

## Korea Crossing Cultures

The various expressions of Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, have preoccupied scholars in media and cultural studies in many places in the world. Studies abound about the geopolitical implications of the Olympic Games held in Seoul in 1988, the emergence of Korean global films in the 1990s and its continued productivity into the twenty-first century, the rise to popularity and wide dissemination of Korean dramas and K-pop in the 2000s, and the strategic move by the state to invest in the international promotion of Korean cuisine as a form of “gastrodiplomacy” in the 2010s. Part of its strong attraction to scholars is the fact that Hallyu remains one of the very few examples of a non-Western popular culture that has gained worldwide phenomenal success. This *Plaridel* special issue seeks to contribute to the discussion on the growing interest on Korean culture but through an oblique angle from which the cultural signifier that is “Korea” is decentered.

In the first article on Anna Deavere Smith’s *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (1994), Ka-eul Yoo examines the nature of docudrama and inquires whether the Smith’s work was effective in shedding light on the complexity of representing “racial” identities in America. Smith’s *Twilight* delves into the televised riots that ensued after the first Rodney King trial. The presence of the Korean American, beside the African American and Latino American, in *Twilight* as a marginal figure in cultural politics is actually central in Yoo’s investigation. In the second article on Joon-ho Bong’s *Snowpiercer* (2013), Ye Dam Yi explores the limits and problems of the category of national cinema, especially when it involves contesting and/or appropriating American

cinema, and reflects on the nature of Korean-centered transnational films. *Snowpiercer* is a quintessential transnational film—internationally co-produced, multilingual in dialogue, and starring actors from different countries. The film lends itself well to Yi’s concerns, because, even while the film is transnational, the most significant financial and artistic contribution to the film are by Koreans, and it interfaces in a single work the cultural capital of both Hallyu and Hollywood.

In the third article, Dina Magdy ElDakhakhny, through the method of autoethnography, problematizes how the Korean wave—in the form of Korean cuisine as represented in media and as a manner of preparing food—is negotiated by cultural outsiders, particularly by a Muslim scholar and fan who encountered Hallyu first in her homeland in Egypt and then in South Korea as a foreign student. Finally, in the fourth article, Ronnel Laranjo analyzes the cultural politics involved in the state’s active accommodation of multiculturalism as a mode of social construction in Korea. Laranjo does this particularly by examining texts written in the Filipino/Tagalog language and distributed by the Korean government as an educational service to local communities.

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Apart from the special focus on Korean cultures and representations, this *Plaridel* issue also features papers on Philippine cinema, which are put together here to commemorate the centennial of the establishment of the first Filipino film company, Malayan Movies, founded by the Father of Philippine Cinema, Jose Nepomuceno in 1917. In this section on Philippine cinema, there are two main articles. First is Tito R. Quilling, Jr.’s study on the use of space and the visualization and narrativization of informal architecture in Lino Brocka’s “Hellow, Soldier” (1974). Second is a study by Feorillo P.A. Demeterio III, Generoso Pamittan, Jr., Chari Amado, and Victoria Amante on the sociocultural and political implications of using gay language in selected films starring Vice Ganda. The rest of the issue presents interviews, short pieces, reviews of books, and a roundtable discussion that altogether put a spotlight on new works on Philippine film scholarship as well as on developments in Filipino film culture, particularly the formation of online networks of cinephiles and the emergence of a new Cebuano cinema.



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