group are doing covers, they are at the same time producing something new out of the original element. They have also created their own fan clubs, their own audiences and fans.

Here I will show the viewers’ perspectives on dance cover MVs made by Vietnamese teenagers. The positive response generally made was that young Vietnamese consumers are now recognized as one of the game changers on the pop culture map. They are not only seen as “cool” and “talented” among the Vietnamese, but in other countries also.

Both those groups (St319, YGLC) have hit dance cover MVs on YouTube, comments from viewers both in Vietnam and other countries. The common comments from YouTube audience are appreciated; praised Vietnamese teenagers “cool” and “talent”. However, there is also a competition among the groups and their fans. While the cover dance style of St319 is very pop, covered all hit songs from Korea, YG lover crew only focus on some hits from YG entertainment which is mostly focused on Hiphop and R&B style.

There is also a competition among different dance teams... In VN there is only one group St.319 has their own fan club. Meaning
that they have their offline meetings sometimes and fan club members can meet dancers. But we only manage the group page views and every year show in August, holding one concert of the group on cover dance, selling tickets to our audience and also to promote a better image of the group, specialized and stronger (Tommy 2014).

The style of YGLC is more hiphop dance. I am not really interested in K-Pop dancing anymore but I am into YG entertainment. They are like American living in Korea. The style, music, everything do not look like K-Pop at all. It is K-Pop because they sing in Korean but their style music is not because they don’t sing Pop, they just sing Hiphop, R&B, Jazz and some kinds of really artistic music (Nhat-Anh 2014)/

Due to having different styles in K-Pop cover dance, their fame and opinions about K-Pop are different. St319 has become more successful because they are very stick to Pop style. Being said that becoming famous because of the names of Korean artists and their fame, St319 has answered:

“So -called followers of the famous Korean artists is not very true because if we do not spend our time and energy to practice, if we do not invest in our products (cover dance MVs), then actually nobody will care about us and let us become famous. And the so-called goal of us is not to get fame but our target is to express what we like and we become famous not because of Korean artists but due to the appreciation of the viewers. Meaning when audience think they are beautiful (MV), audience support us and and we begin to success” (Zoie 2014).

“Why their cover clip 's dance become special because they might have different story for each video clip but did not completely copy the original music video, the group did not merely in the mirror dancing but they have paid attention to distinctions, they build the iconic character, the character's personality on video clips and songs based on it, everything fits together to make up their own definition of it” (Thao 2014).
“For me main reason St319 dance cover and invest in their clip is their passion that has driven them spend a lot of time and effort to achieve what they want. I think their wish is not only to become popular but to devote to entertainment industry of Vietnam...” (Kevin 2014).

According to Alvin Toffler, fans have become “prosumers” who create when they consume (1980). Jenkins (2006:3) has extended Toffler's work to refer to the interactive consumption that is embedded in production, an influential elaboration of media convergence, in which new practices are driven by a participatory culture as participants engage in a dynamic interaction rather than occupy prescribed, distinct roles as producers or consumers. The notions of the prosumer and of participatory culture are reiterated through the concept of Web 2.0, a term coined by Darcy DiNucci in 1999. This term was given to the concept of the Web as "a space for collaboration and reciprocal communication" (Gere 2009:212). As the cases presented to illustrate, the processes of producing, consuming, and being consumed or shaped by digital media are intertwined and often simultaneous.

Only St319 has Official Offline fan club and has its fan page for their fan group in Facebook: IOWA, name of St.319's Fan club (Accessed on 8th, February, 2014 on FB had 20,532 likes.) The page was created to support for St.319 and help people like St.319 communicate with each other.

“Fan club of St 319 was established right after the first days of group activities. A small offline meeting of the group usually has around 50 to 60 people. In a big meeting there are more than 500 people” (Kevin 2014).

And for YGLC performs, they meet their online audience by celebrating offline K-Pop party performance every year. However, YGLC has plans to become a professional dance crew instead of being a K-Pop dance cover group. “I don’t think of your group as K-Pop dance cover group anymore. I think we are like professional dance group for showcases and performances.
Actually I started from Hiphop first then I love YG so I started to take some directions into K-Pop, try to listen to K-Pop and I have been loved K-Pop for a while” (Nhat-Anh 2014).

**Cultural Capital**

In this part, I want to argue that by practicing K-Pop cover dance, the members of YGLC, St319 do not only show their love for K-Pop music and K-Pop stars but they also have an ambition to jump into the National music industry and entertainment sector. They even produce new products on their own. As a consequence, practicing K-Pop cover dance can be seen as the first step for gaining fame both domestically and internationally.

In St 319 case, they have created new identity by learning from Korean music and Western music to making music and dance “cool” and “modern”. St. 319 is already started to reach that dream with 2 new debut products by themselves. They released a new album: MIN from ST.319 - TÌM (LOST) (ft. Mr A) M/V Published on Dec 18, 2013 which lyric is in Vietnamese but dance choreography was inspired by K-pop dance.
It proved for their ambition, plan, to become a more professional entertainment group, not only K-Pop dance cover group.

“We actually is not a truely dance cover group anymore... In the beginning phase we probably have learnt from them a lot but in the next step, we have changed into local entertainment group” (Zoie 2014).

“When the group is in a certain height, then the maintenance is quite important for the group. It will help them progressly deeply go into the entertainment industry of Vietnam” (Kevin 2014).

Vietnamese youths’ active acceptance of new digitalized music will have a great influence on Vietnamese music industry in the future. The same pattern has been seen from American baby boomers’ embrace of rock music which changed the American music industry in 1960s (McRobbie 1993). Like rock music in the 1960s, K-pop music produced by digital technologies is new, trendy, and cool appealing feature of cultural products for youth.

“I think in the future, the impacts of the Korea in Viet Nam will not last much longer like before. We will receive more other styles and even domestic music industry in Vietnam will develop so maybe youth will like this music more” (Ziu 2013).

Within a specific context of several non-Western countries, popular music is distinguished not between high or low culture but between domestic music and Western (US-UK) music (Mori
2009:219-223). In this context, highbrow culture is seen as something from the West, represents for middle class youth because consumption of the authentic fashionable items of the hip-hop culture is as important as the music itself. They are expensive and difficult to find for audiences, unless they lived in the big cities (Lee 2013). Therefore, the audiences who could most easily access global (American) hip-hop culture, the newest trend of that period, were the middle and upper class youths who were living in the big cities.

In the case of Vietnam, even living in big cities, it is still difficult for young people especially young high school/university boys and girls to consume expensive CDs, subscribe to satellite music channels, and purchase international brands of hip-hop fashion items. They are likely to consume those fake international products and/or made in Vietnam products for international brands in local shops but have same styles of international consumers. However, conspicuous consumption of hip-hop cultural products in Vietnam still is one of the symbols of the middle class youths’ own highbrow culture Westernized.

“ST319 they are very young, they are very young people, having an opened way of thinking and living and willing to change in term of fashion sense, dressing, hairstyle to fit the song and match outfits and match the background of the music videos. Then I can see that if they come from normal families and they are only students, it will be difficult for them to change their clothes and styles like that” (Thao 2014).

**Discussion**

Cultural flow of K-Pop is most visible among Vietnamese youth because the youth are the most active recipient of cultural contents across national borders. The nationalities of the cultural products they favor most were US-UK music and K-Pop because they regard themselves as global citizens and consumers. However, they feel closer with K-Pop because they share with K-Pop the same experience and emotion and
because K-Pop represents a new hybrid modernity mixing Asian culture and Western culture.

By forming into a subculture group as such, those K-Pop fans and Dance cover groups in Hanoi have produced transnational dialogues, share cultural meaning, and form affective ties with each other. Within this visual space, those groups also help K-Pop fan communities in Vietnam to further take part in K-Pop consumption, disseminating their cultural capital in K-Pop. In the process of consuming and reproducing those cultural products, their identities are shaped as they clarify their desire to pop music, dance and life style what they consider as cool and modern.

Using K-Pop cover dance as a key platform to cultivate more cultural capital, it comes as no surprise that youth practicing K-Pop cover dance are also making their friends, levering their social status and even become small idols, have fan clubs both online and offline on their own rights and take a higher step in the entertainment industry.

There is a certain degree of economic growth which enables (particularly younger) people to consume cultural products. Youth are more confident because they have both cultural economical and social capital to pursue what they want. They want to be competitive, famous, and not only limited inside Vietnam but internationally, they want to be friends of the world and open to the world.

What is hint behind the scene of K-Pop cover dance practice among youth is not necessary that the youth want to fight against the current regime but what they actually want is to contribute to their fan community and/or their country and let other foreign communities know about Vietnamese youth who have global and regional tastes in a new urban landscape. There are many groups of young Vietnamese who want to do differently from their older generation by their online and offline activities. The case study of K-Pop cover dance from St319 and YGLC is just one of many young Vietnamese groups nowadays after Doi Moi.
Like most ethnographic research, I only focused on a small sample group for this study. Therefore, while generalization of this study might need to be questioned, I tried to demonstrate interpretive subtlety and nuanced cultural understanding that are strengths of ethnography. The research study was conducted in a specific area, and because of that the findings and recommendations may not apply generally and to other places, as they may depend on the context. Therefore, it needs more studies with empirical data collected from participation, interaction and involvement with different groups and in different regions for further understanding of this phenomenon.

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APPENDICES

Profile of Organizing Committee Members

SARAH DOMINGO LIPURA is the Korean Language Program Coordinator of the Ateneo Department of Modern Languages and the Associate Director of the Ateneo Initiative for Korean Studies (AIKS). She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science (cum laude) and a Master of Arts degree in Asian Studies from the University of the Philippines. In 2006, she was awarded the Korea Foundation fellowship that enabled her to receive Korean language training from 2 prestigious universities in South Korea, namely, Yonsei University and Sogang University. After her fellowship, Ms Lipura returned immediately to the Philippines and has since then been actively involved in programs and projects that promote exchanges between Filipinos and Koreans. She has likewise represented the country in various international conferences in South Korea, including the 1st Congress of the World Association for Hallyu Studies, where she has been invited as Philippine representative. Her research interests include, among others, International Relations and Global Politics, in general, and Korean Wave/Hallyu, Korea’s Soft Power, and Korean Language Education, in particular.

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PATRICK MICHAEL CAPILI is a traveler. When he is not teaching at the Department of Modern Languages of the Ateneo de Manila University, he is out celebrating the different cultures of the world. Although his tongue is European and his stomach Asian, he will always be Filipino at heart. He is a proud ELF and his bias is Ryeowook, with Sungmin, Hyukjae, Donghae and Henry as bias-wreckers. He dreams to live in Fullhouse when he retires. K-pop aside, Prof Capili teaches both Portuguese and Spanish and is the moderator of the Ateneo Lingua Ars Cultura. He also coordinated the 1st Campus Korea event in the Philippines organized by the Korea Tourism Organization last 2012 here in the Ateneo.

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ALONA GUEVARRA is an Instructor from the Department of English, Ateneo de Manila University. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature of University of the Philippines Diliman’s Department of English and Comparative Literature. She was awarded by the same institution an M.A. in Asian Studies, and a B.A. in English Studies: Language (cum laude). Her research interests include sociology and literature, the fiction of Murakami Haruki, the fiction of Kim Young-Ha, youth culture and Hallyu studies.

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JOSE ANGELO SUPANGCO finished his Masters in Creative Media from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 2010, specialising in Film and TV production. He returned to the Philippines after his studies and continued working in the Philippine media industry. He is a director and post-production specialist for Indioboy Productions. He also teaches in the Communication Department of the Ateneo and serves as the director of the Eugenio Lopez Jr Center for Multimedia Communication.

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The Ateneo Initiative for Korean Studies (AIKS) was established in April 2012 to set up, grow and sustain Korean Studies in the Ateneo. Through the Korean Studies Incubation Program (KSIP) grant of the Academy of Korean Studies, AIKS was able to launch its flagship project in July 2012, which consists of a roadmap of activities organized under 4 key strategic areas: Academic Program and Research; Networking and Partnerships; Training and Capacity-Building; and Establishment of a Center for Korean Studies.

By embarking on diverse Korea-related initiatives, AIKS seeks to:
1. Promote the significance of Korean Studies and propel Korea-related research in the academe;
2. Propagate interest in activities that foster awareness on different aspects of Korea, and of Philippines-Korea relations;
3. Partner with leading universities, organizations and institutions in Korea and in the region for a wide-range of academic and cultural exchanges relevant to the promotion of Korean Studies in the Philippines;
4. Provide research and training support to students and faculty;
5. Produce local experts in the field, qualified to advance Korean Studies in the Philippines not only as a major academic field but also as an important area of foreign policy.

The initiative is being led by the Office of the Vice President for University and Global Relations of the Ateneo de Manila University.

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The Academy of Korean Studies was established to revitalize the field of Korean Studies by conducting in-depth research and offering courses on Korea-related subjects.

AKS engage in a wide-range of activities including conducting research on Korean culture from both humanities and social science perspectives; collecting, translating and publishing Korean classics; compiling and distributing major reference works such as the *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture* and the *Digital Encyclopedia of Korean Local Culture*; and engaging in cooperation and exchange activities with academic institutions in Korea and overseas, all of which aim at improving the international community’s understanding of Korean culture.

**Korean Studies Promotion Service** – To help Korean Studies become a global academic discipline, AKS set up in May 2007 a division in charge of steering efforts to promote the said field with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (then known as the “Ministry of Education and Human Resources”). The division was renamed as the “Korean Studies Promotion Service” in January 2009.

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