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**Practicing Nationalism:
Culture, Technology, and National Identity in Contemporary Korea**

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**Practicing Nationalism:
Culture, Technology, and National Identity in Contemporary Korea**

by

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Dedication

To Yoosun, Dainn, and my parents.

Abstract

Practicing Nationalism: Culture, Technology, and National Identity in Contemporary Korea

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This thesis consists of three case studies on Korean nationalism: the ‘Korean Wave,’ the relationship between technology and nationalism marked by the ‘iPhone fever,’ and ‘Hines Ward syndrome.’ The three cases and the scant attention paid to them are symptoms of both the profound changes in and the ascendancy of nationalism in contemporary Korea. Taking Korean nationalism as a discursive formation, not as a pathology or a necessary manifestation of national sovereignty, this study challenges the dominant concept of the Korean nation as a real entity. To examine these pertinent cases is an indispensable element in this study’s attempt to avoid the essentialized and fossilized understanding of the Korean nation and nationalism.

By analyzing a wide range of discourses on the cases, this thesis seeks to capture the multilayered appreciation of Korean nationalism. The Korean Wave has been one of the most predominant discourses in which a set of heterogeneous cultural commodities, the Korean Wave, is represented as a demonstration of the Korean nation's cultural potential. One of the purposes of this thesis is to deconstruct this naturalized link between culture and place. This study also rejects the deep-rooted belief in the relationship between technology and national development. Technology and science in Korea do not inherently belong to the pure realm of Truth. Technology and science have been reproduced and constructed as a driving force for and/or an indicator of national development, not only by the national elites but also by ordinary Koreans. Whereas Hines Ward as a marker of unstable boundaries of the Korean nation appears to pave the way for the elimination of long standing discrimination against mixed-blood (*honhyeol*) people, the unquestioned links between race and culture as well as place and identity are still prominent even in multiculturalism as an alternative to the label of *honhyeol*. Based on these findings, this thesis argues, despite the pronouncement of the popular globalization thesis envisioning the death of nations and nationalism, that Korean nationalism continues to exist as a center of everyday discursive practices.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On the contrary, it will inevitably have to be written as the history of a world which can no longer be contained within the limits of 'nations' and 'nation-states' as these used to be defined, either politically, or economically, or culturally, or even linguistically. It will be largely supranational and infranational, but even infranationality, whether or not it dresses itself up in the costume of some mini-nationalism, will reflect the decline of the old nation-state as an operational entity. It will see 'nation-states' and 'nations' or ethnic/linguistic groups primarily as retreating before, resisting, adapting to, being absorbed or dislocated by the new supranational restructuring of the globe. Nations and nationalism will be present in this history, but in subordinate, and often rather minor roles. It is not impossible that nationalism will decline with the decline of the nation-state ... It would be absurd to claim that this day is already near. However, I hope it can at least be envisaged. After all, the very fact that historians are at least beginning to make some progress in the study and analysis of nations and nationalism suggests that, as so often, the phenomenon is past its peak. (Hobsbawm, 1992, pp. 191-192)

It is becoming commonplace to hear the demise of nationalism with the decline of nation-states which has been determined and/or characterized by certain changing conditions and symptoms of a larger, often proposed as inevitable and irresistible, process labeled as globalization. This popular notion of globalization, deemed to cause the decline of nations and nationalism, usually hinges upon the 'facts' such as: the erosion of 'national' economies as the 'base' of nationally bounded politics and cultures; the march of invincible global capital; the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs); and the prevailing regionalist movements striving to transcend the old regime of 'international' politics.

Despite all the pronouncements and 'evidence,' however, as Craig Calhoun (2007) put it, "globalization has not put an end to nationalism" (p. 171). What social

scientists actually encountered at the turn of the twenty-first century was the resurgence of ethnic and national conflicts. Not to mention the lingering crisis in the Middle East, a series of international tensions and ethnic conflicts exploding in the so-called Third World can be characterized by and are appealing to the cause of ‘nation.’ For instance, Japanese rightist movements marked by revision of history textbooks in the secondary education that try to legitimate Japanese imperialism and its actions during World War II — the Textbook Dispute — and the reactions from concerned Asian countries including the two Koreas and China are implemented under the rubric of the reestablishment of national pride and identity. In 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the far-right National Front, won second place in the first round of the 2002 French presidential election, edging out incumbent socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin (Krugman, 2002, April 23). A variety of nationalist movements in the so-called ‘developed’ countries, including this case, show that we cannot attribute the cause of ‘exclusive’ or ‘violent’ movements to the ‘underdeveloped’ cultures or immature democracy of the countries or groups in question.

Indeed, the popular notion of globalization upon which the death of the nation state and nationalism — and the death of the local in general — is predicated is not new. Whether it is described as an irresistible force of homogenization and assimilation or as an inevitable ‘fact,’ this view has been widely circulated both in liberalist and Marxist traditions. One of this study’s purposes is to challenge this type of globalization thesis, showing its various misconceptions and misunderstandings about the nature of nationalism. Nationalism is not a mere ‘superstructure’ that is destined to vanish if the

‘base,’ the nation-state as the core player of international political/economic system, is eroded.

When we think of South Korea, where the signifier of ‘nation’ has been paramount in the history of its modern politics, it seems premature to proclaim the death of nationalism. In the Korean culture industry, among others, one can easily detect overflowing nationalist codes (J. C. Kim, 2006). Moreover, the ‘history war’ with Japan and China characterized by the from-below nationalist movement of netizens shows that nationalism is not inherently monopolized by manipulative elites (H. J. Kim, 2009). And the logic of “national companies” (N. J. Park, 2004) as a form of economic nationalism, often articulated with the globalization or information society discourses, is still prevalent in today’s Korea. What these cases imply is that a variety of social movements that can be labeled ‘nationalist’ are no longer led exclusively by national elites or confined to the realm of politics or ideology.

The present study stresses that, despite — indeed, thanks to — its decreasing appearance in the form of top-down political mobilization, the role and function of nationalism should be reexamined in the specific contexts within which it operates. A variety of social practices and discourses still — either implicitly or explicitly — center on the long-standing concept of the Korean nation as a real entity and its good. What should be noted at this point is that obviously nationalist visions and languages are shared by various social actors, especially in such realms as the cultural industry and technological development, although the role of state in mobilizing and implementing

nationalist symbols and projects in those areas has been attenuated. This thesis argues, based on this diagnosis, that the characteristics of Korean nationalism have undergone gradual, but significant changes.

In an attempt to capture the changes and provide a more sociologically valid analysis instead of a static description of Korean nationalism, this thesis examines three cases that can and should be addressed in relation to nationalism — the Korean Wave, the relationship between technology/science and nationalism marked by ‘iPhone fever,’ and Hines Ward syndrome. As will be reviewed in the following sections, this study argues that these cases have hardly been examined in relation to Korean nationalism, and this fact simultaneously results from and in the predominant “myths” and “misconceptions” (Brubaker, 1998) in the study of Korean nationalism. By analyzing the discourses on the three cases and seeing Korean nationalism as a “discursive formation” (Calhoun, 1997), this thesis, within the intellectual tradition of media and cultural studies, seeks to challenge the essentialized and fossilized concepts of nation and culture.

In this endeavor, the present study’s main objects of analysis will be, though not limited to, the discourses of the Korean media and academia. To analyze the discourses produced by academic and journalistic practices is indispensable not only because of their pivotal role in the historic and spectacular process of ‘imagining’ the nation. Rather, the significance of this study lies in its emphasis on the discursive practices through which we reproduce national identity in everyday, mundane settings such as reading newspapers, surfing the Internet, and consuming popular culture. Academic discourses

also should not be seen as a mere abstract and linguistic practice ‘out there,’ given the role of the inextricable power-knowledge nexus in defining what the Korean nation is and should be. As Michael Billig (1995) rightly pointed out in his excellent book *Banal Nationalism*, the power of the nation, naturalized and so forgotten, lies in its critical process, collective amnesia: “it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (p. 8).

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This thesis does not aim to provide a complete bibliography of or to summarize all the theoretical perspectives on nations and nationalism. Given the enormous volume of the literature in this field, it is impossible to introduce all the existing theories in the field of nationalism in this thesis. But it is possible to identify a few central questions in the field, and indeed, this should be a critical process for this specific study. Therefore, I will briefly summarize the previous research on nationalism and suggest the theoretical framework of the present study.

A great body of literature has centered on the several key questions about nations and nationalism. Those include, but are not limited to, the following: what the nature and origin of nations is (‘What is a nation?’); how nationalism should be viewed; what the (causal) relationship between nations and nationalism is; when and how nationalism emerged or was ‘invented’; and how it is reproduced or under what circumstances it

resurges. As Benedict Anderson (1996, p. 1) acknowledges, however, there is no widely accepted definition of nations and nationalism. According to Özkirimli (2000, pp. 58-59):

As Breuilly notes, nationalism can refer to ideas, to sentiments and to actions (1993a: 404). ... Kellas contends that nationalism is both an 'idea' and a 'form of behaviour' (1991: 3). Nationalism is a 'doctrine' for Kedourie (1994: 1), and 'ideological movement' for Smith (1991a: 51), a 'political principle' for Gellner (1983: 1) and a 'discursive formation' for Calhoun (1997: 3).

This "less analytic consensus," of course, results partly from the multilayered manifestations of nationalism that can be marked by the sheer volume of the literature. More profoundly, however, what makes the study of nations and nationalism complex is the fact that it involves not only sociological analysis of the nature and origin of nations and nationalism, but also the political evaluation of their function and destiny.

According to Antony Smith (1999), one of the leading scholars in the study of nationalism who coined the term 'ethno-symbolism,' most perspectives on nations fall within four major categories of explanation: the primordialist, the perennialist, the modernist, and the ethno-symbolic (p. 3). The primordialist is the most prevalent form of explanation on the nature and origin of nations; it assumes that the nation is a natural community and the primordial divisions of humanity can be traced back to pre-historical eras. Nationalism is, consequently, considered to be ubiquitous and universal. The perennialist thinks of nations as something that have existed throughout recorded history but not as a part of the natural order. In other words, nations "were perennial collective actors but not natural or primordial" (Smith, 1999, p. 5).

The modernist mode of explanation is the dominant approach to nations, proposed by influential scholars such as Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Hans Kohn, John Breuilly, and Benedict Anderson. In the modernist paradigm, nations and nationalism are uniquely modern phenomena, and according to Gellner (1983), nations are not a naturally given entity but the product of modernity, characterized by such processes as the establishment of public education system and increased mobility. Therefore, contrary to the primordialist view, nationalism is not a necessary manifestation of naturally given groups, the nation states. Instead, according to him, it is nationalism that “‘invents’ nations where they do not exist” (Gellner, 1964, p. 169). Benedict Anderson’s (2006) famous definition of the nation as “an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (p. 6) also emphasizes the nation as a product of particular historical conditions, foregrounding the role of print capitalism, although he continuously distinguishes his concept of imagining from ‘invention’ or falsity. In this sense, some scholars classify this perspective into two different positions of instrumentalism and constructionism (Levinger & Lytle, 2001).

The ethno-symbolist, as a critical response to the modernist approaches, seeks to trace the historical origin of nations inherited from the pre-modern era, criticizing the modernist paradigm’s “failure to consider the pre-modern roots of modern nations” (Smith, 1999, p. 7). While “the nations emerged in the modern epoch,” Smith argues, what should be taken into account in the study of nationalism is the “pre-existing cultures and ethnic ties of the nations,” because what actually “gives nationalism its power are the

myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritages” (p. 9) that have been neglected in the modernist view.

In the case of Korea, the subject of this thesis, the dominant concept of Korean nation has been primordialist one, marked by the idea of perpetuating ‘pure blood’ inherited from *Dangun*, the mythical founder of the nation. Many Korean historians still tend to see, based on territorial continuity, the Korean nation as a perennial entity from the pre-modern era (D. H. Baek, 2001, p. 150), whereas a few scholars have consistently criticized the concept (J. H. Lim, 1999, 2000), pointing out that the Korean nation is by no means a natural entity that can be traced back to five thousand years ago. In this sense, this thesis examines the two major approaches to the Korean nation and nationalism, the primordialist and the modernist, for the sake of simplification, in order to answer the key questions in the study of nationalism. Although Smith’s classification of approaches to nations and nationalism and ethno-symbolism as a theoretical alternative to the other approaches provide a fruitful way of mapping the existing theoretical perspectives in the field, the purpose of this thesis is not to establish another version of a theory about the origin and nature of the Korean nation and nationalism, but to examine the specific ways in which nationalism operates in the contemporary setting of Korea by applying the critical questions to the case of Korean nationalism.

According to Lim Jie-Hyun's¹ critique (J. H. Lim, 1999), the dominant concept — or “myth” in his terms — of the Korean nation as a perennial entity has been a kind of taboo, so powerful and sacred that it has never allowed virtually any kind of challenge to it. Therefore, the first step to challenge the myth should be to ask the question: ‘Is the Korean nation a real entity?’ In order to answer this question, we need to examine the ‘objective and material’ conditions, the ground of the dominant concept.

One of the best known definitions, among others seeking to establish objective criteria by which certain groups have become nations, is Stalin's: “A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and physical make-up manifested in a community of culture” (Stalin, 1912, p. 8, as cited in Hobsbawm, 1992, p. 5). However, this concept immediately loses its objectivity by asking ‘Who are the Korean nation?’ instead of ‘What is the Korean nation?’ which necessarily leads to a deductive and abstract definition of the Korean nation. Nationality, language, lineage, culture, and so forth are generally suggested as criteria by which one can define the Korean nation. But among these criteria, no one criterion can completely cover the Korean nation. If we attempt to use language as a criterion to define the Korean nation, every person who can speak Korean has to be a member of the Korean nation. But it is obvious that nobody will call a blue-eyed Frenchwoman a Korean even if her Korean is perfect. In a similar sense, for nationality, nobody is likely to call a German who

¹ This thesis follows the Korean convention that family names precede given names when their full names appear in texts. In in-text citations, however, the initials of given names precede family names as in the English convention to distinguish authors who have the same family name.

obtained Korean citizenship one year ago a real Korean. If someone uses a combination of criteria to avoid this dilemma, one has to be able to address why other possible criteria — such as Chinese characters, Confucian rituals, or Buddhism — that are largely shared not only by Koreans but also by other Asian peoples were excluded from the outset. After all, criteria are ‘chosen’ by the classifier, and we come to confront the oxymoron of ‘subjective criteria.’ Moreover, the fact that these criteria are occasionally constructed for certain ideological purposes shows the fictional aspect of the foundationalist concept that stresses ‘objective’ attributes of the Korean nation. As Kozakai (2003, p. 24) argues, classification is not necessarily done according to objective attributes of the objects.

Lim provides an excellent critique of the dominant concept, commenting on a dispute over the Northeast Project (東北工程) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, begun in 2002 (Ungcho, 2005, April 29). The Northeast Project, short for the Northeast Borderland History and the Chain of Events Research Project (東北邊疆歷史與現狀系列研究工程) has caused a strong backlash from Korea in that the project launched by the Chinese government tries to identify *Goguryeo*, an ancient kingdom located in the Manchurian region and the Korean peninsula as a part of Chinese history. Given that *Goguryeo* and two other ancient kingdoms — *Shilla* and *Baekje*, the Three Kingdoms of Korea — which occupied the Korean peninsula have been considered the ethnic root of Korean nation, Koreans’ claim against the Northeast Project is, in some sense, a natural reaction. According to Lim, however, people who lived at that time in that region were “neither Korean nor Chinese nation,” because they were just people who lived there and

they did not know or need to identify themselves as a unified nation. That is, applying the modern concept of nation retroactively to such people is an obvious anachronism.

His critique of the dominant concept of the Korean nation is well supported by other studies. For instance, Michael Billig (1995) provides a good example regarding national identity, citing Fishman's story (1972) of peasants in Western Galicia at the turn of the twentieth century.

They were asked whether they were Poles. "We are quiet folk," they replied. So, are you Germans? "We are decent folk". (Fishman, 1972, p. 6)

According to Billig, these are not stories of ignorance. Rather, the peasants "had a concrete consciousness: their identity was with *this* village, or *this* valley rather than with the more abstract idea of the nation" and the story "tells of a conflict between two outlooks, or forms of ideological consciousness" (p. 62, emphasis original). The peasants resisted the notion of nationhood, "reacting against its theories as well as labels" when facing a world in which "it is natural to have a national identity" (p. 62). Benedict Anderson (2006), in a similar vein, also points out the way in which a sense of identity, class, is "imagined," arguing that,

To the question 'Who is the Comte de X? the normal answer would have been, not 'a member of the aristocracy,' but 'the lord of X,' 'the uncle of the Baronne de Y,' or 'a client of the Duc de Z.' (p. 7)

We also need to challenge the widely circulated notions of Korean nationalism. Korean nationalism is usually conceived of as something that has an inherent tendency, and this view stems in large part from the dominant concept of the Korean nation as a solid and tangible unity. Being compared to multi-racial societies such as the US and Australia, the Korean nation from the dominant perspective is considered the determinant of the characteristics of Korean nationalism. Critiques of Korean nationalism often see it as an ‘exclusive blood-centrism’ or a mobilizing ideology. On the contrary, several groups who have exploited nationalism tend to assume the Korean nation to be an objective and valued entity and to equate their own political/economic purposes with the nation’s goals, since they are fully aware of the power of nationalism.

It is not surprising in this regard that nationalism is often seen as a kind of pathology, which will be or has to be remedied by such proper prescriptions as the establishment of the doctrine of self-determination or national sovereignty. On the contrary, in most parts of the world, it has functioned as a major strategy to protect ‘our’ culture against the assimilating power of imperialist movements, be it by ‘the West,’ the US, or other foreign invaders. In either case, however, nationalism is assumed to be an inappropriate movement or obsolete ideology that will sooner or later cease to exist, if globalization, assumed to eliminate the hitherto solid boundaries between nation-states, is fully achieved by the development of ICTs or the increasing transnational flow of capital and labor.

This view, as in the popular notion of globalization, has something to do with the long-standing “misconceptions” and “myths” (Brubaker, 1998). For instance, Brubaker identifies “the two opposed appraisals of the gravity and ‘resolvability’ of national conflicts,” and calls them the “architectonic illusion” and the “seething cauldron” view respectively (p. 273). The first is the belief that achieving the “right ‘grand architecture,’” such as the “right territorial and institutional framework,” will lead to the resolution of national conflicts by satisfying the nationalist desires. Opposed to the optimistic first view is the more pessimistic second view in which nationalism is thought of as “the central problem” in certain regions, and the ethnic and national conflicts are “on the verge of boiling over into violence” (p. 273).

Billig (1995) also points to the similar “sociological common-sense” (p. 46) or a “theoretical neglect” (p. 43). He contends:

Nationalism, thus, is typically seen as the force which creates nation-states or which threatens the stability of existing states. In the latter sense, nationalism can take the guise of separatist movements or extreme fascistic ones. ... If sociological categories are nets for catching slices of social life, then the net, which sociologists have marked ‘nationalism,’ is a remarkably small one. (p. 43)

As he continues, the widely accepted notion of nationalism that concentrates “on the striving for autonomy, unity and independence ignores how these things are maintained once they have been achieved” (p. 43).

Another familiar typology of nationalism that involves evaluation comes into play at this point. In this typology, nationalism is classified in terms of binary opposition. As Calhoun (1997) writes, “because nationalism comes in manifold forms, some benign and reassuring and others terrifying” (p. 3), many people have attempted to classify it in terms of “civic vs. ethnic nationalism,” “good vs. evil nationalism,” or “inclusive vs. exclusive nationalism” (Brubaker, 1998; Calhoun, 1997; Gerteis & Goolsby, 2005). Critiques argue that this type of classification only confirms certain tendencies of certain types of nationalism, and consequently, “makes each hard to understand ... and obscures their communalities” (Calhoun, 1997, p. 3) and overlooks the “chameleon-like ability” (Smith, 1995, p. 13) of nationalism. More important is that the second categories of each binarism — ethnic, evil, or exclusive — are linked to ‘others’ in most cases. As Billig (1995) points out,

Instead, it fits an ideological pattern in which ‘our’ nationalism is forgotten: it ceased to appear as nationalism, disappearing into the ‘natural’ environment of ‘societies.’ At the same time, nationalism is defined as something dangerously emotional and irrational: it is conceived as a problem, or a condition, which is surplus to the world of nations. The irrationality of nationalism is projected onto ‘others.’ (p. 38)

Both the Korean nation and nationalism have been privileged as a moral imperative or rejected as a ‘chronic illness’ of Korea. Of course we should caution against ideological assertions that conceal internal power relations and represent particular political/economic purposes as a national goal by foregrounding the solid and

unified nation. However, this does not necessarily mean that the rejection of ‘exclusive and violent Korean nationalism’ can accurately explain the social phenomena. Misunderstandings that connect nationalism directly with exclusiveness or political mobilization can result in compulsive avoidance which might lead to paralyzed analyses of nationalism and related phenomena.

Lim’s view of Korean nationalism is worth of reviewing in this regard. Constantly criticizing the dominant primordialist concept of the Korean nation, he contends that Korean nationalism has been a “secondary ideology” whose characteristics are not determined until it is articulated with another form of “primary” ideology such as anti-communism, Marxism, or liberalism. While his understanding has been fruitful in deconstructing the dominant concept of the Korean nation and nationalism, his concept of nationalism as a secondary ideology fails to explain the reproduction and longevity of nationalism, by granting national elites the status of the master and defining it as a mere ‘ideology’ in the sense of ideology as a false consciousness. That is, if nationalism is seen as a mere false consciousness that has been implemented by a handful of elites, we cannot explain ‘depoliticized’ or post-ideological nationalist movements ‘from below’ in contemporary Korea.

This view often leads to another critical question of this thesis: ‘How is nationalism reproduced in mundane, everyday settings? And what is the role of popular culture in the mechanism of reproduction?’ Although the modernist paradigm has made significant contributions to the field by identifying nations and nationalism as a product

of modernity and historical moments by which nationalism was ‘invented’ or ‘imagined,’ the mainstream modernist view has relatively neglected the question of how nationalism is reproduced in everyday lives. As Edensor (2002) rightly points out, “the only kind of popular culture discussed is that identified as ‘folk’ culture — that is, pre-modern — and often considered as worthy in contradistinction to mass culture” (p. 10). In other words, nationalist movements are in many cases assumed as projects initialized by national elites in the modernist approach, and there has been an “overwhelming emphasis on the spectacular and the historic” (Edensor, 2002, p. 10). That is, as Billig (1995) stresses, the modernist view “confines ‘nationalism’ to particular social movements,” and “only the passionately waved flags are conventionally considered to be exemplars of nationalism” (p. 38).

The present study’s attempt to investigate the mechanism through which nationalism and national identity is reproduced in mundane settings calls for analyses of relevant and specific cases. The theories focusing solely on the role of elitist culture and overemphasizing an instrumentalized concept of nationalism as a means to mobilize the nation cannot explain the multi-layered appreciation of nationalism by different social groups. As an intellectual challenge to the essentialized concept of the Korean nation and nationalism, the present thesis rejects both the normative and the skeptical assertions about Korean nationalism. Instead, it sees nationalism as a way in which people think of themselves and make sense of the world in their everyday lives. Nations are “absorbed into a common-sense view about the way the world is” (Edensor, 2002, p. 11) and

nationalism also functions as “a way of seeing the world and of finding elusive meaning within it” (Delanty & O’Mahony, 2002, p. 29).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, CASES, AND METHOD

Although this thesis can be labeled as a modernist approach in that the Korean nation and nationalism are considered the products of particular historical conditions, it also attempts to overcome the limitation of the approach by taking into account the specific experience of shaping national identity. Given the continuing changes in terms of its members, language, institutions, and culture, a foundationalist definition of the Korean nation and nationalism is not only theoretically irrelevant but politically unjustifiable. But it is also clear that we cannot dismiss the dominant view as a mere ‘false consciousness.’ In other words, we need to see how the myths — namely, the Korean nation as a real entity and the national development through ICTs — are constantly reproduced not only by nationalist elites but also by ‘lay’ Koreans.

The basic idea of this study is that Korean nationalism should be understood as ‘practices’ marked by the multi-faceted appreciation of different social actors, not as an uniformed ideology or idea implanted by a handful of powerful political/social groups. Therefore, I think that Calhoun’s (1997) perspective on nationalism as a “discursive formation” (p. 3) will be useful to analyze the contemporary Korean nation and nationalism in that his constructionist view can provide a useful theoretical tool to

deconstruct the essentialist concepts of the Korean nation and nationalism. Building on Foucault, he argues that

nations are constituted largely by the claims themselves, by the way of talking and thinking and acting that relies on these sorts of claims to produce collective identity, to mobilize people for collective projects, and to evaluate peoples and practices. (p. 5)

In this respect, this study will analyze three pertinent cases — the Korean Wave, technology/science and nationalism, and Hines Ward syndrome — mainly focusing on the various discourses surrounding the cases. The Korean Wave, a term coined by the Chinese media, generally refers to a boom of Korean cultural products in East Asian countries. Of course the geographical location where the Korean Wave has taken place is not Korea, nor is it a nationalist movement promoted by the whole Korean nation itself. Moreover, it is a transnational phenomenon which occurs in the category of ‘East Asia,’ not in a single nation-state. For these reasons, many studies on the Korean Wave stop at simply confirming the ‘nationalist tendency of a few groups,’ and consequently its relationship with the Korean nation/nationalism has remained as a relative blind spot in academic writings. But the mainstream discourse in Korea has showed obviously nationalist characteristics and even the general public is enthusiastic about and proud of the Korean Wave, “realiz[ing] they could export ideas and culture, not just steel and silicon” (Ramstad, 2009, May 19). Critics tend to reject the exclusiveness inherent in Korean nationalism, as in the misconceptions mentioned above. More problematic is the

ascendancy of the essentialist way of understanding and representing the Korean Wave as a demonstration of Korean culture and its potential, despite its nature as a heterogeneous set of cultural commodities. Responding to these issues, this thesis argues that the Korean Wave should be reexamined in regard to the context of Korean nationalism.

Chapter 3 examines the relationship between technology/science and nationalism, mainly focusing on the ‘iPhone fever’ in Korea. In this chapter, I will explore the social implications and effects of the iPhone on South Korea since its debut in November of 2009. The iPhone, not just as a technologically innovative smartphone that threatens ‘Korean’ phone manufacturers such as Samsung and LG, has sparked enormous debate over the social and structural problems of Korea. Analyzing the dominant discourse of the mainstream Korean mass media and the counter-discourse presented by Korean netizens, this chapter seeks to focus on the broader historical and political contexts in which technologies are adopted, represented, and signified. The iPhone has provided a discursive space within which the various social actors negotiate and articulate the meaning of technology and its role in national development. This chapter also argues that the historically predominant discourse on the relationship between technology and national development has rarely been challenged in Korea.

Chapter 4 analyzes a social phenomenon called ‘Hines Ward syndrome’ in South Korea. Korea’s enthusiasm for Hines Ward, a Korean American pro football player for the Pittsburgh Steelers whose mother is Korean, was initiated by his being named MVP of Super Bowl XL in February of 2006. As a *honhyeol* (mixed-blood person), Hines

Ward became a 'national hero' since he demonstrated the Korean potential which was inherited from a natural bearer of Korean culture, his mother. Hines Ward syndrome appears to be exceptionally encouraging, but also incongruent with the deep-rooted discrimination and plight that other *honhyeols* living in Korea have had to endure. Therefore, by analyzing the discourses on Hines Ward and his Korean mother, this study attempts to reveal how the national/cultural identity of the Korean nation is constructed by social experiences and practices of identification. As a site of discursive practices marked by various attempts to appropriate the meaning of the Korean nation, Hines Ward syndrome shows the fluid and unstable boundaries of the Korean nation created by 'othering' practices of categorization. It is important to note that, as Kozakai (2003) argues, identity does not exist on the basis of objective, inherent, and immutable attributes of the object; it is instead constructed by the practice of identification and by the very existence of external observer. The meaning and limitations of multiculturalism as a remedy for the discrimination against *honhyeol* people in Korea will also be examined.

Because this thesis attempts to analyze the discourses on the cases circulated in Korea, the main objects of analysis will be media coverage and academic writings. In order to investigate how these cases are represented and signified, the online news database KINDS (<http://www.kinds.or.kr>), run by the Korea Press Foundation, will be used as the main source of news articles for the cases. Especially in the case of the Korean Wave, as discourses on the Korean Wave have flourished since the early 2000s

(Won, 2005), articles of major Korean newspapers from 2001 will be analyzed. In addition, other materials such as postings on blogs and web communities are also analyzed in chapter 3 to see how ordinary Koreans interpret the case of iPhone fever. In terms of the relationship between technology and nationalism, to avoid the “cocktail of scientific aspiration and commercial hype” (Robins & Webster, 1999, p. 62), this thesis will focus both on the mainstream media’s practice and the government’s policies to reveal how technology has been related to the imperative of national development in the history of Korea.

Chapter 2: The Korean Wave and Korean Nationalism

In November, 2004, the initial frenzy clogged Narita Airport, as thousands of Bae Yong-joon fans flocked to welcome him to Japan, ten people were injured as the crowd outside his Tokyo hotel scrambled to get a peek at him. (Morikawa, 2010, April 4)

Bae Yong-Joon, “better known by the honorific ‘*Yonsama*’ in the island nation” (Salmon, 2010, July 5), the star of *Winter Sonata* was awarded the Hwa-Gwan Order of Culture Merit by Korea’s Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in 2008 (S. H. Han, 2008, October 19). This was the first time for a television star to receive the honor for making a significant cultural contribution to his nation. Bae was also designated as an Honorary Ambassador for the ‘2011-2012 Visit Korea’ campaign by the government (Kwon, 2010, July 8) “in a bid to bring more than 10 million tourists here and also take Korean tourism to the next level” (S. H. Han, 2008, October 19). As an Honorary Ambassador, he joined a rarely-organized overseas promotion event of the Korea Tourism Organization declaring ‘2010-2012 Visit Korea Year’ at Tokyo Dome. It drew estimated 45,000 Japanese, and many of them had come to get a glimpse of *Yonsama* (W. K. Song, 2009, October 1).

Although there has been a little debate about whether the Korean Wave actually exists, the government’s effort to exploit Bae’s popularity and the very currency of the term attest to the status of the Korean Wave as a national agenda. Indeed, the term ‘Korean Wave’ in today’s Korea is no longer limited to cultural products. The term is being widely adopted as a metaphor to describe almost all ‘made-in-Koreas’ being

exported to or applauded by other countries. The usage of the term ranges from rather abstract cultural/social artifacts and ideas such as *Hanguel* — the Korean alphabet — (Y. B. Moon, 2011, March 25) and policies of Korean government (S. Y. Kim, 2010, February 10) to commodities like Korean traditional wine (H. K. Kang, 2010, August 27), food (J. S. Hwang, 2007, February 28), and online games (Game *Hanryu* conquered the Japanese Islands, 2006, September 23).



Figure 1: *Winter Sonata* (2002) starring Bae Yong-Joon and Choi Ji-Woo

The omnipresence of the term reveals the profound impact and symbolic status of the Korean Wave in Korean society. More often than not this leads to the assertion, often conflated with a kind of normalized belief, that all Koreans should support the Korean Wave as a manifestation of Korean culture. As one of the most predominant terms in

Korea, the Korean Wave as a source of national pride calls us to examine the way in which the Korean Wave is consumed and represented in Korean society. The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, to offer a more synthetic understanding of the Korean Wave as a translocal flow of culture, not only by examining its ‘material’ conditions and effects, but also by considering the way in which the Korean Wave, as a discourse, operates in contemporary Korea, with a focus on ‘the Korean Wave in Korea.’

WHAT IS THE ‘KOREAN WAVE’?

It is widely accepted that the term Korean Wave (*Hanryu* or *Hallyu*, 한류/韓流) was first coined by the Chinese media in the end of the 1990s with the success of a Korean ‘trendy drama’ *What Is Love All About?* in China (Heo, 2002). The term generally refers to “a boom of Korean pop culture in East Asian area” (Jeon & Yoon, 2005, p. 68). According to the more sophisticated definition of Cho-Han (2002), one of the leading cultural anthropologists in Korea, the Korean Wave means “a tendency of enthusiastic consumption and enjoyment of Korean popular culture by East Asian peoples, especially among teenagers, in such countries as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and so forth since the late 1990s” (p. 4).

Facing this novel cultural phenomenon whose epicenter is a former cultural periphery, a huge number of Korean commentators and academics have provided a variety of scenarios about the nature and future of the Korean Wave. It was not only the Korean entertainment industry that strived to secure and exploit the burgeoning

popularity of Korean cultural products. The Korean government and the ‘private’ sector, including Korean media and academia, also partake in the ascendancy of the Korean Wave as a dominant discourse in Korea.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a complete bibliography or critique of the whole body of research on the Korean Wave. Nevertheless, to break down the research conducted by Korean academics into a few categories is relatively easy, partly due to their limited focus compared to the studies done by ‘outsiders.’ A notable tendency of the existing studies conducted in Korea is, as we see from the ‘general’ definition, the centrality of the ‘consumption’ or ‘effects’ of the Korean Wave as their objects of analysis. This line of research ranges from descriptive studies that place more emphasis on the immediate economic effects of the Korean Wave (Sang Kim, 2006; Y. H. Shin, 2006), the consequent increase of exports of other manufactured goods (E. K. Han, 2005), and the enhancement of Korea’s overall image or its status (S. E. Kim, 2006) to suggestions for policy-makers (Won, 2005) about how to maintain and expand the popularity of Korean cultural products. Alongside these studies conducted by academics, researchers who work for or are affiliated with government-supported research institutes have made a substantial contribution to the formation of the dominant way of understanding the Korean Wave.

Often infused with nationalist desire, these kinds of studies tend to overemphasize the economic-cultural effects of the Korean wave in terms of international relationship and focus on strategies for (or risks of) sustaining the Korean Wave as a given,

monolithic cultural phenomenon. One thing to be noted at this point is that this tendency hinges upon the ‘general’ definition of the Korean Wave. In other words, while taking for granted the burgeoning popularity and consumption of the Korean Wave, this line of research has paid little attention to the historical and political conditions under which the *Hanryu* has been able to emerge and expand. Assuming the *Hanryu* as a solid fact of fervent consumption across the region often leads to normative assertions for sustaining it. The important thing for such researchers was not the multiple ways in which actual Asian peoples use, receive, and often abhor Korean cultural products. The given and presupposed ‘popularity’ of the Korean Wave has functioned to conceal the very heterogeneous nature of the *Hanryu* itself and the ambivalent reception and consumption by different but homogeneously categorized ‘Asian’ peoples.

Like most (trans)local or ‘global’ phenomena, however, the Korean Wave is by no means something that can be analyzed by the simple formulation of cause-and-effect. Nor does it have a fixed meaning for all members of Korean nation. The very fact that there have been a variety of approaches to the phenomenon reveals its complex nature not only as a mere ‘cultural’ phenomenon but as a discourse within which different desires are projected and articulated. Given that the Korean Wave is “a highly complex and multilayered formation that is composed of real, imagined, and hybrid cultural practices, a diverse range of lived experiences, and sets of powerful discourse which exist at national, translocal, and transnational levels” (K. Lee, 2008, p. 175), how to see the Korean Wave from what (theoretical) perspectives is not just a theoretical question but

also political one. As Stuart Hall has continuously argued throughout his work, “[t]heory here, as always, has direct or indirect practical consequences” (Hall, 1996, p. 19).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

What should be noted here is that it seems extremely difficult to escape the functionalist way of understanding the Korean Wave in which the Korean Wave as an independent variable is assumed to have (un)predictable effects, if one centers exclusively on the aspect of ‘consumption’ and its effects. Of course there have been excellent studies conducted by ‘outsiders’ that focused on various patterns of consumption and captured the multiplicity and complexity of Asian peoples’ practices. But such multiplicity was left out by many Korean scholars, who have rarely focused on these aspects (notable exceptions are H. M. Kim, 2003; Yoon & Na, 2005b). Therefore, this chapter takes as its object of analysis neither the ‘boom of Korean culture’ itself nor the effects of a transnational phenomenon that has taken place outside Korean soil.

Rather, this chapter focuses primarily on the Korean Wave as a discourse in which the subject position of Korean is created, while pursuing a more synthetic understanding of the contexts and conditions of the Korean Wave as a transnational cultural phenomenon. As Du Gay, Hall, et al. (1997) rightly point out, “in the past it was not unusual for sociological analyses of cultural products to begin and end with these processes of production” by assuming “the mode of production” as “the prime determinant of the meaning which that product would or could come to possess” (p. 3).

On the contrary, most Korean scholars have paid scant attention to the very conditions of existence or emergence for the Korean Wave by starting their analyses from the objectified fact of a ‘boom in Asian countries’ which often results in normative assertions for sustaining the Korean Wave. But it is also important to note that the ‘consumption’ as the starting point of Korean scholars does not necessarily lead to an attempt to capture the complex practices of Asian audiences’ reception.

This chapter, building on the model of the “circuit of culture,” attempts to examine the “five processes” of the Korean Wave (Du Gay, Hall, et al., 1997). “Rather than privileging one phenomenon,” this paper tries to see the Korean Wave and Korean cultural products in terms of these inextricably intertwined five processes: representation, production, regulation, consumption, and identity. As they said, these processes “in the real world continually overlap and intertwine in complex and contingent ways” as a circuit (p. 4). Also, to see the Korean Wave as a discourse can be a fruitful way to capture the complex nature and contexts of the Korean Wave. According to Hall’s definition building on Foucault, ‘discourse’ means “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about — a way of representing the knowledge about — a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (p. 44). But the important thing is that “the concept of discourse in this usage is not purely a ‘linguistic’ concept. It is about language and practice” (p. 44). In this sense, as Laclau and Mouffe (1987) argue, the discourse of the Korean Wave is prior to the distinction between “the linguistic and the non-linguistic” (p. 82) and has certain material effects. For instance, as Paquet (2009) aptly put it, the

content of Korean films is becoming inevitably affected by the Korean Wave. That is, there is a growing belief that casting, not the original content or a well-developed screenplay, is the surest route to profitability. The trend for quickly-developed, star-centered projects has led to the poor performance of the majority of such films both in Korea and in other Asian markets, “setting the stage for the late waning of the Korean Wave” (p. 105).

By thinking of the Korean Wave as a discourse, we can also capture the subject position of Korean academics created by the discourse, and the inextricable knowledge-power nexus. Given the pivotal role of knowledge in the discursive formation, how the discourse of the Korean Wave “constructs subject-positions,” and how Korean scholars “become its ‘subjects’ by ‘subjecting’ [them]selves to its meanings, power and regulation” (Hall, 1997, p. 56) needs to be addressed in this chapter. Although this chapter divides the sections according to the five elements, as Du Gay, Hall, et al. (1997) argued, these five separate processes are by no means mutually exclusive or autonomous processes and need to be considered as overlapping and continuous processes. To analyze the Korean Wave as a discourse and examine its five processes in the circuit of culture, this chapter will use a wide spectrum of relevant materials ranging from empirical and theoretical studies on the Korean Wave to journalistic practices. Although it also deals with the studies produced by ‘outsiders,’ it will place more emphasis on domestically produced academic/institutional discourse.

REPRESENTATION OF THE KOREAN WAVE

There have been a few studies that identified discourses on the Korean Wave (Cho-Han, 2002; Jeon & Yoon, 2005; Won, 2005). For example, Cho-Han (2002) classifies the circulated discourses on the Korean Wave into three categories: cultural nationalism, neo-liberalism, and post-colonialism (p. 22). Won (2005) also identifies similar but somewhat different categories that include cultural nationalism, economism, critiques of the Korean Wave, and advocates of (reciprocal) cultural exchange (pp. 184-207). Yet I think the mainstream perspectives of cultural nationalism and economism/neo-liberalism can be discussed as one group, as the two approaches share considerable assumptions and explanations about the Korean Wave. Another strand of the discourses would be 'critiques of the Korean Wave,' either concerning the capitalist nature of it or based on the cultural imperialism thesis. The last view on the Korean Wave can be classified as 'cultural exchange/East Asianism.' Rejecting the other two positions, this view emphasizes the reciprocal and symmetric exchange of (non-commercialized and grass-roots) culture among East Asian countries.

Economic/Cultural Nationalism - The Dominant View

Hallyu is a natural phenomenon. It is not the result of any extraordinary marketing efforts nor is being particularly benefited by global free trade. The great artistic talents of young Korean actors and singers, the experimental spirits of a new generation of movie directors and the entrepreneurship of pop art lovers have combined to create great works of entertainment. Their products overflowed from

this country and spread massively to Japan, China and Southeast Asia helped by cultural affinity in the region. (To keep '*Hallyu*' going, 2010, April 6)

The dominant discourse on the Korean Wave tends to attribute its success to the inherent cultural superiority of the Korean nation. In other words, the popularity of the Korean Wave is a natural and necessary consequence given the nature of the Korean Wave as a manifestation of Korea's cultural essence. That is, the success of Korean cultural products proves the superiority of Korean culture, and this will lead to the enhancement of Korea's brand image. It is hard to deny, of course, that Korean cultural products have achieved significant degree of improvement both in qualitative and quantitative terms. As a Japanese journalist writes:

what they are really buying is the whole Korean drama package - the excellent camera work, the passion, the direction, the perkier dialogue and plots, the detail regarding fashion, and the beautiful background music that make them a distinctly Korean commodity. (Morikawa, 2010, April 4)

The most predominant discourse on the Korean Wave is an instrumentalist view which sees it as a means to promote 'national' economy or as a demonstration of the cultural potential of Korea. The following interview with Kim Han-Gil, the then-Minister of Culture and Tourism of Korea in 2001, when the Korean Wave was come into the spotlight as a driving force for the national economic development, is an exemplar of the nationalist way of understanding of the Korean Wave.

[The Korean Wave] shows the potential for overseas expansion that the Korean culture has, with the foundation of the cultural proximity between the Asian peoples and favor on the Korean culture, pulling down the monopolistic status of Japanese and American culture. The Korean Wave is making a positive effect on the national economy (H. G. Kim, 2001, July 21).

This statement shows obviously nationalist desires. In these kinds of discourses, the proliferation of individual cultural products from Korea leads to the superiority of the Korean national culture or the enhancement of national competence. Especially, ‘cultural’ superiority parallels with ‘economic’ effects in large part. Simply put, this discourse is predicated on the nationalist desire that Korea can enhance its national image and create economic benefits by promoting and maintaining the Korean Wave, which shows the superiority of Korean culture. In these nationalist discourses, the Korean Wave is often considered a valued and homogeneous unity; consequently, it becomes something that has to be maintained regardless of its nature. Although these views are suggested mainly by government-affiliated institutes (S. C. Jeong, 2001; Korea Creative Content Agency, 2004), industrial sector (J. Y. Kim, 2007), and mainstream media (J. Y. Chae, 2006, March 29), academic discourses have also contributed to this tendency.

Indeed, the attempt of the Korean government to support the domestic culture industry is not new. For instance, a film entitled *Seopyeonje*, directed by Im Kwon-Taek and released in 1993 became the first film to pass the symbolic number of one million admissions. The success of *Seopyeonje* led to the recognition of the economic potential of cultural products. According to Paquet (2009) “a symbolic turning point for the film industry came” in 1994 when the Presidential Advisory Council on Science and

Technology issued a videotaped report to the then-President Kim Young-Sam, and this is what Shim Doobo (2002) calls the “*Jurassic Park* discourse.”

Hollywood film *Jurassic Park* ... generated, with all its spin-off product sales, revenue worth foreign sales of 1.5 million Hyundai cars. The report concluded: since Hyundai Motors’ annual foreign sales numbered about 640,000 autos, a well-made film could be worth more than two years’ of Hyundai’s car exports. ... This report literally sent shock waves across the country, and, becoming common knowledge, eventually forged the public consensus needed in promoting media development as a national strategic industry. Previously, culture, which dealt with seemingly ephemeral and intangible phenomena that were assumed to contribute little to material conditions of the people, had been allotted an inferior position in the national agenda. (pp. 340-341)

Shim (2002) provides a convincing interpretation of the relationship between the prevalence of globalization discourses, cultural nationalism, and economic discourses in Korea. While the logic of “national companies” had already gained currency in Korea (N. J. Park, 2004), according to Shim, the *Jurassic Park* discourse in 1990s Korea played a pivotal role in the emergence of cultural nationalism in which the cultural industry was recognized as a primary agenda of the society, connecting the economic benefits of the cultural industry to the wealth of the nation. As he explains, the “comparison between a film and Hyundai car was so strategically effective” that it made “Koreans began to recognize the cultural sector as an industry comparable to the automobile, shipbuilding, or construction industries” (p. 341). As a result, Kim Young-Sam administration started to take as its motto *Segyehwa* — *Segye* means world and *hwa* becoming — for the globalization of Korean business and society.

Like the *Segyehwa* discourse, the Korean Wave, in the economic nationalism or language of developmentalism, is considered one of the future strategies for the Korean nation. This is what Lee Keehyeung (2008) and Cho-Han (2002) dubbed ‘economic/cultural nationalist discourse’ on the Korean Wave. This stance is usually connected with a more paramount concept in Korea, the notion of ‘national interests.’ And this myth of national interest is most prevalent when we think of ‘national companies’ such as Samsung and Hyundai. Following this logic, the ‘cultural’ sector of the Korean Wave is combined with the realm of economy through the medium of ‘nation.’ It also seems obvious that this kind of cultural nationalism leads to expansionist assertions in the context of globalization. And this becomes the main target of the critiques of the Korean Wave.

Critiques of the Korean Wave

Critiques of the dominant nationalist discourses on the Korean Wave consist of two related but separable positions. One of them mainly criticizes the sub- or quasi-cultural imperialist aspect of the Korean Wave and dominant discourses. The other strand impugns the Korean Wave as another variant of (Westernized) cultural commodities. However, the former has been much less discussed in public than the latter. Although a handful of Korean scholars and commentators have suggested its latent imperialist nature (U. C. Cho, 2005, February 20; Won, 2001, September 27), most critiques predicated on the first view were suggested by outsiders or foreign media.

Now, South Korean creative industries are staging their own version of cultural imperialism by expanding into neighboring Asian markets (Ward, 2002, February 8).

As Jeon and Yoon (2005) point out, it is very interesting that the cultural imperialism thesis directed against cultural products from Japan and Hollywood, one of the predominant intellectual paradigms in Korea in the 1980s, has vanished in the case of the Korean Wave. The following exceptional critique by Park No-Ja (2005, June 21) points out the “Korean variation of American pop music and Japanese dramas,” criticizing the imperialist characteristics of the Korean Wave:

To the ‘left’ of the 1980s, cultural imperialism was a very popular concept and the examples of it were the legal invasion of Hollywood movies and the illegal invasion of ‘third-rate’ culture from Japan. For them, people who were crazy about Rambo and Japanese comic books had become ignorant (mass) subjects of neo-colonialism. But now, Koreans speak of conquest of Asia with the Korean Wave, and even ‘progressive’ apostles of it admire “the power of Korean culture.” If Chinese and Vietnamese media mention the imperialist nature of the Korean Wave as the Korean media did in the 1980s, Korean media immediately describe those attitudes as a “head-wind.” While a Korean boy who wanted to be like Rambo was a “son of neo-colonialism,” Vietnamese teenagers trying to imitate Korean actors’ hair style become “costumers of the Korea brand.”

Given that the position which defines the Korean Wave as a type of cultural imperialism has hardly been circulated, critiques of the nationalist tendency do not completely escape the nation-centered logic. Despite their critical stance on the Korean

Wave as cultural commodities, such critiques tend to imply that the cultural potential of Korea made it possible from the first. That is, admitting the Korean Wave as a manifestation of Korea's cultural potential, they focus on its commercial nature or 'misuse' driven by Korean cultural capital.

It is true that the Korean Wave has showed the infinite potential of the Korean people. But if we soak in the pride of "cultural superiority" or recognize it solely as a means to earn foreign currency, the Korean Wave would not be different from Hollywood at all. (C. S. Song, 2004, November 23)

The majority of critiques of the Korean Wave, admitting the power and preeminence of Korean culture, lead to the alternative of the "authentic Korean Wave" (Paik, 2005) that needs to be substituted for the commodified Korean Wave. Indeed, the third position that insists on reciprocal or symmetric 'cultural exchange in East Asia' stems from this view.

Cultural Exchange/East Asianism

The third perspective rejects the dominant 'exclusive nationalism,' which tends to overemphasize economic effects of the Korean Wave. This 'cultural exchange' thesis or 'East Asianism' also tries to enhance the productive force of the Korean Wave. This view has been suggested not only by the 'civil society' sector but also by the Korean government. Of course, there is conspicuous difference between them; whereas the

Korean government focuses on the category East Asia as a market, the civil society sector explicitly adheres to the aspect of ‘culture.’

[The Korean Wave] should not be an ephemeral phenomenon, but lead to the establishment of regional community which guarantees the harmony of East Asia in the 21st century. I fervently hope to see the ‘Korean Wave,’ ‘Japanese Wave,’ and ‘Chinese Wave’ flowing in harmony across these ‘three nations of East Asia,’ and the synergy of the *Three East Asian Nations’ Wave* which would contribute to the peace of the whole world. (M. G. Kang, 2005, January 10)

It is a very valuable attempt to solidify the cultural bloc in East Asia which can stem the tide of Western or American culture. The Korean wave would give the momentum for creating the Asian cultural bloc. In this respect, the Korean Wave is a notable event in Asia and a great chance to create a regional community. (Won, 2001, September 27)

This position continuously defies the commercialized Korean Wave and tries to attain the goal of equal and symmetric cultural exchange between Asian peoples. It ostensibly rejects nationalism, conceiving a much broader category of East Asia. And as the term ‘exchange’ implies, it continuously assumes the equal status of each country involved. The question is, then, why does the Korean Wave, not the Japanese or Vietnamese wave/culture, have to be at the center of this vision? More fundamentally, why do cultures have to be demarcated according to the physical borders of nation-states (e.g., the ‘culture of Japan’ or the ‘culture of China’) in this view?

The simplest question of why the Korean Wave has to take the privileged status in East Asia is directly connected to the themes of nation and nationalism. Despite the

deluge of studies on the Korean Wave and its effects and reception in other Asian countries, there have been only few studies on Koreans' consumption of foreign cultural products (exceptions are Y. Choi, 2003; H. M. Kim, 2003; Yoon and Na, 2005a). Given the prevalent and lasting popularity of Japanese anime and American TV dramas in Korea, the insufficient number of studies on Korean audiences who have consistently consumed the foreign cultural products reveals the nation-centered logic in the realm of the culture.

Another blind spot of this view is the proclivity to regard culture as something that is solid and fixed. Why do the cultural products of Japan and the China have to be 'colonial invasion' or 'Sinocentrism?' Of course, most Japanese and American cultural products circulated in Korea are commodities made by transnational media capital. But exactly the same statement can be applied to the Korean Wave. Also, if there is any true or authentic, not commercialized, culture of the 'grass-roots,' why has the possibility of American grass-roots culture or true Japanese culture not been mentioned? Considering this, it can be said that such critics have not freed themselves from the problematics of 'nation,' in that very few academics have explained the reason why the Korean Wave should be at the center of East Asia.

PRODUCTION AND REGULATION

It is often said that the role of Korean government in the emergence of the Korean Wave was not critical. As Shim (2008) argues, many insiders of the culture industry discredit the government in that "it only jumped on the bandwagon when the

phenomenon became very apparent” (p. 30). Nevertheless, the fact that the Korean government officially supported the Korean Wave should not be underestimated. It shows the prevalent and conventional way in which culture is captured by the official discourse of state under the familiar rubric of ‘national culture.’

The substantial support, of course, cannot be ignored either. According to Shim (2008), the Korean government designated six key technologies in 2002, and one of them was ‘cultural technology’ (CT), which should drive the future of the Korean economy along with BT (bio-technology) and IT. The government also provided financial support to encourage content producers to cultivate overseas markets (p. 28). In addition, the local government of *Gyeonggi* province announced a plan to build ‘HanryuWood’ investing nearly \$2 billion (2 trillion *won*) by 2008 (K. Lee, 2008, p. 179).

With the support of Korean government, the Korean cultural industry began to develop both in quality and quantity. For instance, Choi (2010) contends that with the commercial success of *Shiri* and *Joint Security Area*, “the ‘Korean blockbuster’ established itself as a feasible production/marketing strategy within the South Korean domestic market” (p. 7) in the late 1990s. The growth both in qualitative and quantitative terms, however, cannot solely account for the popularity of Korean cultural products, considering the long-standing influence of and preference for their Japanese and Hollywood counterpart.



Figure 2: *Shiri* (1999), the first ‘Korean blockbuster’



Figure 3: *Joint Security Area* (2000), directed by Park Chan-Wook

Of course, with the massive investment of the government and of the private culture industry, Korean cultural products made a great deal of progress. But it is inappropriate to attribute its success exclusively to that factor. Rather, as Shim (2008) points out, it will be more convincing to say that “the international market conditions worked favorably for the exports of Korean television dramas which were gradually improving in commercial quality” (p. 25). Indeed, with the waning popularity of Japanese dramas in Taiwan, Taiwanese importers began to import cheaper Korean television dramas to fill this opening. As Chua and Iwabuchi argue (2008, p. 4), the post-1997

Asian financial crisis “contributed to the stepping up of exporting of Korean pop culture as part of the national export industry.” And it also led television to look for cheaper programs than the relatively expensive Japanese dramas. As Kim Hyun-Mee (2003) contends, the Korean cultural products were one of the commodities that could fill out the cultural void of the Asian region.

Along with the investment of the government and private sector, another process that should be taken into account to explain the competence of the Korean cultural industry is regulation. The most notable official regulation imposed to protect Korean culture was the total ban — which began in 1945 and had been maintained since Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule — on all Japanese cultural products. This ban was not removed until 1998, when Korea and Japan signed the Joint Declaration of the New 21st Century Korea-Japan Partnership (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008, p. 3). By 1999, Japanese films that had been circulated at film festivals could earn distribution rights in Korea. In 2004, Japanese films of all ratings were allowed. The last to be imported were Japanese TV variety shows, including comedy shows and anime feature films, which gained permission in 2004 and 2006, respectively (Choi, 2010, p. 4). Thus it took six years for the Korean government to completely open its door to Japanese popular culture (D. H. Lee, 2008, p. 157). It is understandable in this regard that the Japanese commentators reacted to the ban by complaining that it has been decades since the Japanese fashion

magazine *Non-No*, as Japanese newspapers argued, has been the textbook for Korean youth (J. I. Lee, 1998, January 24).

It should be noted, however, that the total ban was not very effective in reality. As Chua (2004) points out, the “Korean popular culture industry appears to be the most influenced by the standards of Japanese production.” That is, Korea has continuously and secretly “copied,” “partially integrated,” “plagiarized,” “mixed,” and “reproduced” Japanese cultural products (p. 207). As Do Jung-II, a respected Korean literary critic argued:

We [Korea] firmly lock and bar front doors but leave our back doors wide open. With our left hands we indignantly slap away any offers but we are busy snatching at any opportunities with our right. This has been our society’s attitude toward popular Japanese culture during the last 30 years’ (Kim Hyun-Mee, 2002, p. 1, as cited in Chua, 2006, p. 207).

On the other hand, restrictions on Hollywood cultural products have been less regulatory than the Japanese ones. In 1962, Park Chung-Hee enacted the Motion Picture Law, “which served as the film industry’s regulatory blueprint” with the aim of accelerating the industrialization of the Korean motion picture business, a year after he succeeded in his military coup (Paquet, 2009, p. 45). Park had protected local films to some degree from competition against Hollywood by means of import quotas and other governmental regulations. Foreign distributors could only sell release rights to Korean companies but that restriction has been lifted since 1998, with the sixth revision of the

Motion Picture Law, due to the persistent lobbying of the Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA). American distributors, including UIP, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century Fox, Columbia and Disney, have been allowed to establish branch offices in Korea and to operate in the Korean market without any restrictions (p. 42).

The Korean government's "last-resort attempt to protect" (Choi, 2010, p. 7) its film industry is the screen quota allotted for domestically produced films. In 1986, after the sixth revision of the Motion Picture Law, major Hollywood studios received permission to directly distribute their products, and in 2006, the Korean government finally agreed to reduce the screen quota from 146 to 73 days for the Free Trade Agreement between the US and Korea. As a reaction to this revision of the MPL, Korean actors and filmmakers had a 'protest relay' in downtown Seoul. The protest relay lasted for months (Choi, 2010, pp. 1-3; Paquet, 2009). An interesting thing to note here is that the logic of protecting cultural diversity used in the protest was not applied in the domestic film industry. It is now common knowledge in Korea that the number of screens for 'small' films is constantly declining due to the oligopoly of production, investment, and distribution system by four big companies — Cinema Service, CJ Entertainment, Showbox Inc., and Lotte Cinema. The protection of cultural diversity as the cause of the screen quota was, indeed, much like the language of patriarchal nationalism that has simultaneously functioned as a protector and an oppressor of the 'nation.'

What also should be stressed when we think of the Korean Wave is that the role of regulatory policies imposed by each Asian government cannot be underestimated as

consumption-centered analyses might do. As Park No-Ja (2005, June 21) points out, governments under socialist regimes still maintain almost absolute control in deciding what kinds of cultural products are to be imported. He contends that one of the reasons that Korean cultural products can be broadcasted in such countries as China and Vietnam is the governments' tacit approval based on the recognition that Korean cultural products, compared to Japanese and Hollywood counterparts, have less politically and ideologically disruptive elements. Indeed, the mainstream discourse on the Korean Wave tends to omit the dynamics between the cultural products and governmental regulations in order to foreground the role of Korean cultural products' edge or superiority over the locally produced ones as the cause of the proliferation of Korean culture in those countries.

CONSUMPTION

It is not only Koreans who say that Korean dramas “dramatically changed the image of Korea in Japan” (Hirata, 2008, p. 145). Setting aside this statement's ideological function for a moment, we can find a good deal of empirical research which supports the role of Korean cultural products in changing the image of Korea. One empirical survey conducted in 2004, for instance, reported that approximately 60% of Chinese who had been exposed to Korean dramas came to have a positive image of Korea. The same agency also conducted polls twice during the same period in Japan, and found a similar trend had occurred in that country as well. In 2004, about 61% of Japanese said they had

watched Korean dramas and the rate rose to 67.7% after two years. About 42.5% of Japanese said their perception and impression of Korea changed in a positive manner after they watched Korean dramas (H. K. Kang, 2009, May 6). It may be true that Korean dramas dramatically changed the image of Korea, as respondents replied to the questionnaire, but this is often used by Korean nationalists to conceal lingering structural problems by not talking about dark sides of the Korean culture industry such as the extremely low salary of film-making staff and the ‘page script’ system in television drama production, which gives actors lines for the day’s shooting only — sometimes actors and actresses do not receive scripts until after they finish their makeup (Chung, 2007, December 31).

Analyzing the “three genres of public discourse that articulate the meanings of the Korean Wave” in Taiwan, the Taiwanese scholar Yang (2008) describes the way in which the mainstream “economic” discourse in Taiwan refers to *qing* (情) in Korean dramas as a key to the success of Korean television dramas. *Qing*, a kind of emotional bond, means in the discourse “amicable relationship and ethical relationship” that include “relationships among family members, friends, teachers-students, and even love for the nation and humankind in general.” According to Yang, this discourse signifies *qing* as what “gives new strength to Korean dramas and films and gives birth to the Korean Wave in the world” (p. 194-196).



Figure 4: *Dae Jang Geum (Jewel in the Palace, 2003-2004)*

This is an interesting point given the Korean literary critic Baek Ji-Un's (2006) discrepant diagnosis that "setting aside historical dramas such as *Dae Jang Geum (Jewel in the Palace)*," most Korean "trendy" dramas are based on "western/modern tastes and have imitated and absorbed Japanese trendy dramas" (p. 5). This contradiction, however, does not stem from a mere perspectival difference. In fact, it is not hard to find this kind of interpretation adopted by the mainstream Taiwanese discourse in the reception of the Korean Wave. As Yang points out, the Taiwanese discourse uses "the Korean wave as a reference point to think about the cultural policies in Taiwan" (p. 200). In this process, valuable tradition such as *qing* and filial piety that Korean dramas are assumed to have preserved are regarded as what Taiwanese people have lost, despite the fact that those values originally belong to Confucianism and should be protected by Chinese

descendants. It is not hard to see, in this regard, similar reactions to Korean cultural products in the People's Republic of China.

Although the backdrops of Korean TV dramas are modern, the narrative structure is quite traditional. Most of them show Westernized aspects, but retain Eastern ways of interpretation, tolerance, and beauty. (*People's Daily*, November 17, 2005, as cited in K. W. Yoon, 2006, p.52)

The core of the Korean Wave is Confucianism. Korea has preserved and developed the Confucianism, which is our cultural heritage. We must reflect on ourselves. (*People's Daily*, January 20, 2005, as cited in K. W. Yoon, 2006, p. 53)

Separating the Korean dramas' modern forms from their 'traditional' contents, commentators frequently describe the Korean Wave as a manifestation of Korean culture that embodies Confucian tradition. The articles of the *People's Daily*, the official organ of the Chinese Communist Party, are not as much an expression of admiration for the Korean culture per se as they seem to be. Rather, it is more convincing to see them as the rhetoric of a nationalist strategy to reassert the cultural identity of China while foregrounding valuable 'Eastern' culture and Confucianism as originating in China. This view, however, is not limited to the official organ of the Chinese government. The Chinese media scholar Zhu (2008) argues:

The popularity of Korean dramas in China has a lot to do with the shows' underlining Confucian ethos that values reverence for the elderly and for the bonds of marriage. Unlike the Japanese trendy and pure love dramas in which

young single professionals predominate, Korean trendy dramas are mostly set in a multi-generation household where people co-habit harmoniously and where spouses and lovers remain loyal to each other. We see in Korean dramas a rare synthesis of modern lifestyles with Confucian moral and ethical codes. (p. 91)

Again, this is an interpretation that contradicts the Korean cultural anthropologist Cho-Han's analysis, and that also contradicts the mainstream discourse in Korea. "Although this view may be valid when we only think of Korean cultural products produced in the 1980s," she argues, this is not the case anymore (Cho-Han, 2002, p. 19-20).

Another trend to be noted here is that, within institutionalized Korean academia, very few studies have focused on Korean audiences' reception of 'foreign' cultural products. Given the universal and long-standing influence of Hollywood and the 'unofficial' penetration of Japanese popular culture, we can say that the element of 'consumption' in the cultural circuit has had a relatively low epistemological status in the discipline of Korean media studies (a notable exception is H. M. Kim, 2003). It is striking to see, then, the exploding number of empirical studies on Asian peoples' consumption of the Korean Wave.

One may argue that, especially in the case of Japanese culture, what can be called a consumer group or a critical mass did not exist in Korea because of the official restrictions on imports of Japanese cultural products. However, I argue that the absence of audience studies on Korean consumers has less correlation with the ban than with the deep-rooted recognition of 'commercialized and obscene elements inherent in Hollywood

and Japanese culture' as a harmful, 'third-grade' culture. Especially, Japan as the "envious enemy" (S. M. Han, 2001, p. 195) often entails Korean audience's ambivalent reaction to Japanese culture, marked by simultaneous contempt and desire, as Do Jung-II has pointed out.

Not only has Japanese culture profoundly affected the narrative forms of Korean television via the informal routes of copying, there has been the informal circulation of Japanese cultural products in Korea, which has generated spontaneous acts of fandom (D. H. Lee, 2008, p. 157). According to Lee Dong-Hoo, in 2004, there were 549 Internet communities related to Japanese TV dramas at Daum, one of Korea's largest Internet portals (p. 157-158). Also, in terms of *Manhwa*, the comic book industry (the Korean equivalent of *Manga*), the pirated contents of Japanese *Manga*, which have been regarded the primary source of 'obscene and lowbrow' Japanese culture, were extremely popular among comic book fans, and after the official ban was lifted, Japanimation account for nearly 100% of the market share in the Korean *Manhwa* industry (W. G. Lee, 2006, October 24). It can be said, accordingly, that 'foreign' cultural products, assumed to be adulterated culture as opposed to the relatively pure Korean culture, have not been an appropriate object of academic research until the 'consumption' of culture started to be recognized as an important part of Korean media studies with the advent of the Korean Wave.

The concept of cultural proximity also needs to be briefly examined, given that it has functioned as one of the most powerful theoretical frameworks to explain the Korean

Wave at its early stage of emergence, and that it also poses some theoretical issues regarding the question of identity that I will deal with in the next section. The concept of cultural proximity was developed by Straubhaar (1991) to explain the larger cultural contexts which affect the audiences' selective processes, especially in the case of Latin America. According to Straubhaar (2003),

The idea of cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 1991) tries to explain why television production is growing within Latin America and other regions of the world at both the national and regional levels. The argument, building on Pool (1977), is that all other things being equal, audiences will tend to prefer programming that is closest or most proximate to their own culture: national programming if it can be supported by the local economy. (p. 80)

As we can see from the title of Straubhaar's work *Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity* (1991), the adoption of the concept of cultural proximity is part of a larger theoretical project challenging the cultural (media) imperialism thesis which had been the dominant paradigm until 1970s in international communication studies. *Telenovela* was the counter-evidence against the cultural imperialism thesis that assumed the one-way flow of cultural products from center to periphery, from the First World — usually the US — to the Third World. According to Straubhaar (1991), “Brazil was one of the first Third World countries to succeed in substituting its own television production for U.S. imports” (p. 52).

At the center of the concept lies the rejection of cultural imperialism, which has underestimated the active role of the audience in the process of reception or meaning-

making. And the most immediate reaction to this concept is one suggested by Oliveira (1993), who argues that “the *telenovela* phenomenon is far from representing a reaction against an imported worldview.” That is, the Brazilian *telenovela* cannot be regarded as an authentic “national” program in the sense that it “exemplifies the creolization of US cultural products” (p. 119). His emphasis on how the programs of the Third World are still reproducing the Westernized “values, norms, patterns of behavior, and models of social relations” (p. 119) is of course directly applicable to the Korean Wave, which comes from another former cultural periphery. A similar point is also made by Kraidy (2005), who writes that “in global media research, the ‘local’ often connotes cultural authenticity” and that the notion of “the local as unadulterated is fundamental to the concept of cultural proximity,” which “risks reducing culture to the idea of tradition” (p. 142).

IDENTITY

Regarding the element of identity in the circuit of culture, we can pose two different but interrelated questions; one is about the identity of the Korean Wave and Korean cultural products and the other is about the cultural identity of East Asia. As we have seen in the consumption of different Asian peoples, we can propose the question about whether there is an identifiable essence or core values threading through the individual Korean cultural products. Is there anything uniquely Korean embodied in those cultural products? Shin provides a clear answer to the question, saying that Korean

popular culture is “a regional variant of [commodified] global pop culture” which in reality contains “nothing uniquely Korean” (H. J. Shin, 2005, as cited in K. Lee, 2008, p. 184). He says that there is no such thing as distinctive Koreanness in those commodified cultural products, and therefore, the wide appeal of the Korean Wave draws on something other than the essentialized attributes of Korean culture.

What has engendered the thriving popularity of the Korean Wave, then? Explaining the wide popularity of Japanese TV dramas in East/South Asian countries, Iwabuchi (2004) answers, rejecting the notion that Asian peoples’ “perception of ‘cultural proximity’ in a primordial sense” drives the Japanese culture’s popularity:

the specific meaning audiences favorably perceive through Japanese youth drama should not be regarded as something that is “Japanese” or “Asian” in any essentialist meaning, any more than a mere duplication of Western modernity. (p. 12)

Given the characteristics of Korean cultural products as the substitute for more expensive Japanese counterparts, the putative essence of the Korean value of the Korean Wave is a much less relevant factor than the “Asian modernity,” if not essentially and distinctively ‘Asian values,’ being experienced contemporaneously by Asian people (Iwabuchi, 2004, p. 12-13). Then, how do we understand the following reaction of an organ of the Chinese government to the Korean Wave?

Korean culture and Chinese culture are relatively proximate and both of them are part of Asian culture. It is for this reason that we can easily accept [the Korean Wave]. (*China Youth Daily*, October 8, 2003 as cited in K. W. Yoon, 2006, p. 52)

It is not unusual to hear, both in Korean and other Asian countries, that the so-called 'Asian values' such as filial piety and Confucianism along with the enhanced aesthetic quality of Korean cultural products enabled the Korean Wave to resonate with Asian viewers. It is tempting to believe those reactions at face value. But a more fundamental problem of the concept of cultural proximity is that the very concept is based on an irresolvable distinction between cultures. Culture, of course, has a naturalized connection to the "naturally" given place, and through this process "space functions as a central organizing principle in the social sciences at the same time that it disappears from analytical purview" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 34).

It is important to ask, therefore, as Wallerstein (1997) did, "why are the boundaries drawn where they are drawn?" (p. 94). The mainstream discourse in Korea tries to exploit the economic benefits that the Korean Wave may generate and to reassert the Korean national identity by imagining the Korean Wave as a homogeneous group of products bearing the core of Korean culture, and as a demonstration of the Korean nation's cultural potential. The Korean Wave in this nationalist discourse functions as a source of Korean cultural identity and national pride. Indeed, the condition of existence for a nationalist movement is not the immutable and solid national identity. Precisely to the contrary, nationalist movements' goal is to make one, because they do not have such a thing as a solid core of national identity and point of reference.

On the other hand, analyses that link the Korean Wave to the culture of East Asia are in most cases predicated on a nostalgic concept of cultural proximity marked by Confucian values such as *qing* and filial piety. However, as we all know, not all the people have the same political purpose. China's official discourse may use the link between the Korean Wave and East Asian cultural identity for the purpose of 'othering' Japanese and American cultures by incorporating the Korean Wave into the Confucian tradition, which 'originally' belongs to China. In the case of Taiwanese mainstream discourse, as Yang (2008) suggests, it may use the Korean Wave to "warn the Taiwanese public of the urgency to join the globalization march" (p. 197) by foregrounding the cultural progress of Korea, which "occup[ies] the same temporality" (p. 196). The Korean nationalist projects are mainly concerned with cooperation and harmony with Japan and China by securing Korea's status in 'the three East Asian countries.' In the mainstream discourse, for instance, Mongolia has never been incorporated in this category, despite its geographical location.

It can be said in this regard that the culturalists' attempt in Korea not to be captured by the dominant nationalist way of understanding the Korean Wave is valuable. As Lee Keehyeung (2008) describes it,

the culturalist position attempts to bring in a much more critical and politicized reading of the *Hanryu* phenomenon by foregrounding the issues which are often disregarded or downplayed by mainstream discourse on *Hanryu*: the possibility of cross-cultural or transborder dialogues from below that can be mediated through *Hanryu* texts and their audiences in various geopolitical regions. (p. 185)

It is not at all clear, however, why these “cross-cultural or transborder dialogues from below” have not been proposed until the emergence of Korean Wave. Nor is it clear why the Korean culture, the *Hanryu*, has to be placed at the center of this cultural exchange and why other cultures cannot mediate the dialogues. While a kind of ‘authentic’ or ‘true’ culture as the opposition to commodified cultural products is suggested, dialogues centering on Vietnamese or Japanese culture ‘from below’ have rarely been envisaged by these culturalists.

THE KOREAN WAVE, EAST ASIA, AND THE KOREAN NATION

Briefly analyzing the discourses on the Korean Wave, what I have tried to reveal is not the ‘problems’ of those discourses per se, but rather the logic of ‘nation’ which is threading through the discourses. Simply put, ‘nation’ operates when the Korean Wave is understood as a cultural phenomenon, not as the pursuit of profits by the Korean government and media companies. As mentioned above, a majority of both the academic and journalistic literature on the Korean Wave revolves around an obviously nationalist perspective. The centrality of the Korean nation was not much different in the East Asia discourse. As Kim Seong-Ki (2004, October 7) argues, this position can easily be a “vicious circle in which even the attempt to stand outside of national egoism is immediately recaptured by that” (para. 4).

It could be a mere illusion, therefore, that we can be completely free from 'exclusive' nationalism by conceiving the category of East Asia. To what extent can 'nation' be eliminated? If it is impossible to dismiss 'nation' even in the discourses of East Asia, how do we deal with it? The profound mechanism of 'othering' practices must be examined in order to answer these questions.

As we can see from the appellation of East Asianism, the 'Other' that plays a key role in creating the category of East Asia is the 'West.' In order to overcome the West, the most urgent necessity becomes the affiliation between Asian countries which is based on cultural proximity. Then, what is the identity of East Asia? Are there discernable attributes by which the category can be made? Can it be objectively differentiated from the West? Kim Kwang-Eok (1999) argues,

In most case, the substance of East Asia discourses is reduced to the attributes such as tradition of Confucianism, the Chinese character as a source of ideas and a medium for communication, unification between nature and human being, organismic world view, circular way of thinking instead of linear one, and so forth. ... Indeed, the attributes are not new in that those are defined as non-Western by the West. (p. 164)

Therefore, the Orientalist terms are being continuously reproduced, although the hierarchal status of the Oriental has been repositioned. It is obvious, however, that we cannot think of the major nation-states that constitute East Asia without modernity, the core of the West. As Kim Kwang-Eok (1999) contends, that kind of classification makes us forget the fact that those attributes are "universal principles also embraced by other

regions and communities in the world” (p. 165). That is, the binary opposition of West and East “fossilizes ‘culture’” (p. 165) by ignoring its internal multiplicity and fluidity.

In this context, the East Asia discourses based on putative common attributes are the result of categorization marked by unstable and fluid boundaries. The East Asianism in Korea tends to recognize China and Japan both as partners to affiliate with and as competitors to overcome. Here, the premise is that Korea has to try to protect its cultural identity amidst these two big neighbors, finding a way to associate with them, given their power. In contrast, the other Asian countries such as Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand, and so forth, referred to as objects of the Korean Wave, are rarely mentioned as same-level partners in the category of East Asia. Unlike Japan and China, they, the mere objects of the Korean Wave, are ‘others’ and hardly regarded as important resources for ‘East Asian culture.’ There is no room for Southeast Asian nations; there are only three North East Asian nations in ‘East Asia.’

Accordingly, the East Asia discourse show the aspect of indispensable othering practice of the Korean Wave-related discourses which has to center the Korean nation. In this case, East Asia is a multilayered category constructed by various othering practices which have different objects such as the West, Japan and China, and other East Asian countries. The axis of this category which has fluid boundaries is, of course, the Korean nation. The East Asia discourses, if not ‘nationalist’ in the way that the mainstream discourses are, cannot escape the orbit around the Korean nation.

Chapter 3: Technology, Development, and Nationalism

Another noticeable realm in which nationalist languages are frequently found and adopted is that of science and technology. It might seem somewhat ironic to see the seemingly ‘pure’ or ‘neutral’ realm of science and technology in relation to nationalism, which is assumed to belong to the realm of ‘the social’ or ideology as opposed to the natural or truth (see Latour, 1993). However, as history and sociology of science have revealed, science and technology are far from being autonomous or independent determinant of human progress, unlike the beliefs of technological determinism. Rather, the introduction, development, final form, and use of technology hinge upon the existing power relations in society (Pinch, Bijker, & Hughes, 1987).

The beliefs in the role of technology, especially that of ICTs, indeed, are not unique to Korea. For instance, since the late 1990s, the so-called ICT4D approach has been widely adopted by the development projects — including partnership with private corporations — of bi- or multi-lateral international institutions and NGOs (Leye, 2007; Mercer, 2006; Wilkins & Waters, 2000). Prominent among these projects are Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force), the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS, the two-phase summit in Geneva in December 2003 and in Tunis in November 2005) and the World IT Forum (WITFOR) (Avgerou, 2003).

The question is, then, why do they so enthusiastically seek to implement such projects? Through what mechanism are ICTs assumed to exert significant effects in the process of ‘development’ or ‘social change?’ What potential of ICTs do these

organizations/institutions discover? The answers are closely intertwined with how they define the ‘development, ‘problem,’ and the role of ICTs. This chapter is thus concerned with how the predominant techno-deterministic view is entangled with the imperative of national development. It is in this sense that ‘iPhone fever’ in Korea and widely held beliefs in the role of science and technology in national development are to be analyzed throughout this chapter.

“IPHONE SHAKES UP KOREA”

The iPhone launched in South Korea in November of 2009. In some sense it is very strange that Korea, which has boasted about being one of the world’s most advanced ICT infrastructures, adopted one of the world’s most popular technological gadgets almost three years after its release in the U.S. The obvious hurdle was the WIPI (Wireless Internet Platform for Interoperability), a ‘homemade’ standard middleware platform mandated for all data-enabled mobile phones sold in Korea. The WIPI had functioned as a legal and technical barrier to ‘foreign’ makers; to enter the Korean market, the powerful international mobile phone manufacturers such as Nokia and Sony-Ericsson could sell only a few modified products out of their whole line-up, which resulted in their failure in the Korean market. Only after the Korea Communications Commission (KCC), the central regulator for broadcasting and telecommunications, had abolished WIPI requirements could KT — the second-largest mobile service provider by subscribers and revenue — begin to offer the iPhone.

Since the iPhone's debut in Korea, over 600,000 units have been sold in just five months (S. H. Hong, 2010, April 29). Given that the total population of South Korea is 47 million, this is the most noticeable aspect of what people call 'iPhone fever' (Y. C. Kim, 2010c) in Korea. Korean newspapers devoted a great deal of space to reports comparing the iPhone with other 'Korean' smartphones. The market share of Samsung Electronics and other domestic mobile phone makers has declined and critiques of the closedness of Korean IT policies (e.g., the WIPI) have been widely circulated. Most ICT-related Web communities and blogs have also dealt with the iPhone 'shock,' providing their own analyses as to why its introduction was delayed and how it will change the Korean IT industry. The iPhone, thus, was not just another smartphone introduced to Korea. It has sparked enormous social debate ranging from critiques of the Korean government and IT companies to analyses of deeper structural problems in Korea; it truly "shook up" Korea (Ramstad, 2009, November 27).

The iPhone, in this sense, was not just a technologically innovative smartphone whose effects are limited solely to the realm of IT industry. Rather, it should be understood as a social phenomenon. Thus this analysis does not aim to provide a description of the iPhone as a technologically innovative smartphone or its 'determining effects' on Korean society and the everyday life of ordinary Koreans, nor does it understand the iPhone phenomenon as mere "symptoms," in Raymond Williams' (1974, p. 6) terms, of overall social change. Rather, it is an attempt to understand how a

technology is represented and signified in the society by examining its broader historical and political contexts and power dynamics.

This chapter, therefore, begins by analyzing the characteristics of current discourses on the iPhone presented by various social actors. As we will see, the dominant framework of mainstream mass media, which resonates with the interests of giant ‘Korean’ companies, is clearly distinguished from that of netizens. If we can see the ‘iPhone effects’ as a discourse, as Foucault (1990) argues, the iPhone discourse shows that it “can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (p.101).

ATTACKING THE IPHONE, OR DEFENDING KOREA?

Although the function of the WIPI as a technological/legal barrier was obvious, how the barrier was able to be maintained against users’ huge expectation for the iPhone is not clear, nor is it clear how the WIPI was terminated and iPhone could be introduced. Some have suggested collusion between Samsung Electronics and SK Telecom, which is the Korea’s largest mobile service provider as well as the biggest seller of Samsung’s handsets in Korea, as the reason for the iPhone’s delayed launch (H. J. Lim, 2010, January 6). Others have criticized “arrogant Apple” (Koo, 2009a) for refusing to modify the iPhone at the request of Korean telecommunications companies; Apple ignored the “Korean rule,” and thus, they contend, was very disrespectful to Korean customers.

Korean netizens, in contrast, blamed the KCC and its regulation which helped the domestic mobile phone manufacturers and telecom companies to maintain an unfair oligopoly that limited users' free choice. Regarding the iPhone's arrival in Korea, it is generally accepted that KT's role was critical, because offering the iPhone was its most important strategy to challenge the first-ranked SK Telecom.

The main concern of most Korean newspapers, however, seemed to be the iPhone's 'effects' on the 'Korean market.' And most of them tended to highlight the match-up between the Samsung Omnia II and the iPhone. In this process, such military terms as 'war,' 'raid,' 'defense force,' 'landing,' and so on were frequently used. The enemy was of course the iPhone, and our force is Samsung. Through this rhetoric, the iPhone's missing features or its known/potential technical problems were constantly stressed, whereas new/distinctive features of Samsung's new lineup of phones were underlined or closely/vividly described.

Omnia II, however, is worth its higher price [than the iPhone]. It is equipped with a 3.7 inch AMOLED display, and its CPU is 800MHz, a processor that is faster than the iPhone's by 30%. Its technical specifications overwhelm the iPhone's, allegedly a "computer in your hands." ... Although the existence of the App Store compensates for the iPhone's shortcomings, only a small number of current apps support the Korean language.... In addition, unlike most 3G phones, it is incapable of video calling, even though it uses a 3G network. Users cannot replace its internal battery because it does not have the standard 20-pin charging system. Therefore, it might annoy users because they can't charge it anywhere they want. (D. H. Kim, 2009, November 19)

The number of Korean-language applications [for the iPhone] is extremely small, whereas the number of the Omnia's applications has reached 10,000, so users can download them right now.... The technical details of the Omnia II are overwhelming. Its spacious 3.7 inch AMOLED screen shows great resolution, and the default Divx player, which allows users to watch movies without cumbersome converting file formats, is really convenient. ... Users should keep in mind that the iPhone's internal battery is not replaceable. (D. G. Lee, 2009, November 19)

While the iPhone is loaded with a lot of impressive functions and applications, it is very inconvenient in not having DMB, considering Koreans' taste. Because of its internal battery, users can't charge it anywhere unless they carry the charger. First and foremost, users can't expect convenient and reliable "after service," as with Korean products. Apple Korea was once criticized for its conservative repair policies. (B. Y. Jun, 2009, November 25)

As various smartphones have been introduced, good "after service" is becoming a critical criterion for users' choice. Samsung and LG, which share over 90% of the Korean mobile phone market, have 160 and 123 customer service centers, respectively, that provide quick and convenient service. (Koo, 2009b)

In these news articles, commonly presented strengths of the Samsung Omnia II are Samsung's reliable 'A/S' policy (which refer to after-sales service and repairing centers in Korea), its faster CPU, the larger number applications in Korean, its easy charging system, DMB (Digital Multimedia Broadcasting, a very popular mobile TV service that lets users watch terrestrial TV programs using their cell phones or GPS devices for free), AMOLED, and so on. As we will see, the focus on the Omnia II's comparative advantages in terms of hardware specs is harshly criticized by netizens. Among the technical keywords used in newspaper articles on the subject, the AMOLED (Active-Matrix Organic Light-Emitting Diode), which is a 'first in the world' display

technology created by Samsung Electronics, was one of the most intensively emphasized. Because it was one of the relative strengths of the Samsung Omnia II relative to the iPhone's touch screen based on TFT LCD, most newspapers highlighted Samsung's 'world's first' technology as one of the advantages of Omnia II.

What is interesting is that most newspapers, including the Internet media that have become young Koreans' main channel for accessing news, contain almost the same contents under almost the same headlines when they report on Samsung's new products or 'world's first' technologies. For instance, when Samsung showed its 'first in the world' Super AMOLED at the 2010 Mobile World Congress (MWC), most Korean newspapers had the almost same headlines ("Samsung Electronics revealed Super AMOLED at MWC 2010") and contents for the articles released on February 7 and 8. A search for the keyword Super AMOLED using the most popular search engine in Korea, NAVER, revealed that more than twenty newspapers and internet media (*Asia Economy; Asia Today; Aving News; Beta News; Break News; Digital Times; EBN; Economy Today; Financial News; Hankook Kyoungje; I-News; IT Daily; JoongAng Ilbo; K-Mobile; Maeil Economy; Money Today; Morning News; Naeil Shinmun; Pusan Ilbo; Yeonhap News*) reported the story under the almost same headline, describing the features and superiority of Super AMOLED, which is "five times brighter than AMOLED." It seems obvious that the same source from Samsung almost dictated the article to those newspapers. This fact, considering the amount of articles comparing Omnia II and iPhone that disproportionately favored the Omnia II over the iPhone, shows Samsung's vast influence

on the Korean media as a “second filter” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Samsung Electronics, the biggest subsidiary company of the Samsung Group, was the Korean newspaper industry’s biggest advertiser in 2009 (J. H. Lee, 2010, February 3).

The mainstream newspapers’ frame of ‘what the iPhone cannot do’ usually does not mention the explicit problems of Samsung or LG products posed by netizens. In this process of emphasizing the iPhone’s problems, the products of ‘IT Korea’ are assumed to have relatively fewer problems and they are unconsciously or intentionally positioned on the side of ‘Korea.’ In a similar vein, the Samsung Omnia is frequently represented as the “defender” (Yoo, 2007, October 2) and domestic smartphones as the iPhone’s “competitors” or “killers” (D. G. Lee, 2009, November 19), trying to protect Korean customers from Apple, which threatens the “mobile sovereignty” of Korea. Further, the antagonist is “not Apple but the U.S.,” which established a “cultural empire” (K. B. Lee, 2009, November 30).

In contrast, in this predominant frame, the problems with Samsung products constantly noted by netizens are not mentioned, and the fact that 43% of iPhone users are those who switched from Samsung mobile phones has rarely been reported by the mainstream mass media in Korea (Jun, 2009, November 25). The ‘A/S’ system, the alleged strength of Omnia I and II, was not satisfactory according to real users. Samsung did not support the operating system (OS) upgrade for Omnia, although constant OS upgrades is the most important demand of smartphone users. Moreover, Samsung’s Omnia the Show, the handset released by KT (the iPhone carrier), was even excluded

from Samsung's OS upgrade list. Samsung's hardware-centered arms race that made previous models obsolete in just two months was also criticized because it means that anyone who wants to use the latest and stable OS has to purchase the latest handset (Koo, 2010, April 28).

What is ironic is that 'iPhone fever' was not entirely bad for Samsung Electronics. During the 'crisis,' the former boss of Samsung, Lee Kun-Hee, returned to the head of the company. Because he stepped down in April 2008 after being charged with tax evasion and breach of trust — three months before being handed a three-year suspended sentence — the civil sector severely criticized the "return of the King" (Samsung chief returns after tax-evasion pardon, 2010, March 24). His return was justified, however, by the claim that Lee, a reinstated member of International Olympic Committee (IOC), could help Korea's bid to host the 2018 Winter Olympics, the same reason for which he was given a presidential pardon at the end of 2009. Also ironically, thanks to Apple's iPod and iPhone, Samsung Electronics may have drastically increased its revenue because it is the largest NAND Flash chip provider for the iPod and iPhone. In 2004, Samsung Electronics' chief operating officer (COO) Lee Jae-Yong, Lee Kun-Hee's eldest son, proposed to Steve Jobs that Apple use Samsung's flash memory chips as the iPod's storage instead of Toshiba's hard disk, and Apple accepted Samsung's proposal. After that, sales of the iPod drastically increased and thus Samsung's semiconductor business increased too. As its flash memory chips were also adopted in the iPhone, Samsung's revenue in semiconductor has surged with the iPhone's global hit (K. N. Baek, 2009,

November 16). As a result, according to Samsung's estimate, its first-quarter net profit reached 3.99 trillion *won* (\$3.6 billion) up from 582.2 billion *won* a year earlier. Sales also increased 20.8% to 34.64 trillion *won* (Y. C. Kim, 2010a). Samsung has also received a large order for the displays being used in Apple's iPad, and the deal is expected to be worth \$240 million (Y. C. Kim, 2010b).

Another widely used trope was that of 'the crisis of IT Korea' which has been circulated especially since Apple released the iPad. As the iPhone has 'swept' Korea, the media are concerned about the status of 'IT Korea,' and present the evidence of the injured 'pride of Korea.' According to those newspapers, the lingering problems include the unequal contract conditions between the *chaebol* — Korean business conglomerates marked by family ownership, monopoly, and many subsidiary companies, the most powerful of which are Samsung and Hyundai — and mid- or small-size tech companies, as well as Korea's technological dependency on foreign companies such as Qualcomm, to which Samsung and LG have paid royalty for its core chipset of cell phones. The most dangerous problem is Korea's incompetency in terms of software and contents business, which has given Apple huge revenues. According to this rhetoric, if Samsung and other domestic IT companies cannot recognize and do not correct those problems, it will lead to the 'fall of IT Korea.'

What needs to be noted here is that these 'problems' are long-standing situations — that is, they were never 'problems' before the iPhone shook up Korea and the iPad was released in the U.S. Other international titans such as Nokia and Sony Ericsson have

landed in Korea, of course, but they have stumbled because their products' distinctive features had to be removed in order to meet the legal requirements. They were not a serious threat. But Apple rejected the requirements of the Korean telecom companies and the KCC (i.e., the WIPI) and this was hailed by the fascinated Korean smartphone users. In other words, with the launch of the iPhone, taken-for-granted — and even desirable — business strategies and governmental policies began to be presented and perceived as problems threatening 'IT Korea.' And 'the crisis of Korea' usually means the crisis of large Korean IT companies. Because Apple is shifting the paradigm of IT industry, if 'we' fail to make innovative contents-centered products like the iPad and focus only on network or hardware, IT Korea will be marginalized as a mere manufacturer or provider of simple parts for those products. In particular, according to this argument, the exclusive focus on "world-class technology" or creating "world's first" products that ignore the customers' needs and the importance of software is a profound problem (Jun & Oh, 2010, January 29).

In the global market, they have to recognize the fact that we are no longer the leader. IT Korea can be marginalized.... We need to face up to reality. We need to take back the pride of IT Korea through cooperation between the government and corporations. (IPad shock awakens 'IT Korea', 2010, January 29)

In terms of core technologies, we are still dependent on them.... While the sales of handsets increased, net income has decreased because of this fact. (J. H. Park, 2010, January 29)

The pride of the “powerful manufacturer of cell phones” blinded us to the great tide of change. It is the matter of time until we are marginalized from the center of “IT Power” unless we make decisive changes. (Are we just a spectator?, 2010, January 29)

The Ministry of Knowledge Economy acknowledged that Korea fell behind in terms of software and contents, while it still maintains its status as a powerful hardware maker of semiconductors and LCDs. We cannot call Korea the true IT Power. We all know that the market for software exceeds the hardware market, but Korean companies are swimming against the stream. (Ko & Lee, 2010, February 4)

These articles have finally ‘discovered’ the blind spots or problems of ‘IT Korea’ after the release of the iPhone and iPad. Yet the problems that made users turn their back on ‘Korean’ companies’ products have been concealed under the name of IT Korea and by astonishing numbers supporting it. For instance, the high rate of data usage was the major source of Korean telecom companies’ revenue. The three mobile service carriers — SK Telecom, KT, and LG Telecom — “are generating around 2.8 trillion *won* (\$2.5 billion) in combined mobile data revenue” (T. H. Kim, 2009, November 23). Under the WIPI regulation, to protect their revenue, they did not allow cell phones to connect to the Internet through Wi-Fi, which is one of the main features of the iPhone.

It also needs to be noted that the issue of dependency on foreign software was not new either. One of the main issues of the Korean Internet environment was its dependency on Microsoft’s Internet Explorer Web browser, because almost all governmental organizations and financial institutions in Korea support only Internet Explorer, which uses a particular framework called Active X. As a result, in order for

Korean Internet users to use public Web services and Internet banking services, they have to install an Active X control in their computers by using a combination of MS Windows and Internet Explorer. Most Korean e-commerce transactions also support only the Internet Explorer based on Active X control; people using other Web browsers such as Firefox, Chrome, or Safari, or other operating systems such as Linux and Mac OS X could not use those sites. The notorious Active X technology, however, has been revealed to have serious problems in terms of security, and even Microsoft has announced that it will minimize the use of Active X control in its forthcoming Web browsers.

In opposition to those institutions that have adhered to the Active X control, the Open Web Movement in Korea sued the KFTC (Korea Financial Telecommunication and Clearings Committee) in 2007 (Web 2.0 Asia, 2008), claiming that the rampant use of Active X control is against the fair trade and relies on the technology of a particular company (Microsoft) and thus it limits users' choice of OS and Web browser. But the Open Web movement lost this lawsuit. The Court declared that because over 90% of Korean internet users are using the Internet Explorer and MS Windows, not supporting other browsers cannot be seen as against fair trade; but it is obvious that this decree is based on reversed causality, in that the users have from the first been forced to use Internet Explorer precisely because of the Active X component.

ATTACKING SAMSUNG, OR DEFENDING ‘IT KOREA’?

In contrast, public opinion on the Internet was very different from the mainstream media’s attitude to the iPhone and Samsung. Although they acknowledged the problems and missing features of the iPhone which mainstream media constantly presented, netizens tended to criticize the mass media’s “childish” attitude. They were also well aware of the relationship between those media and their big advertiser, Samsung. Problems with Samsung’s products and its apparently “sleazy” marketing strategy using mass media are harshly criticized by netizens in many Internet communities, forums, and blogs, based on netizens’ own expertise in the IT industry and the technology itself. They usually denounce the ‘media play,’ which refers to the PR strategy of big companies and the mass media’s favoritism toward big advertisers. Netizens are aware of why the iPhone was unfairly criticized by mainstream mass media and how the Omnia II was uncritically praised.

We all know Samsung is the biggest advertiser supporting those media corporations. Media’s tactfully decorated articles favoring the Samsung Omnia made me hate it. Everybody knows their efforts to denounce the iPhone. So who would believe those articles if those kinds of comparisons of the iPad vs. Samsung’s tablet PC, Galaxy S vs. the iPhone 4G go on in the same way?
(Blogger I-on-I, 2010, April 24)

Netizens also criticize the unequal contract conditions between Samsung and mid- or small-size software companies and its oppressive policies against individual engineers. They contrast it with the case of the iPhone, which is assumed to establish a revolutionary

business model in which software engineers, manufacturers, and consumers are equally benefitted. Samsung's closed and unidirectional A/S system and its "hardware arms race" are also criticized (Blogger Doa, 2009, December 5). The problems of 'IT Korea' that go unmentioned by the mainstream media are also mentioned by the public. The iPhone effects are not just limited to the critique of Samsung in terms of technology and handsets. Rather the critique was about the deeper structural problem of the 'Republic of Samsung' — the term that dispraisingly parodies the official name of the Republic of Korea to refer to the vast influence of Samsung on Korea.

Of course there are some conflicts between netizens who advocate Samsung/Omnia and those who criticize. But one noticeable aspect of these debates over the iPhone was that both heavily relied on the framework equating Korea with 'true IT Power' or on one of 'the national interests of Korea.' People who advocate Samsung — sometimes assumed to be hired by Samsung to manipulate the public opinion on the Internet, which is partly true — claim that we need to keep purchasing Samsung products, because Korea developed thanks to those 'national corporations' and they are still driving the Korean economy. For them, this is more about the nation, thus the minor technological/social problems do not matter and 'we' have an obligation to consume Samsung products in order to protect the domestic economy and maintain the jobs which Samsung created. More importantly, Samsung, the world's largest technology company by revenue, is the pride of nation. On the contrary, those who criticize Samsung claim that in order for us to be a true IT Power, we need to correct the unequal power relations

in the IT industry and make Samsung respect domestic customers. For them, the iPhone revealed the problematic structure of the Korean economy and suggested a more democratic way of being a true IT Power through which Samsung will be able to have true 'global competency.' Therefore, ironically, buying more iPhones can be a truly patriotic action in that the iPhone effects will make Korea realize its lingering problems and correct them — for example, the dependency on Active X control and Microsoft. Indeed, after the iPhone was released most Korean banks developed their own applications for mobile banking on smartphones that no longer need the Active X control and Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

Over 100,000 Koreans have subscribed to financial transaction services through smartphones in merely four months after such features became available here last December. ... Observers point out that the debut of the Apple iPhone is in no small part responsible for the huge subscription to mobile financial services.... Currently, a total of nine financial institutions are offering mobile trades based on smartphones, mostly the iPhone. The number is expected to rocket to 34 by next month.... (T. G. Kim, 2010, April 11)

One of the most problematic discourses in Korea may be the logic of 'national corporations' (N. J. Park, 2004). From this perspective, as advocates of Samsung claimed, we need to protect these national companies that have driven the national economy, even if their products' prices are higher than those in foreign markets. Those price policies are attempts to increase national companies' market share that eventually lead to the growth of national interests. Accordingly, along with neo-liberalist discourse,

it is assumed that if we do not maintain corporation-friendly policies such as deregulation, those companies might leave Korea, and this would mean the fall of the national economy. Thus we have to maintain deregulatory policies to prevent them from leaving for other countries. In this discourse, the very simple facts that they essentially are profit-seeking corporations and that a considerable part of their manufacturing facilities have already gone abroad are usually omitted. This discourse is also criticized by netizens.

Up till now, we consumers have kept buying low-quality products with high-prices, and these are tolerated.... But why should we spend more money for worse products? Just because they were “made in Korea”? We have been forced to believe that they are on “our side.” How can we understand the irony that the more we buy their products the deeper the problems of Korea? Science and technology has been assumed to be based on truth and objectivity, but in reality, it hinges upon value judgment. We can hardly find the iPhone-favored newspapers.... They don’t attempt to correct the isolationism of the Korean Web and to resist the oppressive telecom companies.... At this time, for the future of “IT Korea,” true patriotism is to buy more iPhones. (I. S. Kim, 2009, December 10)

‘IT KOREA’: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In this respect, it can be said that the iPhone has provided a discursive space within which the meanings of ‘national corporations’ and ‘national interests’ are negotiated and rearticulated. It should also be noted, however, that the discourse of ‘IT Korea’ is still predominant in these debates. The cause of ‘national development through ICTs’ is hardly challenged in this discourse. In other words, Korea’s advanced ICTs are

perceived as an indicator of the nation's enhanced status in the world order, and at the same time, as a driving force for the national development in this 'new' era. Indeed, the dominant discourse of 'IT Korea' within which most iPhone-related debates have taken place is based on a more profound belief in the role of technology and science in 'national development.'

As is widely known, the belief in the role of science and technology in 'national' development is not new. Many developmental projects have been implemented at both global and national levels based on a naïve technological deterministic view that ranges from Daniel Lerner's modernization theory (1958) to the discourse of "ICTs for development" (see Leye, 2007). From this perspective, technologies are considered something autonomous and external to the existing social structure, hence we cannot control the direction and impact of independent technologies. Moreover, we need to do virtually nothing but to adopt 'appropriate' technologies because those technologies will automatically lead us to the next emancipatory stage of human progress. ICTs become at once a tool for national development and an urgent goal for the nation to achieve.

Technology, from this perspective, is not only an indicator of national development but also a marker of demarcated historical phases (e.g., the Steam Age, the Information Age). That is to say, this kind of perspective is closely intertwined with the conception of demarcated (and demarcatable) historical phases, namely the practice of periodization as one of the underlying premises of technological determinism. In this broadly held conviction of the advent of the 'information society' and technology as its

determinant, and with such buzzwords as the ‘knowledge society,’ the ‘information revolution,’ and the ‘Information Age,’ the metaphors of ‘Age’ or ‘revolution’ envision a qualitatively different world that radically breaks with previous historical stages (Slack, 1984). This break, of course, usually implies progress through which a variety of existing social constraints can be resolved. But as Webster (2002) asks, “How much ICT is required in order to identify an information society?” (p. 11). In other words, the question of at what point on the technological or historical scale the “information society” can be fundamentally distinguished from “advanced industrial society” is often ignored by the popular futurists who herald the advent of a new era.

It is necessary, however, to capture the distinctive features of current capitalist society. In this sense, some scholars try to distinguish between the ‘information society’ and ‘informatization’ in order to capture both “continuity and discontinuity” with capitalist society (Robins & Webster, 1999, p. 62). Rada (1985) also contends that “‘informatization’ is the consequence of development and not its cause” (p. 572, emphasis original). As one of the major discursive practices driven by a handful of wealthy countries and transnational corporations, the concept of ICT as a cause of development is predicated on an inherently ahistorical approach that conveniently forgets the foundation of imperialism on which the ‘developed’ countries could develop. We should not forget that ICTs can be applied to the existing infrastructure of factories, offices, and service industries. ICT is by no means a mirage in the desert. Even within those advanced countries, the ‘knowledge’ industry is materialized and stratified “along

the lines of gender, ethnicity, region, accent, professional status and pay” (Shields, 2003, p. 158).

If we think of ICTs, as in the dominant discourse, as an actor that is autonomous, value-free, or external to society as a static/organic system, this view eliminates the need for public intervention in the very process through which technology is ‘shaped.’ The effects of this depoliticization of technology directly lead to the depoliticization of everyday life. According to the techno-deterministic view, people do not need to worry about or actively engage in the existing unequal social structure. All they need to do is to accept those inevitably progressive technologies into the society as an organic whole. ‘Neutral’ technologies will provide people with unlimited and equal access to the source of power. Even the oppressive structure dominated by a handful of elites does not matter because they subjugate us in order to set us free from technological constraints by modernizing our nation (Prakash, 1999).

Indeed, in the history of Korea, which achieved ‘compressed’ development after the devastating Korean War, the dominant discourse of ‘national interests’ or ‘national companies,’ predicated on the unquestioned identity of ‘IT Korea’ that directly connects ICTs to national development, is not new at all. The most noticeable example of this connection between science/technology and national development in present-day Korea might be the phenomenon called ‘Hwang Syndrome’ or ‘Hwang Affair.’

‘HWANG SYNDROME’ AND PARK CHUNG-HEE’S REGIME

In 2004 and 2005, Korean stem cell bioscientist Hwang Woo-Suk and his colleagues published two papers in the journal *Science* on the establishment of human embryonic stem cells and claimed that they had finally succeeded in cultivating patient-specific stem cells that cause no concerns about serious side-effects or immune reactions (Hwang et al., 2004; Hwang et al., 2005). Whereas adult cells cannot be changed because of their specific functions in the body, embryonic stem cells have the potential to develop into different types of cells, which can, theoretically, replace any disabled human organ. Soon after Hwang’s papers were published, the front pages of almost all Korean daily newspapers were, very unusually, filled with science-related articles. Most mass media and politicians in Korea immediately started to connect Hwang’s groundbreaking scientific feat to the national interest, and his ‘original Korean technology’ was hailed as a new engine for the economic growth of the nation. He was named as the first Supreme Scientist of Korea, and with full government support, his research funds in 2005 reached about \$30 million. Hwang was “certainly the national hero” (Hong, 2008, p. 2). However, being suspicious about the unethical egg trading, some young bioscientists began to express doubts about the data used in his papers. As a result, an investigative panel at Seoul National University retested his research in December of 2005 and eventually announced that the data in his two papers were fabricated. With the fall of a ‘national hero,’ Hwang Syndrome culminated in “one of the biggest scientific scandals in years” (Macintyre, 2005, December 18).

What played a key role in the process of the Hwang Syndrome was, of course, the Korean mass media's sensationalism. Given the intrinsic unintelligibility of scientific issues, sensationalism was seen as the most effective way for the Korean mass media to cover Hwang's research. The problematic media practice of what Nelkin (1990) called "selling science" is not new, nor is it unique to Korea.

An interesting fact, however, is that Hwang was, in a technical sense, a veterinary scientist, not a 'bioscientist.' His name was barely known to the public until he succeeded in cloning the cow named *Yeongrongi* in 1999 by transplanting somatic cell nuclei, the same method that Ian Wilmut used to create the world's first cloned mammal, Dolly (T. H. Kim, 2008). It should also be noted that stem cell research has received extensive attention in Western societies since 1998, "when stem cells from human embryos were isolated for the first time" (Nisbet, Brossard, & Kroepsch, 2003). The Korean mass media's indifference — or ignorance — of this issue shows that one of the most salient scientific issues of recent times had little news value for them until a Korean, Hwang, published two papers in *Science*, one of the world's leading scientific journals. Moreover, Hwang had had no peer-reviewed publication before the two papers in 2004 and 2005 (S. Hong, 2008). But after he claimed that he had succeeded in cloning the second cow *Jini* (1999) and cloned a BSE- (mad cow disease) resistant cow 'for the first time in the world' in 2002, he began to gain national publicity as a world-class cloning expert. This means that his research had not been retested and approved by the scientific community, which is regarded as the most important procedure required for a scientific discovery. In

other words, what made Hwang Syndrome possible was not the superiority or accuracy of Hwang's scientific feat per se, but the nationalism that constantly equated his achievement with 'national interests' or 'national pride.' This is reflected in the fact that the people who expressed doubts about his fabricated data or unethical egg trading were denounced as a "traitor to the nation" (Ryu, 2007, August 3).

Although bioscience is not the focus of this chapter, the Hwang Affair has several implications for theoretical issues I have tried to deal with. It reveals how the seemingly 'pure' or 'neutral' realm of science/technology can be inflected by various 'social' factors, namely nationalism and the mass media. Hwang Syndrome, in which the discourse of national interests played a pivotal role, strikingly resonates with the 'development ideology' led by Park Chung-Hee's military regime that drove coercive nationalist development projects under the aegis of 'national interests.'

These considerations call for us to reexamine the generally accepted notions about the relationship between technology and society in broader social contexts and power relations. The dominant discourse of 'IT Korea' did not come out of the blue. It needs to be understood in relation to the instrumentality of science in nationalist projects. As we witness with the 'iPhone effects,' whether a particular technology will succeed or fail is not dependent on the inherent/objective superiority of the technology. It is the result of 'selection,' which involves a complex process of social antagonism and negotiation among social (and technological) actors. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the deep-rooted practice of nationalizing science and technology, as well as the ideology that has

marked the dominant discourse on technology and science in Korea by analyzing science/technology policies and campaigns during the Park's regime.

As soon as he succeeded in the bloodless military coup in 1961, Park adopted hard-line anticommunist policies and emphasized "rebuilding the nation" to secure his legitimacy in international politics (H. A. Kim, 2005, p. 123). By foregrounding economic development as the nation's ultimate goal and as a means to acquire legitimacy, Park started to push forward with heavy chemical-oriented industrialization. Because the intellectual and social foundations of Korea were devastated after the Korean War (1950-1953), Park perceived science and technology as a primary tool for rebuilding the nation in postwar Korea. The Plan for Promoting Science and Technology launched in 1962 was also a part of the first Five-Year Economic Development Plan (Y. J. Kim, 1992). In reforming governmental institutions in 1967, Park's government transferred the task of policymaking and administering science and technology to the newly established Ministry of Science and Technology. This was the manifestation of the Korean government's will to promote science and technology. The Park administration perceived the development of science as the basis of economic growth. As Yoon Jung-Ro (2000) has indicated, the ultimate goal of the government was to enhance the competitiveness of Korea by developing technology and science (p. 18).

The Park Administration attempted to secure these policies by producing nationalist discourses. Park emphasized the 'independent' economic development of the nation, which was expressed through such slogans as "independent rebuilding of the

national economy,” “economic independence,” and “export-driven policy.” Among these, the economic development discourse was the attempt to made the Korean economy stand out, and this logic was clearly stated in the Declaration of Heavy Chemical Industrialization in 1973 (D. H. Kim, 1997). Also, the logic that a “righteous welfare society” could be realized by building a powerful national industry and that only the “expulsion of unemployment and inoccupation, which cause corruption” by “eradicating poverty” would result in “victory against communism” (Park, 1967a) revealed themes running through both technological and economic policies. Although Park could not ignore the close ties to the US and Japan, given the geopolitical conditions under the Cold War — this is clearly stated in his speech that defined the “three public enemies” as “poverty, corruption, and communism”— nevertheless, the importance of Korean’s being an “independent nation” was noticeable. In other words, Park tried to promote “independent” economic and scientific development by connecting them with nationalist discourse. He tried to realize the equation of ‘economic development = progress in scientific technology = development of the nation.’

It is also important to note that the process of decision-making in science and technology policies during this period was based on the logic of efficiency. This means that government-led science policy was a “highly ‘autonomous’ realm that was isolated from citizens’ concerns” (J. R. Yoon, 2000, p. 31). Korean citizens were not allowed to participate in establishing scientific development policies, although the results of the policies were intimately connected to their lives. This centralized decision-making

process under the Park regime manifests itself not only in the reform of laws and organizations but also in the promotion of overseas technological exchange as well as in political campaigns such as ‘Scientizing the Nation’ and the creation of the national ‘Day of Science.’

Park was confident that developing scientific technologies was indispensable to economic development, and thus the emphasis was put on promoting scientific technologies. The cause of ‘national development through promoting scientific technology’ was expressed in a variety of public speeches, addresses, and congratulatory messages (Park, 1965). Park recognized that scientific advance was necessary for the modernization of the nation, but it was also an important means to enhancing the status of the Korean nation. Therefore, he set up multi-phased and multi-dimensional plans for the development of scientific technology. According to Kim Il-Young (1995), Park planned to make Korea one of the leading countries in the world by the 2000s through a multi-phased developmental strategy. For this purpose, he enacted laws, reorganized governmental institutions, and established scientific institutes throughout the 1960s and 70s.

The Five-Year Economic Development Plan was the representative policy of Park’s administration. The first Five-Year Plan began in 1962, and the fourth was in progress by the time Park was assassinated in 1979. Park thought that scientific technology was indispensable for the success of the first Five-Year Plan (1962-1966), thus he simultaneously implemented the first Plan for the Promotion of Science and

Technology (1962-1966). Park also insisted on the need to establish a comprehensive research institute run by the state. However, these plans were not always successfully implemented because of a lack of necessary funds.

The turning point was Park's state visit to the US at the invitation of President Johnson in 1965. During this visit, the two leaders discussed a loan for developmental plans (about \$15 million), and agreed that the funds would be used to create an institute for applied science. Park then established the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) (*Chosun Ilbo*, February 5, 1966) as suggested by the Finance and Technology Agreement with the US on February 4, 1966. By 1970, more than two hundred scientists and technicians had been trained in this institution (J. R. Yoon, 2000).

Science-related laws were also necessary to establish a plan for promoting scientific technology and to attract foreign aid in order to expand the scientific infrastructure. In 1967, the Law for the Advancement of Scientific Technology was passed, and the law led to the establishment of an administrative agency. Although there had already been a governmental agency for science and technology, it lacked the power and human resources to manage new plans for the development of science. As a result, Park restructured the administrative system by newly establishing the Ministry of Science and Technology. The Ministry of Science and Technology was endowed with power to perform the restructuring of industry, as it was thoroughly protected from the interference of other ministries and from the political pressure of the opposing political parties. Park's effort to advance scientific technology also unfolded in terms of the introduction of

‘advanced’ foreign technologies, the promotion of national research capacity, the enhancement of educational infrastructure, and academic-industrial cooperation. In particular, Park’s desire to import ‘advanced’ technologies as a means of promoting science and technology was evidenced in a series of agreements on technology exchange with foreign countries, including the Agreement on Exchanging Technological Information between Korea and the Japanese Minister of Science and Technology (1968) (*Chosun Ilbo*, 1968, September 4), the Agreement on Establishing a Scientific Research Center with Japan (1969) (*Chosun Ilbo*, 1969, January 29), the Agreement for Science Exchange with the UK, France, and Germany (1972) (*Chosun Ilbo*, 1972, June 22), and so on.

As we saw in the Hwang Affair, Park consistently connected science and technology to the ‘future of the nation.’ That is, “enhanced national power” was the result of economic development, and the scientific progress of the nation was the prerequisite to economic development, which was the ultimate goal prior to all other social agendas (Park, 1967b). The imperative of development in terms of the economy and technology which allegedly indicated the ‘national potential’ of Korea justified a series of oppressive state-driven and export-oriented economic policies reliant on low wages, long work hours, and poor work environments. Of course, it should also precede political democratization. Throughout these processes, Park’s regime consciously produced the discourse of ‘technology for development’ and ‘development for the nation.’

In line with industrialization in the 1960s, the Korean newspaper industry started to expand as a modern capitalist corporation. The press enlarged its means of production and productive power under the aegis of the authorities and hurried to reform their management structure to secure maximum profits. In addition, the monopolistic capital shaped under Park's regime directly controlled the newspapers by the means of advertising. In other words, as the social and economic situation changed, the collusion between the press and the government became stronger. The Park administration tried to control the media, and the media as a "handmaiden to power" was a means to suppress social conflicts by concealing economic inequality, poor working conditions, and an oppressive social environment (W. S. Kim et al., 1990).

It is understandable that the media had not been able to criticize the government's policies on science and technology under these conditions. Park's desire to use the media to propagandize on behalf of his policies as well as the media's tendency to reproduce Park's intentions are clearly reflected in the following article:

"Science and technology must be spread and infiltrated into all areas of life, and for this goal we should continue to make great efforts." President Park said, "For this purpose, it is necessary for textbooks from elementary to high school to reflect this," and he indicated that "the main purpose of TV, radio, and newspapers is providing news and entertainment, *but please try to find effective plans for the campaign of developing science.*" (emphasis added) (*Chosun Ilbo*, 1979, February 2)

Taking the carrot-and-stick approach to the press, Park provided the press with financial incentives that enabled it to become a capitalist company; newspapers were able to get long-term bank loans at the lowest interest rate for purchasing rotary presses and for constructing new company buildings in exchange for proliferating propaganda. A monopolistic structure for the newspaper industry was created by the policies of the military junta; the Association for Newspaper Publishers fixed the subscription fees and advertising rates in collusion with one another. National economic development and the modernizing projects of the administration were able to be maintained effectively by both conciliating and controlling the press.

In these circumstances, the Korean mass media emphasized the importance of science and technology as the authorities wanted them to. Editorials faithfully served the will of those in power, reproducing the authorities' discourse on science and technology. *Chosun Ilbo*, the most powerful newspaper, uncritically echoed Park's emphasis on science and technology instead of revealing the oppressive social structure. *Dong-A Ilbo*, another powerful newspaper, also emphasized the importance of scientific technologies in its article "Independence of science and technology: Unscientific intention must not control science and technology":

Independence can be achieved by efforts to increase efficiency in deploying human resources and R&D, to introduce foreign scientific technology, and to manage transferred scientific technologies systematically at the national level. ... We must pay attention to long-term investment in research and development or

academic-industrial cooperation; all people must respect science and technology as well. (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 1976, September 27)

It is clear that both Park and the media understood science and technology in terms of national development. The ‘Scientizing the Nation’ movement of the 1970s resounded with criticism about the backwardness of domestic science. *Chosun Ilbo* had done a series titled ‘Sunday Scientific Topic’ and ‘Everyday Science’ throughout the 1970s before the Popularization of Science campaign was emphasized. And the other series of articles such as ‘Scientists Say’ (1962), ‘A Series for the Future of the Scientific World’ (1965), ‘The Science of Communist China’ (1967), and ‘The Location of Modern Science’ (1978) were part of this science-oriented practice.

A prominent tendency common to the science journalism of the 1970s and that of the present is a vision of a ‘rosy’ future, one of the general characteristics of utopian technological determinism. A considerable number of stories reproducing such utopian visions, however, turned a blind eye to the existing structural problems of Korean society. The policies for scientific-technological development under Park’s regime offered the fantasy that science and technology would bring us to a ‘better’ world as far as we conformed to those policies and to the regime. The dominant discourse identifying science and technology as the only way to achieve the national development was hardly challenged in 1970’s Korea. And it has not changed much, as evidenced by the *Dong-A Ilbo* article describing even the oppressive culture of Hwang’s lab as a valuable “spirit” from which his great achievement was able to emerge (J. Kim & I. Y. Cho, 2005).

Although the Korean media are no longer controlled by an authoritarian regime, their attitude to science and technology and their utopian promises have changed little. If we can find a significant difference, it would be the replacement of the heavy-chemical industry of the 1960s with the bio-science and ICTs of the 2000s. The media's belief in science and technology in the 1960s and 70s, permeated with the ideology of modernization and developmentalism, is not essentially different from the media's enthusiasm for Hwang in the 2000s.

Despite all the similarities suggested, however, I am not arguing that Park's regime was the sole cause or historical origin of the present nationalist discourses on science and technology. As Kim Hwan-Suk (1991) points out, the 'technology drive' was more enthusiastically adopted by the new military authorities in Korea in the 1980s. Moreover, there is a significant difference between the strategies of the present media and those of the 1960s: current science journalism tends to hinge more upon abstruse technical terms by which the objectivity of science and journalistic professionalism appears to be guaranteed, whereas that of the 1960s and 70s was based on more naïve utopian visions. It also needs to be noted that there have been small but discernible counter-discourses suggested by alternative media which constantly criticize the dominant nationalist discourse (S. I. Kang, 2005). But the historical contexts that formed biased nationalist discourses on science and technology still exist. The 'economic value' of 'original Korean technology' shows the same logical structure as one of the dominant discourses under Park's regime. Park's equation of "progress in scientific technology =

economic development = the good of the whole nation' is still reverberating in the Hwang Affair.

Chapter 4: Hines Ward and the Border of Korean

In 2006, there was an interesting social phenomenon called ‘Hines Ward Syndrome’ in Korea. After being voted MVP of Super Bowl XL, Hines Ward, a Korean American pro football player for the Pittsburgh Steelers and whose mother is Korean, suddenly became a star in a country where “most people have no idea of what a touchdown is” (Hines Ward finds stardom in South Korea, 2006, February 9). Korean mass media were enthusiastic for his triumphant return (Wiseman, 2006, April 10), and major Korean companies strived to use him to endorse their products (Song & Kim, 2006, March 29). He was even able to have lunch with then-President Roh and the first lady at the Blue House, an opportunity a mere sports star rarely gets without having made an exceptional contribution to his or her nation (Y. W. Jeong, 2006, April 5).

What makes this phenomenon striking is the fact *honhyeol* (mixed blood) people like Hines Ward have been severely discriminated against and marginalized in Korea. Even into the 1980s, it was not unusual for people to call them, disparagingly, *ttuigy*, which means ‘mongrel,’ and for Korean-African American children, *ggamdungi*, the American equivalent of ‘nigger.’ During and after the Korean War, they stood for the ‘impurity’ of Korean women who ‘sold their bodies’ to American GIs. That is, they contaminated the integrity of ‘pure Korean.’ In a similar sense, *Yanggongju* was the derogatory term used to refer both to GI brides and to the women who prostituted themselves to support their family during the War (H. S. Kim, 1998).



Figure 5: Hines Ward, Pittsburgh Steelers

In a technical or traditional sense, Hines Ward is not Korean. He is an American citizen who cannot even speak Korean. He did not grow up in Korea and does not know much about Korean ‘culture,’ aside from the custom of taking shoes off in a house. More importantly, from the view of ‘race,’ his skin color is not that of Koreans. And in spite of all this, a *ggamdungi* became a “national hero” (J. Cho & Fiola, 2006, April 8) beyond being embraced just as a member of the Korean nation. Hines Ward Syndrome, in this regard, appears to provide a great opportunity to end the long-standing ‘exclusive Korean nationalism’ as the cause of discrimination against mixed blood people. However, in reality, the plight of mixed blood people in Korea has changed little. According to a 2002

survey taken by Pearl S. Buck International Korea, a nonprofit international adoption agency, 9.4 percent of Amerasian children drop out of elementary school; another 17.5 percent quit middle school. As adults, “more than 45 percent are unemployed or work odd jobs to get by” and 83 percent of the Amerasians are being raised by single mothers, who are often jobless or work only part time (M. Lee, 2008, p. 60; Wiseman, 2006, April 10). Unlike Hines Ward, they are still excluded from the category of Korean.

Considering the gap between a *ggamdungi* and a national hero, and the existence of social constraints imposed on mixed blood people, how can we understand this phenomenon? Although it was primarily media sensationalism that initiated Hines Ward Syndrome, this reflects the very fact that he had sufficient ‘news values’ in Korea. Obviously, what played a pivotal role in the process was the fact that his mother was Korean and he had ‘Korean blood.’ This fact shows that the logic of blood is still pervasive in Korea just like the word *honhyeol* still maintains its currency in Korean society. At the same time, Hines Ward Syndrome shows that the boundaries demarcated by such marks as blood, culture, and language are subject to contexts. Given the predominant view on the Korean nation that assumes the ‘unified nation,’ characterized by ‘one bloodline’ extending back 5,000 years, it may be considered a noticeable change of meaning of the Korean nation.

DISCOURSES ON HINES WARD

It needs to be noted that before the Steelers reached the Super Bowl, very few articles about Hines Ward appeared in major Korean newspapers. The number of news articles about him began to drastically increase from January 24, the day his team advanced to the Super Bowl, and exploded on February 7 when the Steelers won the Super Bowl and Ward was named MVP. Hence, in some way, from the very first, a man of Korean lineage whose mother was Korean had to qualify to be Korean. It was also obvious that Ward was able to be exalted because he won the MVP in Super Bowl XL, the most popular sport in the US. In these discourses, his individual success reflected Korea's potential to be the best even in the most powerful country in the world. He enhanced Korea's "national image" (The true way to respect Hines Ward, 2006, February 10, para. 1) in the US, and the "touching story of his mother made the US cry."

After Ward earned MVP, he "was featured in nearly every South Korean newspaper" (Hines Ward finds stardom in South Korea, 2006, February 9) and "Koreans were quick to make the link to his Korean heritage" (Branch, 2009, November 9). Because his mother was virtually the only connection to Korea, a large part of the reports has been allotted to her. The headlines of front pages on February 7 were full of references to the connection with his mother: "Mother's tears raised the hero" (Kang & Ahn, 2006, February 7), "Modesty and sacrifice, learned from mother" (T. I. Lee, 2006, February 7), "Mother, you are the MVP" (J. H. Jeon, 2006, February 7), "My mother is

my pride” (T. H. Kim, 2006, February 7). His Korean mother was, first and foremost, the source of his greatness.

The circulated discourses can be divided into three types. The first is the nationalist project that emphasizes his Korean lineage. With this rhetoric, the most important factor of his success was the Korean blood from his mother. His mother is thus represented as a bearer of a variety of virtues, meaning Korean culture. The second is a self-reflection frame focusing on the deep-rooted discrimination against the mixed blood people and the exclusiveness of Korean nationalism. The third and barely circulated perspective mainly criticizes the media’s sensationalism by revealing the constructed relation between Ward and the Korean nation.

The primary goal of the mainstream discourses was to excavate his immanent ‘Koreanness.’ Citing Ward’s statement that he was “very proud of my Korean blood” (J. P. Kim, 2006, April 5), the media foregrounded more abstract attributes such as “the spirit of Korean” (Ahn, 2006, February 6). In this context, the ‘Korean spirit’ that made him such a great person was naturalized as something intrinsic to all Koreans.

The fighting spirit that Hines Ward showed was one of the Koreans that never gives up. (T. H. Kim, 2006, February 7)

The color of his face was not that of other Koreans. But Americans witnessed the spirit of Korea through him. (Seok Kim, 2006, January 24)

His skin color was different. But the fervid Korean blood running through his blood vessels is of “black Korean.” (S. J. Moon, 2006a)



Figure 6: Hines Ward and his Korean mother, Kim Young-Hee

This kind of goodness should turn out to be something inherited from a real Korean. This is the reason why a large number of stories paid attention to his mother. In doing so, his quality became something inherited through blood, like a genetic imprint of Korean culture. And this virtue of Korean was sufficient to attract the world’s attention.

The whole world is paying attention to “Korean mothers” by his earning of the Super Bowl MVP. ... Peoples are moved by Kim’s devoted maternity and the filial piety of Hines Ward who says that he learned diligence, love, and honesty from his mother. (J. H. Lee, 2006, February 10)

His mother, Kim Young-Hee, has continuously said to her only son “be humble.” (J. H. Jeon, 2006, February 7)

Although he was a superstar, he has never forgotten his mother’s instruction, “always be humble.” (S. J. Moon, 2006b)

Ward’s mother, Kim Young-Hee, becomes the epitome of Korean mothers who preserved the values of Korea in her body. A *Yanggongju* suddenly became the most respectable type of mother in Korea. A motherhood that made her work three jobs a day is represented as a natural and sublime attribute of her and Korean mothers regardless of who she was and the how she was treated in 1970s’ Korea. These gendered and ethnicized discourses suggest Ward’s filial piety and Kim’s sacrifice at once as part of the nature of the Korean nation and a social norm Koreans should retain but have forgotten. This project of normalization was another tendency of the first discourse.

Behind his success, there is thirty-year Korean maternal love of sacrifice and dedication. Filial piety, what Koreans are spitting in the eye of nowadays, is still alive. And it moves Koreans.... His mother, Kim Young-Hee’s 55 years are the epitome of Korean mother who sacrifices everything for her child. (Hines Ward story written in the name of the mother, 2006, February 7)

Divorce and family discord is everywhere. In this era, it is impossible to overemphasize the importance of mother’s role. Kim is a true Korean mother characterized by her life of patient endurance and infinite love for her son. (It was Korean mother who raised the Super Bowl MVP, 2006, February 8)

The greatness of Ward is often presented in terms of his influence on Korean society. In this context, he contributes to lifting not only the stereotypes of mixed people but also social and institutional constraints. Literally, “he paved the way to change the prejudice against mixed blood people” (S. H. Kim, Shim, & Cho, 2006, April 12). Some newspapers mentioned specific companies sponsoring Ward. This of course functioned effectively as indirect advertising. More importantly, it reaffirmed the classic capitalist ideology that assumes the individual’s effort as a key to success, turning a blind eye to structural restraints and showing that even *honhyeol* can be a ‘VIP.’

[Ward] changed the prejudice against mixed blood people. Employees praised him for having “found true Koreanness in his extreme devotion to his mother, smile, and artlessness.” ... Lee Byoung-Woo, the head cook of Lotte Hotel and who served Ward said, “I could feel Korean emotion from his face, even though he returned to Korea after a twenty-nine year absence.” (S. H. Kim, et al., 2006, April 12)

During the ten days of his visit, the Korean government started speaking of enacting new anti-discrimination laws, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education started to examine the designation of ‘Foreigner’s Day’ and revising school textbooks that defined Korea as a “nation unified by one bloodline” respectively. (I. T. Lim, Jeon, & Cho, 2006, April 12)

School textbooks that describe Korea as a “nation unified by one bloodline” will be changed to one that has a “multiethnic and multicultural society.” (Shin, 2006, July 25)

Ward is, literally, a VIP. Lotte Hotel where he is staying is providing him the \$6,300-a-night Royal Suite and a “Hines Ward cooking team” that consist of five cooks who will exclusively serve him. (K. Y. Jeon, 2006, April 4)

What characterizes the second strand of discourses is that it frequently takes “If Hines Ward had lived in Korea...” (K. Cho, 2006, February 8; S. Y. Ryu, 2006, April 24) frame. This strand mainly points out how mixed blood people in Korea are excluded and calls for societal openness.

If he had lived in Korea, could he have been such a great person? No, as we all know. Space and passage in which he could live is obstructed in our society. (Our self-portrait reflected by Hines Ward, 2006, February 16)

We should reflect on ourselves as we face his visit and success. We have to ask ourselves why we have been completely indifferent to the plight and identity of mixed people in this country while still being proud of Ward, who has his Korean name tattooed on his right arm. I hope that his visit ends this prejudice against the “blood” and “color of skin” and awakens the value of mixed people’s culture. (The true way to respect Hines Ward, 2006, February 10)

According to the above editorial, the ‘value of mixed people’s culture’ is still discernible and distinguishable from the Korean culture despite the fact that they legally are ‘Koreans’ who have lived for decades in the country. Accordingly, we have to be an “open society” that can “embrace” them (What Hines Ward and his mother left behind, 2006, April 13). This assertion that Korea has to be an open society is predicated on the ‘globalization’ thesis in which the world is becoming multicultural and multiracial and

Korea is no exception. What was frequently omitted was, however, the fact that mixed people were constituents of the ‘Koreans before the world was globalized or that their culture was the very Korean from the first. This omission of course draws upon the parallel between the skin color and culture.

Reproducing the familiar ideology of ‘American dream,’ this perspective assumes that Ward was able to succeed because he grew up in the US. But it is worth noting that Kim Young-Hee’s comments about her experience of the very discrimination the Korean media criticized were hardly reported. This is partly due to her not saying much but also to her being “still leery: ‘Is it because he’s MVP, or do you really accept him?’” (Wiseman, 2006, April 10). Although there was a “Korean mother who bore the hardships” in those news articles, most articles focused only on her poverty in the US, a poverty that made her work sixteen hours a day. However, only few Korean media mentioned that the adversity, to a large extent, resulted from Koreans (exceptions are J. H. Han, 2006, February 10; S. M. Lee, 2006, February 9).

This is the point that the third, hardly-circulated view on Hines Ward Syndrome criticizes — the practices of institutionalized media. The following citations show Ward’s mother’s traumatic experience from the Korean communities in the US.

When he was in high school, there was a tournament baseball game of Korean students between schools. Because he excelled in athletics, one school recruited him to join them. But they excluded him from the celebration afterward, and the sponsor asked only Korean boys to have dinner. They used him. (S. M. Lee, 2006, February 9)

Koreans... I have never thought about them for 30 years. I never saw them. What if I had brought him to Korea? He would have been a beggar at best. ... Koreans living in America ... totally ignored us. They discriminated us much more severely than other Americans did. They never helped or took care of us, but now Ward has come to be famous.... (J. M. Kim, 2006, April 8)

Kim Young-Hee's family hid the existence of Hines Ward so completely that even relatives thought that she had married a Korean man and lived in the US. Kim recalls finding out that her mother had hidden Ward's photograph when she returned to Korea in 1978, 10 years after her migration. ... She said "even Koreans who had international marriages said they 'didn't go along with women who live with African Americans.'" (J. H. Han, 2006, February 10)

This perspective criticizes the hypocritical enthusiasm of the Korean media, politicians, and corporations. Furthermore, it cautions against the conventional self-reflections that were based on the thesis of a 'globalized Korea.' Revealing the ideology of "pure blood," it shows that Kim "did not merely migrate to the US but was exiled" (H. J. Lim, 2006, April 4). In this view, self-reflection was an indispensable to incorporating a successful Korean-African American back into the "national community."

There was a deluge of reports and editorials containing self-reflections on prejudice and discrimination against mixed people. ... It can be said that it was a necessary rite of passage to incorporate Ward, who can never be a Korean from the "pure blood" view, into the community of Korean nation. (Seol, 2006, May 4)

Hines Ward Syndrome was a site of discursive practices where Korea's national/cultural identity was negotiated. As is shown, the first stance of nationalist project was attempts to appropriate Ward as a Korean by articulating his biological

descent with the putative cultural essence of the Korean nation. In the second frame of self-reflection, we see the indispensable prerequisite for embracing Hines Ward and mixed blood people as Koreans. As a comment on Hines Ward Syndrome, one writer remarked, “One week after Ward left, we can hardly find a piece of news about him” (S. Y. Ryu, 2006, April 24). Nevertheless, it sparked considerable debate on mixed blood people in Korea. In this process, ‘multiculturalism’ or ‘multicultural family’ thesis was widely accepted as an alternative term to mixed blood and as a solution for discrimination against them.

MULTICULTURALISM – RACE, CULTURE, AND OTHERS

As I have argued, the ‘self-reflection’ discourses on the discrimination against mixed blood people hinge largely upon the globalization thesis. Based on statistical data, these kinds of discourses contend that Korea has ‘entered’ a multiracial and multicultural society and that we can no longer call Korea a unified nation. This is, of course, an obvious ‘fact.’ According to a research report issued by the Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (Seol, Lee, & Cho, 2006), the total number of marriages in 2005 was 316,375, and 13.6% (43,121) of them were international marriages (p. 363). Moreover, according to the 2008 population data from Statistics Korea, the portion of babies from international marriages was more than 12% (58,007 out of 465,892).

Drawing on this trend, the terms ‘multicultural family’ or ‘children of multicultural family’ were largely adopted by various sectors in Korea that called for

awareness of discriminatory connotation of the term ‘mixed blood’ (*honhyeol*). Multiculturalism has gained wide currency in social discourses as an alternative to the terms ‘mixed blood’ or ‘unified nation,’ and “has become the theme of many academic conferences, and the national government and local governments, as well as NGOs” (H. M. Kim, 2007, p. 101). Few researchers, however, have posed questions on the very juxtaposition of blood and culture. Of course, there could be ‘cultural differences’ in recent international-marriage families in that a considerable number of international marriages have been organized by commercial international marriage brokers (H. M. Kim, 2007, p. 102; Onishi, 2007, February 22). But it is hardly mentioned in this context that, even in a marriage between Koreans, there is ‘cultural difference’ among family members due to their different generational, economic, and regional backgrounds. More problematic is that even *honhyeol* people who speak Korean, eat rice and kimchi, and consume Korean popular culture are incorporated into this ‘children of multicultural family’ category. Although they cannot be differentiated by taken-for-granted criteria or elements of culture such as food, popular culture, language, and customs, they are still positioned, in multicultural family discourses, as people who have different cultures than ‘authentic’ Koreans. The very term ‘multi-’ in its nature premises the fundamental separability and the existence of others to be embraced. By being reduced to the biological element of blood, the ‘cultural’ difference between Koreans and mixed people becomes irresolvable. Culture, as a dynamic process, is captured by demarcation between bloodlines that we can never transcend.

It can be said in this sense that multiculturalism is based on what Gupta and Ferguson (1997) call the “illusion of a natural and essential connection between the place and the culture” (p. 38). And the naturalized links between place and identity as well as race and culture in the multiculturalism thesis become more visible when we think of the ‘East Asianism’ in the Korean Wave discourse and its origin. When it speaks of ‘Asia,’ this seemingly transnational concept usually takes the West as its Other, and the line drawn between the West and Asia is in many cases framed in racial terms. According to Shin Gi-Wook (2005), who examined the Korea’s politics of identity in the form of Asianism since the late nineteenth century, the vision of Asianists in the early nineteenth century was primarily based on the “yellowness.” For instance:

Yun Chiho, a progressive leader of the Independence Club (*tongnip hyophoe*), also noted the common bond among East Asians and called for their unity against the ‘arrogant’ white race, particularly the Russians. ... he expressed a deep-rooted racial prejudice against the West (Russia) and an appreciation for a common Asian cultural heritage. (G. W. Shin, 2005, p. 619)

For Yun, “the meanest Japanese would be a gentleman and scholar compared to a vodka-drunk, orthodox Russian” (p. 619) and ‘Asian solidarity’ based on the common experience and cultural heritage was a means to “survive the white onslaught” (p. 618). This is the reason why “some even urged fellow Koreans to support Japan [the colonizer] in its fight against Western civilization in such struggles as the Russ-Japanese War, which was seen as a war between the ‘white’ and ‘yellow’ races” (p. 618).

Given that the very concept of Asianism was based on the ‘Yellowness’ in its earliest form (Schmid, 2002; G. W. Shin, 2005), it is not surprising at all to see the

prominence of 'race' in the East Asianism. The concept of Asia, primarily imagined in terms of the grand binary opposition between the white and the yellow becomes more fragmented when it is transplanted into the mundane process of identifying Asia. That is to say, the 'brown' children in multicultural family are rarely identified as 'Asians,' even if their mothers are members of 'Asian' nations, which are assumed to share common cultural heritage in Asianism. Instead they are usually captured by another category of 'Southeast Asians,' based on the racial distinction between the yellow and the brown, regardless of their nationality — be they from Vietnam, Thailand, or Pakistan. 'Their' cultures are determined by and attached to race, hence subsumed into the category of the 'multicultural.' And what lies at the center of the perceived, putatively irresolvable, cultural differences is the unquestioned link between place, race, and culture.

What, then, makes Korean culture fundamentally distinguishable from the cultures of mixed people or immigrants? By what criteria can the line between Korean culture and other cultures be drawn? As I have argued in regard to the definition of the Korean nation, categorization of 'other' cultures can be made without defining discernible essentials of Korean culture. The Hines Ward discourse shows that most attributes or values of Koreans are suggested in highly inclusive and abstract terms such as 'diligence,' 'spirit,' 'sacrifice,' 'maternity,' and so forth. However, these are not unique to Koreans but are universal virtues or values sought in almost every human society.

Therefore, we need to acknowledge that ‘other cultures’ are constructed by perceived differences as a result of contact with the heterogeneous elements of ‘other’ cultures. We need to remember that culture is not something solid and tangible, nor does it have fixed boundaries. Culture is a dynamic process marked by ‘external’ stimulus and interaction between members of a society. And I argue that what is operating in this process is ‘the nation’ as a cognitive entity.

THE “COGNITIVE TURN”: THE NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY OF KOREA

I contend that the Korean nation cannot be defined by its own objective attributes. At this point, we are helped by examining the question of identity through a philosophical paradox known as ‘The Ship of Theseus’ (Kozakai, 2003). Let us suppose there is a ship. As time goes by, the old planks of the ship have to be replaced as they decay or are broken. By the time the shipbuilder dies and leaves it to his grandson, all the parts of the ship have been replaced. In this case, is it still the same ship which his grandfather made? Of course, the grandson is likely to believe that it is his grandfather’s. However, on what basis can he be so certain that it is the same as the original boat? He may answer that it is because the boat maintains its ‘form,’ as Aristotle might suggest. Then, what if someone tears down the boat and builds a new ship with new planks according to the original plans? We can easily imagine the grandson’s response. He might regard it as a duplicate at best, although it has the same form as the original ship.

We can pose the same question about the Korean nation. According to the Korea Population and Housing Census of 2005 (Statistics Korea, 2005), the population of South Korea is about 47 million. The number of live births per year in 2008 was 465,892; the number of deaths was 246,113. Considering that the life expectancy is about 76, we can conclude that almost every member of the Korean nation is replaced in less than 100 years. Then, why are so many people assuming that the identity of the Korean nation continues, even though the members of the nation are constantly being replaced?

Kozakai (2003) says that continuity of the form cannot guarantee the identity of the object. According to him, the foundation of identity exists not inside of the object, the ship, but outside of the object. If we pull down the boat and build a new one with new elements, it can be recognized only as a duplicate because of the high degree of discontinuity. But if it changes over a long period and the degree of change is imperceptible, people feel that the identity is maintained, even though it is being destroyed in the strictest sense. In other words,

Representation caused by the observer's continuous identification of the changed state makes the sense of identity. It is not timeless essentials that guarantee the identity of the object. The existence of an observer who believes in the immutability of the object constructs the identity of the object. The foundation of identity should be sought in psycho-social phenomena raised by the movement of identification, not in the intrinsic state of the object. (p. 77)

Therefore, this thesis suggests a "cognitive turn" (Brubaker, Loveman, & Stamatov, 2004) as a fruitful way of understanding the Korean nation. Rephrasing

Wittgenstein's term, Brubaker and his colleagues suggest a "cognitive turn" in the study of ethnicity and nationalism:

Cognitive perspectives suggest treating racial, ethnic, and national groups not as substantial entities but as collective cultural representations, as widely shared ways of seeing, thinking, parsing social experience, and interpreting the social world. (p. 45)

This view suggests a shift of focus from the static imagination of cultural identity to the very process of 'identification.' As Kozakai (2003) stresses, the foundation of identity exists outside the object, the practice of identification in everyday life.

The present thesis argues that the Korean nation should be understood from this perspective. The Korean nation, not as a real entity but as a cognitive entity, functions as a core mechanism of identification through which nationalist movements or nation-related agendas are carried out and justified. The absent essence of the nation is filled with discourses in the 'real' society. Also, nation as a cognitive entity functions as a framework of categorization through which the 'Korean nation' interprets and understands social phenomena or external conditions. In this process, the nation can be maintained only by categorizing practices, making boundaries with 'others.' That is, the category of the Korean nation, which cannot be defined by objective attributes or essence, can secure its self-identity only through practices of boundary-making and identification.

The 'cultural identity' of the Korean nation is not different. Generally, protecting and sustaining culture is regarded as a pivotal process in maintaining and securing a

group's identity. Like the Korean nation, however, the national culture of Korea as a tangible and solid entity is also doubtful in that the 'culture of Korea and the Korean nation' is being constantly constructed and changed. Historically, we have observed that a new national culture has been established, excavated, or designated, whereas certain custom or rituals have been displaced from their status as national culture. Also, according to traditionalist assertions, contemporary Korea is already contaminated by Western values and lifestyles. Putting aside the ideological aspects of these assertions, we cannot think of contemporary Korea without modernity, a value regarded as the core of the West. Furthermore, Koreans cannot deny the still-influential 'residues' of Japanese colonial rule. In this respect, the cultural identity of Korea is not something solid or fixed (Hall, 1990; Lowe, 1991) but something constructed by identification. The unchanged essence of Korean culture, or of other cultures, does not exist 'out there.'

This argument does not lead, however, to cynical relativism. It does not argue that everything is equal and that nothing is important because everything is constructed. I am not saying that there is no 'central' value. There have always been central social values in particular societies and times. But we cannot call them the essence of the culture. As Kozakai argues (2003), we need to pay attention to the "function" of core values. In other words, we feel that cultural identity has been maintained when we can confirm that the conceived core is being protected. As Chatterjee (1993) writes,

The spiritual, on the other hand, is an "inner" domain bearing the "essential" marks of cultural identity. ... The colonial state, in other words, is kept out of the "inner" domain of national culture, but it is not as though this so-called spiritual

domain is left unchanged. (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 6, as cited in Stringer, 2000, p. 306)

As we have seen from the Hines Ward discourses, the essential attributes of Koreans can exist only in discourses. These attributes or virtues of Koreans can be supported neither by 'real' measures nor by logical proof. In this regard, 'other' cultures are not tangible or solid entities, and boundaries with them are also fluid and not fixed. Of course, if the 'others' are perceived to be non-threatening to 'our identity' or to be useful in reinforcing it, they are temporarily incorporated into 'us.' Most mixed blood people in Korea, however, fall within neither category.

Chapter 5: Conclusion: Culture and Nation

What this thesis has attempted to show is that the national/cultural identity of the Korean nation is constructed by social experiences and practices of identification. As a notable site of discursive practices marked by various attempts to appropriate the meaning of the Korean nation, the Hines Ward Syndrome and the multiculturalism thesis show the fluid and unstable boundaries of the Korean nation created by ‘othering’ practices of categorization. The attributes of Koreans heralded by the media so as to incorporate Hines Ward into the category of Korean cannot be applied to other mixed blood people in Korea since they were captured by the net of multiculturalism from the beginning. The Korean nation as a cognitive entity and as a framework of categorization still exerts its power in the process of interpreting and understanding external environments, even in this ‘globalized world’ marked by multiculturalism.

However, this “constructedness” (Ignacio, 2005) should not lead to a naïve celebration of ‘fluid cultural identity’ or an optimistic declaration of ‘free choice’ among multiple identities imposed on individuals. As I have mentioned above, external objects cannot be recognized without ‘subjective’ categorization. This subjectivity, however, should not be seen as a mere ‘fabrication.’ It has to be considered inter-subjectivity constituted by the interaction between the individual and society, as well as between members of the community. Therefore, categorization is subject to historical contexts and the existing discursive order. For instance, as Kozakai (2003) points out, race is a

‘subjective’ categorization by the arbitrary criterion of skin color, which can maximize the visual discernibility between Europeans and non-Europeans, in contrast to other possible criteria such as blood-type, eye color, or hair color that make it hard to distinguish the white from others. Nevertheless, this subjective categorization ‘chosen’ by imperialist projects is far from being a mere ‘false-consciousness’ that remains only in our heads.

Taking a constructionist view, therefore, does not mean conveniently dismissing oppressive and institutionalized impositions of identity on individuals or “turning a blind eye” (Ignacio, 2005, p. 43) to ‘real’ social problems. Instead of admitting material power “*despite*” the constructedness, we need to take more “positive” position that the reality is established “*based on*” or “*due to*” the constructed “fiction” (Kozakai, 2003, p. 14, emphasizes original).

Multiculturalism and the newly-coined term ‘Kosian,’ widely adopted as an alternative term to *honhyeol*, need to be reconsidered in this respect. If Korea has become a multi-cultural or multi-racial society simply because more than ten percent of the population is not ‘Korean,’ until when, exactly, was Korea a unified nation? What determines whether a society is a multi-cultural one is not a ‘real’ fact. The term ‘Kosian,’ referring to ‘multicultural children,’ is no different. Despite its egalitarian sound, it still assumes the Korea nation and Korean culture to be an entity distinguishable even from the continent of which Korea is a part. Considering the fact that Kosian usually refers to ‘darker’ children born to mothers from Southeast Asian countries such as

Vietnam and the Philippines (Japanese Koreans are hardly ever called Kosian), it still indicates a supposed superiority of Korea to relatively underdeveloped other Asian countries. By positioning them as others in the form of an asymmetric binary opposition between Korea and Asia, Korea maintains its privileged identity just as the term ‘Amerasian’ or ‘Asian American’ does. Of course, such people should not be discriminated against but this does not mean that we have to recognize and distinguish them by the ‘multi-’ framework. Instead of celebrating the multiculturalist discourses which presume the existence of a solid Korean culture and of distinguishable other cultures based on ethnicity, we need to accept the fact that culture is a process, not a stable and solid entity directly connected to a particular nation or ethnicity. Culture is a dynamic process in which individuals, not the culture itself, influence ‘each other,’ and it is in this context that we need to understand ‘fluid’ cultural and national identity.

Given the pivotal role of culture in the reproduction of identity, there is one more important question to answer. Going back to the case of the Korean Wave, when encountering cultural products made in ‘foreign’ countries, people usually recognize them in terms of ‘cultures of this region’ or ‘cultures from that country.’ This cognitive process would normally occur when the Korean Wave is received by other Asian peoples. But one of the key elements that made the Korean Wave possible is its contemporaneity or “shared modernity” (Iwabuchi, 2004, as cited in K. Lee, 2006, p. 232), not the inherent Koreanness of these cultural products. That is, the Korean Wave is more ‘of modernity’

than 'of Korea.' Moreover, it is worth of remembering that one of the reasons why Korean cultural products were able to gain popularity in Asian countries is because they were cheap products that could fill the cultural hollow in some countries in Asia, as Kim Hyun-Mee (2003) argues. It is clear that the Korean Wave does not bear the 'core' of Korean culture nor do such cultural products reflect the 'real' life of Koreans. Nevertheless, many people are still equating the Korean Wave with Korean culture. It can be said that 'nation' is often conflated with 'culture' in the process of categorization.

What then is the core or essence of Korean culture? Does it really exist? Reversing the question, what is the core or essentials of other cultures? How and to what extent does the reception of other cultures influence our own cultural identity? We can answer these questions only by abandoning the concept of Korean culture as a solid entity. As I have argued, the dominant nationalist discourses about the Korean Wave presume that it proves the superiority of Korean culture. In this context, they presuppose the national culture of Korea as a solid entity that can be defined by certain essential elements. This assumes that each culture exists as an independent unity that consists of discernible and objective attributes.

The Korean Wave is by no means a unified flow. I argue that if any analysis focuses only on the Korean Wave as a monolithic transnational flow of Korean pop culture or as a homogenized manifestation of Korean culture, it will immediately lose its analytical purchase. When seen as a homogeneous set of cultural products that reflect Korean culture, the Korean Wave is instrumentalized. It is the same for the broader

meaning of Korean culture. Culture is, however, a dynamic process, not a fixed unity. It is worth noting, as Kozakai (2000) said, that “it is people in the world that receive or reject the heterogeneous elements penetrating into the society, not the culture per se” (p. 222). The Korean culture or national culture is continuously changing. If a culture is a solid unity and can perpetuate its attributes, how can we explain the generational cultural gap and the varying degree of reception of other cultures? Custom, tradition, ritual, and even language — those things generally referred to as constituents of culture — do, as we all know, change. This fact shows the “constructedness” (Ignacio, 2005, p. 44) of culture and cultural identity. When we accept the dominant perspective on Korean culture, the perceived cultural difference between them and us cannot be resolved, and the others consequently become objects to be conquered or the other (inferior) part of a binary opposition.

Yoon and Na (2005a) provide an interesting study in this regard. In their study of Korean teenagers’ reception of Japanese cultural products, the teenaged Korean interviewees “tended to conceive of a certain ‘our culture’ although they could not define a specific ‘Korean emotional structure’” (pp. 20-21). They also compared “relatively ‘innocent’ Korean culture to ‘exciting’ but ‘provocative’ and ‘obscene’ Japanese culture” (p. 21). That is, they were reproducing the mainstream discourses which assume that the essentials of Korean culture can be contaminated by Japanese culture. According to the authors, a more interesting result of the study is that

a considerable number of the participants did not think of mass culture as the cultural core or index of identity. ... It is noteworthy that most teenagers differentiated their favorability towards Japanese cultural products from their evaluation of the general Japanese culture. Some interviewees did not even regard the mass culture as 'culture,' seeing them as a mere commodity or entertainment. (p. 23)

Teenagers who assumed the "essentials of Korean culture" did not think of Japanese 'mass' culture as the substantial culture of Japan. That is, they are consuming "Japanese cultural products as resources of mass culture which cannot influence the essentials of Korean culture" (p. 24). This tendency was also found in the authors' other similar study on Japanese teenagers' consumption of the Korean Wave (Yoon and Na, 2005b). In that study, they also conclude that "the Korean Wave among Japanese teenagers was marked by a limited consumption of otherness" (p. 34).

The implication of this is that, to Asian consumers, the Korean Wave may not be 'the Korean culture,' in contrast to the nationalist assertions by Koreans. Given the Asian peoples' "narcissist" (J. U. Baek, 2006, p. 16) and "nostalgic" (Yoon and Na, 2005b, p. 34) style of consumption, the vision of East Asianism that puts the Korean Wave at the center of an envisaged 'denationalized' identity seems to be far off. The Korean Wave can be appropriated by other Koreans in a way in which they secure and reinforce their own cultural identities. In this respect, the Korean Wave is also an experience through which Korean people shape and confirm their own national/cultural identity.

Therefore, we need to acknowledge 'other cultures' as constructed by 'nation' as cognitive entity and 'othering' practice. 'Other cultures' as cognitive categorization can

be employed without defining the essence that is fundamentally distinguishable from Korean culture. The ‘national culture of Korea’ is no different. The essentials of Korean or any other culture do not exist from the first. ‘Other’ culture is constructed by the perceived difference between our culture and theirs through the practice of identification.

As examined above, the most conspicuous characteristic of the discourses on the Korean Wave is that most of them are contingent upon the cognitive framework of ‘nation.’ And Korean nationalism, which has been mainly used — and understood — as a political ideology or a means of political justification, has expanded to the realm of culture. The nation as a cognitive entity becomes a core mechanism of identification, and its absent core is filled up with discourses in the society. That is, the national/cultural identity of Korea can be maintained only by making boundaries between them and us and by the practice of identification. Further, the condition for the existence of nationalist movements is not an immutable national identity or a real entity on which it is grounded. On the contrary, this thesis argues that nationalist movements emerge out of desires to make a clear ‘point of reference,’ exactly because there is no solid and definable identity.

This argument, however, does not mean that there are no central values in certain societies and periods. There have always been the central social values, but we cannot call them the perpetual essence of a culture. As Kozakai argues (2000), we need to pay attention to its function. In other words, we feel that the cultural identity has been perpetuated, when we can confirm that the conceived core is being protected.

It is clear that boundaries are never fixed. In the discourses on the Korean Wave, as I have argued, the ‘other’ can be Vietnam or China as well as Japanese or American capital. Of course ‘others’ can be temporarily incorporated into us. It is the nation as a cognitive entity and a categorizing framework and the fluid boundaries that entail the inconsistent patterns — for instance, accepting Japanese capital and cultural products while rejecting the conceived ‘culture of Japan’ — of cultural reception. The Korean Wave itself and the related discourses should be interpreted in this context.

But it is also clear that the boundaries should be fixed at some point. Although it is a well established perspective that the cultural identity is not stable or fixed (Lowe, 1991), this does not necessarily mean an endlessly floating or ever-slipping identity without any constraints in terms of adopting and exploiting collective identity. Rather, at some point, it is and should be temporarily fixed and anchored. This articulation of identity is always in progress, and hence the continuous process of identification.

At the same time, we need to acknowledge that we do not really have many alternatives to the language that links nation-state and culture. As in the myth of national company/interest/culture, the categorization is an indispensable process by which we can organize things and make sense of the world. Therefore, important thing is not to dismiss the ‘false consciousness,’ but rather to try to understand the multiple aspects of the discursive site in which the power-knowledge nexus is continuously subverted, reasserted, and negotiated.

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