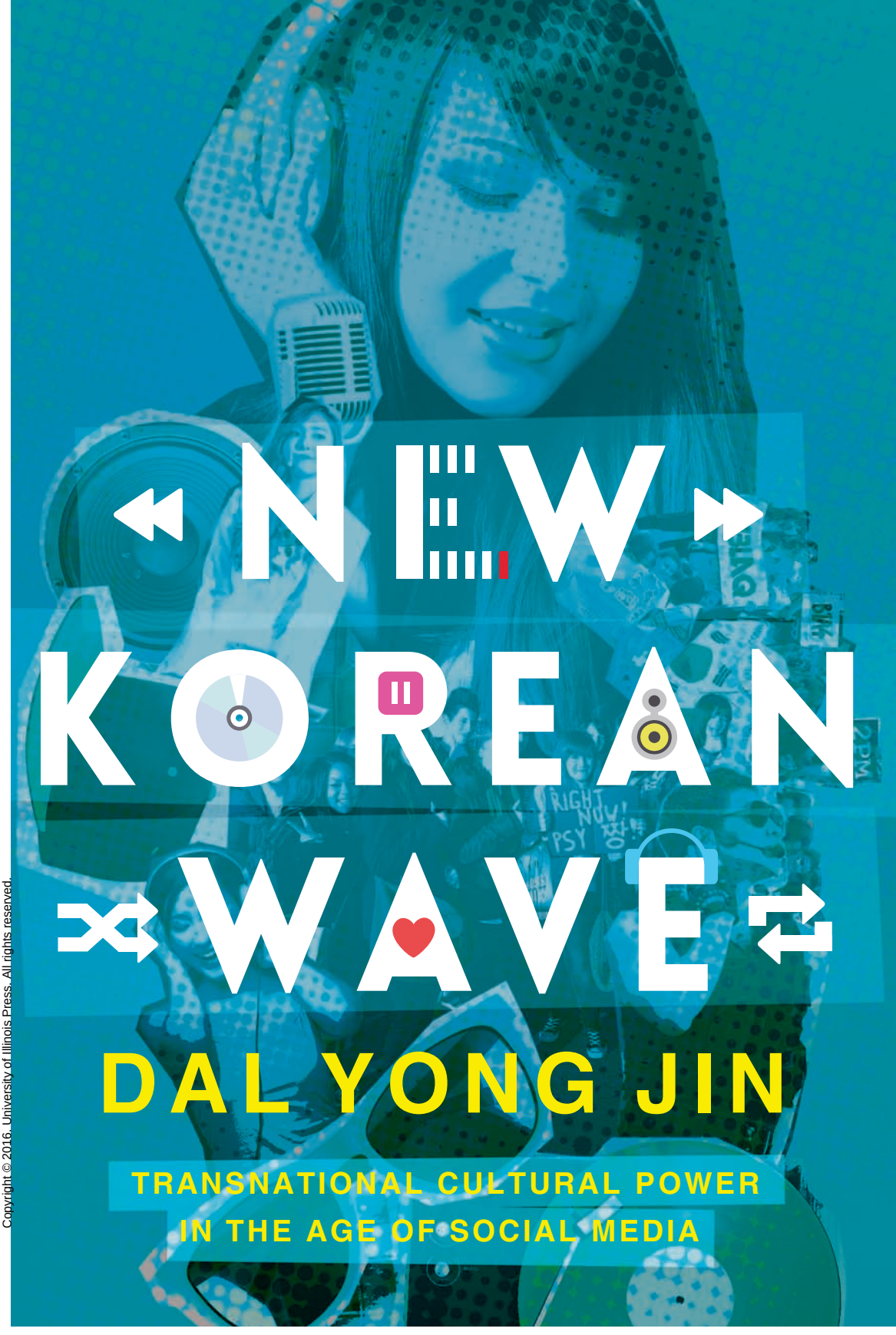

New Korean Wave

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Transnational Cultural Power in the Age of Social Media

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Contents

Preface

The Korean Wave, symbolizing the rapid growth of Korea's cultural industries and their exports of cultural products in Asia since the late 1990s, has experienced substantial changes in the 2000s. There are several key elements characterizing the recent growth of *Hallyu* as transcultural popular culture and digital technology developed by a local force after around 2008 that are very different from the early stage of export growth between the late 1990s and 2007. The most significant part of the nascent *Hallyu* trend is the evolution of social media and its influence in the realm of local cultural products, because fans around the world heavily access social media to enjoy Korean popular music (K-pop), digital games, and films. As in the case of Psy's "Gangnam Style," which was a globally popular K-pop song primarily due to becoming a YouTube sensation, social media have shifted the notion of global cultural flows of local popular culture. Korea-based smartphones and video games have also become some of the major parts of *Hallyu*. Unlike *Hallyu* 1.0 between 1997 and 2007, which focused on film and television programs as major products to be exported, *Hallyu* 2.0 between 2008 and the present has emphasized the convergence of creative content and digital technologies. The cultural markets for Korea have changed at the same time. While Asia has been the largest cultural market for the Korean cultural industries, other parts of the world, including North America, western Europe, and South America, have gradually admitted Korean popular culture, both audiovisual products and digital technologies.

Consequently, Korea has become the first among non-Western countries that meaningfully exports almost all of its cultural forms, such as television programs, films, popular music, animation, online gaming, and smartphones, to both Western and non-Western countries. There have been several countries that have penetrated the global markets with their cultural products, but they primarily export only limited cultural forms (for example, television dramas from Mexico and Brazil, as well as animation and console games from Japan). The contemporary global presence of diverse Korean cultural forms cannot be seen with other non-Western countries.

As the major characteristics of the Korean Wave have changed, academic discourses, both in terms of academic conferences and seminars as well as academic publications on *Hallyu,* have been pouring in during recent years. However, as a reflection of the diverse areas of the Korean Wave, in terms of cultural forms (for example, television programs, film, popular music, and video games), academic scopes (cultural studies, policy studies, and institutional analysis), and major fields (plastic surgery, Korean food, and fashion), these events sometimes have not taken tangible academic form in terms of journal articles or books. Several books published in the early 2010s are all edited volumes, and they mainly provide materials on current events with no critical or analytical rigor.

Although they were all valuable, I felt that something was missing. They were all significant individually; however, they missed several important elements, such as history, theory, and critical perspectives running through several cultural forms and academic scopes. After pondering these issues, I started to develop this book as the first attempt to analyze the New Korean Wave compared to the initial state of *Hallyu,* exploring the recent characteristics of *Hallyu* in a sociocultural context alongside its textual meanings. I believed that this book should focus on not only the celebratory achievement of local popular culture and digital technology through the analysis of media texts, but also the significance of social milieu in the development of local culture and technology. Therefore, I critically and historically contextualized the nascent development of Korean popular culture within the debates of neoliberal globalization versus cultural globalization, known as hybridization.

Ultimately, I determine the possibility of the advancement of non-Western theories and new theoretical perspectives in the midst of the continuation of Western dominance. In other words, with the growth of local popular culture as shown in the current *Hallyu* phenomenon, I explore whether non-Western perspectives challenge central assumptions and arguments developed by Western perspectives. I discuss the integration of Western and non-Western perspectives

in media and area studies, the uses of theories of global comparative research, the relevance of non-Western theories and models, and successful and failed efforts at theoretical cross-pollination. Throughout the discussion, I hope to shed light on current developments and place them in a perspective that has relevance for future transnational cultural flows and productions.

Because I have continued my academic journey on the Korean Wave since the early 2000s, the ideas of this book originally appeared as materials in a few academic publications, such as *Javnost—the Public* (2010) and *Popular Music and Society* (2014), although I have extensively developed my ideas and discussions and elaborate on them in this book. The second chapter of the book, though, was primarily based on an article titled "The Power of the Nation-State amid Neoliberal Reform: Shifting Cultural Politics in the New Korean Wave" that was first published in *Pacific Affairs* 87, no. 1 (2014): 71–92.

PART I

The Political Economy of Cultural Industries

1

The Rise of the New Korean Wave

> If it were not for the rapid proliferation of social media, the contemporary boom of the Korean Wave would have been impossible. Speaking from the perspective of an avid fan in the West, but also aware of the immense popularity of the Korean Wave in Latin and South America, where I am originally from, I was initially very impressed to see how it reached countries like Mexico, Peru, and Brazil with such fervor; but with this generation of youth that can easily access content online including subtitles, torrent file sharing, and media streaming, it is less surprising to me upon reflection when I began thinking of our increasing digital culture.
>
> —Interview with a twenty-three-year-old female student in Vancouver, Canada

In the early twenty-first century, Korean popular culture has become a global sensation. Several forms of culture, including television programs, film, music, and animation, have increasingly penetrated the Western cultural markets, including North America and Europe. While the influence of Western culture, including Hollywood films, has continued in non-Western cultural markets, the Korean cultural industries have expanded the exportation of their locally created popular culture to several parts of the world. Social media, both social networking sites (SNS, such as Facebook) and user-generated content (UGC, such as YouTube), have played a major role as new forms of platforms for Korean popular culture. Korean popular culture is arguably reaching almost every corner of the world, and popular culture fans around the world enjoy Korean music and television programs on these social media in addition to traditional media. Digital technologies and culture, such as video gaming and smartphones, have also become some of the major parts of *Hallyu* due to their substantial penetra-

tion in the global markets. These levels of successful cultural and technological exports and dissemination globally are not something that has yet materialized for other non-Western countries.

It was not long ago that South Korea (hereafter Korea) started to emerge as one of the major centers for the production of transnational popular culture. Since the late 1990s, the Korean cultural industries have developed many of their cultural products and expanded the export of these products to mainly East and Southeast Asia. Korea has become a new local force for the production of transnational popular culture, exporting its own cultural products into Asian countries. The sudden rise of Korean popular culture and its dissemination in Asian countries, known as the Korean Wave, or *Hallyu,* took many people in Asia by surprise, as foreign or transnational popular culture in Asia had often been associated with the United States, Japan, or Hong Kong (Joo 2011; Youna Kim 2013). Despite some concerns by a few media outlets and scholars who have argued that "*Hallyu* is a fad" that is going to disappear sooner or later due to both protective cultural policies in some Asian countries and the emergence of China and India as new powerhouses in the realm of popular culture, the Korean Wave has further developed from a regional reception to a global occurrence, although it has not yet fully bloomed. Many policy makers, cultural practitioners, media scholars, and, most of all, popular culture fans around the world are amazed by Korean culture and digital media, and they are keen to learn the reasons for the global popularity of a local culture originating from the small, once peripheral, country of Korea.

How to Define *Hallyu* 2.0

While the Korean Wave tradition has continued since the late 1990s, there are several major variances in this phenomenon, particularly since around 2008. Although we cannot fully isolate the current form of *Hallyu* from the previous manifestation lasting until 2007, the New Korean Wave, or *Hallyu* 2.0, existing since 2008, has its own distinctive characteristics differentiating itself from the previous *Hallyu* tradition. In order to historicize the growth of the Korean Wave, I characterize it into roughly two major historical developments: the *Hallyu* 1.0 era (approximately between 1997 and 2007) and the *Hallyu* 2.0, New Korean Wave, era (mainly from 2008 to the present). Although these two periods share some common phenomena, after my analysis, which can be seen throughout the chapters, I am certain that they are dissimilar in their major characteristics, such as the major cultural forms exported, technological developments, fan bases, and government cultural policies (table 1.1).[1]

Table 1.1: Comparison of *Hallyu* 1.0 versus *Hallyu* 2.0

	Hallyu 1.0	*Hallyu* 2.0
Major points		
Period	1997–2007	2008–present
Primary genres started	TV dramas, films	K-pop, video games, animation
Technologies	Online games	Social media (SNS, smartphones), digital games
Major regions	East Asia	Asia, Europe, North America
Primary consumers	In their 30s–40s	teens–20s included
Major cultural policies	Hands-off policies	Hands-on policies

Source: Parts of the table are cited from "*Hallyu* 2.0 Has Begun" 2010.

To begin with, the trend in the global cultural trade for the Korean cultural industries has changed since 2008, when the export of cultural products, including broadcasting, movies, music, and games, surpassed the import of cultural products. The overall import of foreign cultural goods has consequently declined, with some exceptions, since 2008. During that same year, Korea exported $2.33 billion worth of cultural goods, while importing $1.98 billion, which was down from $3.35 billion in 2007 (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012b, 70). Korea finally achieved its surplus in cultural trade in 2008, and this trend continued until 2014, which is a major characteristic of the New Korean Wave.[2]

Second, in recent years, Korea has become the top non-Western country that meaningfully exports almost all of its cultural forms, such as television programs, film, popular music, animation, and digital technologies, including online gaming and smartphones (not only as technology but also as culture) to both Western and non-Western countries. There have been several other countries that have penetrated the global markets with their cultural products, but they primarily export only limited cultural forms. Mexico and Brazil, for instance, have exported television programs, known as *telenovelas,* and Hong Kong was famous for its Kung-Fu movies in the 1970s and 1980s. Japan has also become a global leader with its animation; however, its popular music and television programs have not been received well in the Western markets, regardless of their successful regional penetration in East Asia.

Third, the most noteworthy element of the current *Hallyu* trend is the swift advance of social media and their influence in the realm of local cultural products, because fans around the world heavily access social media to enjoy K-pop, video games (for example, online, mobile, and social games), television programs, and films (see Jin 2012). Korea-based smartphones and video games themselves have driven the Korean Digital Wave, which is the major part of

Hallyu. In fact, at the center of *Hallyu* 2.0 is the development of new digital technology and social media.[3] Until June 2007, there were no smartphones, and YouTube was created in 2005 and acquired by Google in 2006. Therefore, the influences of these digital platforms were not significant in the *Hallyu* 1.0 era,[4] because such popularity of local culture in the global market is contingent upon a high penetration of digital technology and social media through which soft pop cultural content flows with ease. During my interview, an American female student, age twenty-two, stated: "I started enjoying Korean popular culture in 2008 when I was a junior in high school. The current Korean Wave seems to be more social media based to reach more of a global base than the older Korean Wave, which seemed smaller scale and largely kept to Asia. The most significant factor for the growth of the New Korean Wave is social media. If not for YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Viki, many international fans would never have heard of the Korean entertainment industry." In fact, as in the case of Psy's globally popularized K-pop song "Gangnam Style," which as of June 16, 2013, had more than 1.6 billion hits on YouTube, and again exceeded YouTube's 32-bit integer-count limit in December 2014 (BBC News Asia 2014),[5] social media have shifted the notion of global cultural flows of local popular culture.[6] Many North American fans of Korean television dramas—in particular, entertainment genres—also enjoy these programs on YouTube. Without digital technologies and social media, the current form of the Korean Wave surely would not exist. Unlike other countries' crossovers with one particular cultural form, the New Korean Wave has achieved, though not yet fully, this crossover with several cultural products and digital technologies as they penetrate Western markets with a substantial number of these products.

Fourth, government policy has shifted from hands-off (indirect support to the global trade of cultural products) in the early years of *Hallyu* 1.0 to hands-on (direct support) in the new *Hallyu* era as a result of changing political ideologies and the relations of each government to neighboring countries as well as the United States. Popular culture cannot be separated from cultural policies, and it is necessary to analyze the influences of key cultural policies in the development of Korean popular culture. In the *Hallyu* 1.0 period, the Korean government developed its cultural policy to initially support indirect intervention and deregulation so that the private sector could advance the *Hallyu* phenomenon. However, the previous Lee Myung-bak (2008–13) and the current Park Geun-hye (2013–) governments have subsequently changed their emphasis on cultural policy toward a creative content policy and have begun to be actively involved in the cultural sector.

These latest two governments since 2008 have focused on the creative industries (previously the cultural industries) as a significant part of the national

economy, with one of the emphases having been intellectual properties.[7] Indeed, intellectual property rights have become some of the most significant revenue resources for the Korean cultural industries and performers, and they are much more important than future exports of cultural goods. This means the government and corporations in the cultural industries carefully develop their strategic policies because some cultural products, including those within the music industry, get benefits from intellectual property rights as well.

Of course, *Hallyu* denotes not Korean popular culture per se, but the high tide of Korean culture in non-Korea territory. *Hallyu* cannot be seen as a transnational cultural phenomenon only. *Hallyu* is not just cultural in its valance or determined solely by international fans. Instead, *Hallyu* has to be seen also as a national-institutional policy initiative with clear ambitions reaching beyond the cultural domain. *Hallyu* as a national policy initiative is a planned, concerted effort for the whole of Korea's national interest and is helmed by a handful of entrepreneurs, mainstream media, state bureaucrats, and professional consultants, mostly based in Korea (J. B. Choi 2015).[8] Consequently, these two governments have also expanded the scope of *Hallyu,* from the exports of popular culture to tourism, Korean food, and fashion, which seeks the crucial involvement of government initiative and participation.

These shifts together lead us to think that the historical evolution of the New Korean Wave must be understood according to a wider range of characteristics, such as major cultural forms exported, technological developments, and government cultural policies, in addition to the changing media texts themselves. The New Korean Wave, as the phenomenon of the growth of Korean popular culture in the international market, has continued traditions of the *Hallyu* 1.0 era; however, due to these major characteristics differentiating it from the early *Hallyu* tradition, it is crucial to analyze the backgrounds behind the *Hallyu* 2.0 development and its influences on both global and national cultural industries.

Major Features of the Book

This book, as the first attempt to comprehensively analyze the New Korean Wave in comparison to the initial stage of *Hallyu,* explores the recent evolution of *Hallyu* in a socioeconomic context alongside its textual meanings. Previous works primarily examined the major reasons for the success of specific Korean cultural products in the Asian cultural markets. The majority of studies on the Korean Wave (Huat and Iwabuchi 2008; D. Kim and M.-S. Kim 2011; Youna Kim 2013; Kuwahara 2014; Lie 2015) have been rooted in anthropology or cultural studies and have taken an ethnographic approach, with a focus on case studies. Their priorities aimed to analyze textual images used in popular culture and

cultural reasons for the growth of Korean popular culture in Asia. They also did not engage with the increasing role of social media and digital technologies as a reflection of *Hallyu*'s short history.

Unlike these previous works, this book discusses not only the celebratory achievement of Korean popular culture through the analysis of media texts, but also the significance of social meaning in the development of local Korean popular culture. It is especially about the political economy of Korean popular culture and digital technologies in the global context. I look at the operations and globalization strategies of Korean cultural industries alongside changing cultural policies in order to comprehend the power relations within cultural politics, both nationally and globally. Because the political economy approach to the study of popular culture focuses on analyzing cultural industries and cultural policies, I emphasize the economic and industrial aspects of popular culture, explore questions related to the interaction of politics and economics, and provide a better view of the big picture by articulating the relations among cultural industries, the global cultural market, and government. "Since the political economy approach is itself focusing on digital technology because of its major role in changing the form of cultural flows" (Otmazgin 2013, 2–3), it is also critical to analyze digital technologies, which are rapidly becoming an integral part of the New Korean Wave.

As such, this book critically and historically contextualizes the nascent development of Korean popular culture and digital technologies within hybridization. The critical analysis of the New Korean Wave should not be taken as totally rejecting positive changes. Instead, I believe that constructive critique is a necessary deviation to contribute to the further growth of cultural industries and the quality of cultural content. Furthermore, as the methodology and theory sections explain, I also utilize textual analysis and in-depth interviews, which are primarily culturalist approaches, in order to fully understand several major characteristics of the current Korean Wave tradition.

More specifically, this book systematically analyzes several key elements for the change and continuity of the Korean Wave in very recent years compared to the early stage of *Hallyu.* Because my approach to the New Korean Wave is inclusive, this book encompasses not only popular culture, such as television programs, films, animation, and music, but also digital technologies, including smartphones and digital gaming, as primary sectors that I examine through the lens of cultural globalization, known as hybridization. Given that the Korean Wave phenomenon has changed its own major characteristics over the past eighteen years, I focus on the ways in which local cultural industries have developed their distinctive features, in particular the creation of hybrid local

culture and the exports of hybrid popular culture in recent years. I also map out how social and digital media as new outlets have played a major role in the exports of several cultural genres in the global markets, as well as the ways in which digital technologies themselves become parts of the New Korean Wave.

Second, this book documents the historical growth of the Korean Wave, which means that each chapter starts with the sociocultural contexts of pre–Korean Wave history of that particular sector because the current Korean Wave cannot be separated from the previous developments of Korean cultural policy and cultural industries. As Tae Jin Yoon aptly puts it, "It is not desirable to study a cultural text as if it is ahistorical, and historical study is a process to reconstruct the past by finding and regrouping fragments. Reconstruction, of course, means that the past cannot only be described, but also be explained" (1997, 68). Although we cannot go back several decades, I discuss some early development of the Korean cultural industries directly influencing the contemporary Korean Wave, including the digital *Hallyu* 2.0. I expect that this historicization process allows us to firmly comprehend several key developments in the Korean Wave tradition, from the pre-*Hallyu* era to the *Hallyu* 1.0 era and again to the Hallyu 2.0 era.

Third, I examine the fundamental assumptions of the concept of hybridity in the swift growth of Korean popular culture and digital media. As will be detailed in the next section, I utilize hybridity as a major theoretical framework in analyzing the recent development of popular culture. The main goal here is not only to examine the ways in which local cultural industries hybridize their cultural products, but also to investigate whether they achieve the primary goal of hybridization, which creates a new type of culture driven by local forces. This is very critical because we must be able to confirm whether Korean cultural industries and producers have utilized hybridity in creating new possible cultures, which are free from U.S. dominance in the realms of popular culture and digital media, or whether they have merely advanced physical mixes between Western culture and local culture.

During the process, I also interrogate the transnationalism of popular culture, not only through the examination of the exports of domestic popular culture to other countries, but also through Korea's utilization of Western culture in the production of its local popular culture. Because many Koreans and cultural producers have been influenced by Western culture, it is logical to analyze transnational influences from the West in the production of hybridization in Korea's local popular culture and how the Korean Wave eventually becomes a global sensation. I expect that this circular transnational cultural flow, emphasizing the possibility of contraflow—the cultural flow from non-Western to Western

countries—uncovers the true meaning of Korean popular culture in the era of globalization.

Although upholding the consistency in utilizing hybridity theory throughout all chapters, each chapter develops several particular forms of the hybridization process, such as television formats in chapter 3, linguistic mixing in chapter 6, glocalization and contraflow in chapter 7, and technological hybridization in chapter 8. These theoretical frameworks work with hybridity to help us understand the rapidly shifting Korean Wave in the digital media era.

Fourth, I examine government policies as the most significant yet least discussed factor in the development of the Korean cultural industries and cultural policies, because changing cultural policies in conjunction with economic and historical considerations have played a pivotal role in the growth of the Korean cultural industries and the New Korean Wave. The contrast and comparison of cultural policies between the governments in the *Hallyu* 1.0 era (Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-hyun) and the governments in the *Hallyu* 2.0 era (Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye) are my primary concern, because our understanding of changing cultural policies provides the basis to analyze the role of neoliberalism in the formation and actualization of cultural policies in the Korean context, which has continuously developed state-led developmental policies.

Finally, but not least, I determine the possibility of the development of non-Western cultural hegemony and new theoretical perspectives in the midst of the continuation of Western dominance. In other words, with the growth of local popular culture and digital technologies as shown through the current *Hallyu* phenomenon, I explore whether non-Western perspectives challenge central assumptions and arguments developed by Western perspectives. This means that I do not simply admit to the increasing role of non-Western culture in the global cultural markets, but attempt to interpret whether non-Western forces challenge asymmetrical power relations between the West and non-West. Because the increasing role of local forces cannot automatically prove the significance of local Korean popular culture in the Western cultural markets, I contextualize the meaning of the popularity of local culture through the lens of hybridity and contracultural flows.

In terms of methodological considerations, several scholarly analyses and discourses about *Hallyu* previously focused on the cultural aspects of local popular culture, such as identities among youth and changing lifestyles, in the development of the Korean Wave phenomenon by employing audience studies (Sujeong Kim 2009). However, popular culture is no longer a discrete and distinct sector. All its circuits, technology, cultural texts, and promotion have become intertwined with the wider orbits of digital networks and culture as

critical zones for growth and profits (Kline, Dyer-Witheford, and de Peuter 2003). Cultural products should be defined based on specific combinations of technical, social, cultural, and economic characteristics and not exclusively on any one of these alone. Through the examination of the New Korean Wave in light of its sociocultural elements and critical studies contingencies, I illuminate some of the underexamined complexities inherent in the conception, development, implementation, and reception of *Hallyu* in a global arena.

As such, I employ political economy approaches, emphasizing the historicization of the growth of the *Hallyu* 2.0 era from the *Hallyu* 1.0 period, and combine them with textual analysis to strengthen the major analytical framework. Most chapters include a textual analysis of one or two audiovisual cultural products for case studies, which benefit the readers in understanding hybridized Korean popular culture. I also conducted in-depth interviews with about ten producers and media scholars and forty Korean popular culture and digital platform users in Seoul, Korea, and Vancouver, Canada, between the summers of 2012 and 2014. I used a semistructured interview to allow the general interviewees to express their opinions beyond our questions. As a starting point, I asked them questions regarding their experiences and understanding of the recent growth of Korean popular culture and digital technologies, the role of social and digital media in the swift penetration of Korean popular culture in Western countries, and their perspectives on the New Korean Wave. This converging and innovative approach provides sources for an in-depth analysis, mainly because while the historical analysis and interviews provide the reasons for the major shifting trend of the Korean Wave, the textual analysis offers the readers an understanding of the changing nature of cultural contents themselves.

Hybridity in Korean Popular Culture

In this book, I critically engage with hybridization as a major theoretical framework within the context of transnational popular culture and digital technologies. In particular, this book is not only adopting postcolonial approaches in its notion of the third space but also critically politicizing hybridization theory in the case of Korea's popular culture. Admitting that hybridity in cultural texts is one of the essential matters in cultural globalization in the midst of the emergence of local forces in the global cultural markets, I analyze hybridity in its historical-structural perspective as well. In other words, this book emphasizes that hybridization needs to be analyzed as a form of politicization, given that the global flow of cultural products and digital technologies between Western and non-Western countries involves negotiations, both textually and structurally. Theoretically, the research

of popular culture through the lens of political economy is relatively new, and the politicization of the hybridization process is rarely attempted in the growth of Korean popular culture. Therefore, I am certain that this critically driven theoretical approach will shed light on the current debate of hybridity in the context of the New Korean Wave.

In fact, hybridization as a theoretical framework has been significant in media studies since the early 1990s, regardless of its lengthy history in other fields. A few theoreticians (Appadurai 1996; Kraidy 2005; Pieterse 2009; S. Jung 2011) emphasize hybridization or hybridity (or both)—the heterogeneous creative mixings of the global and the local—as a convincing theoretical framework in analyzing the changing nature of local popular culture. Starting in the early 1990s, media scholars, including Joseph Straubhaar (1991), began to talk about the decreasing role of cultural imperialism, emphasizing the dominant role of a few Western countries, including the United States (H. Schiller 1976; Guback 1984), due to the arrival of cultural plurality. Media scholars (Tomlinson 1999; Giddens 1999; J. Sinclair and Harrison 2004) have disputed whether the global flow is necessarily a one-way flow while conceding the predominance of Western media and cultural products in international communication.

During the process, a few scholars have emphasized that several countries in Latin America, East Asia, and South Asia have developed unique cultural products and penetrated neighboring countries whose languages and cultures are similar or the same, utilizing hybridization strategies. Mexico's and Brazil's *telenovelas* and India's Bollywood have been examples of the success of local culture confronting Western culture, because they are not only adopting Western culture, but also developing their own cultures in mixing these two different cultures (Siriyuvasak and Shin 2007). From this perspective, global interconnectivity is more a multidimensional and complex set of processes that allows the enrichment of global culture through diversity. Of course, whether these countries' popular cultures have penetrated the global markets in great magnitude has been thoroughly researched yet remains controversial because the successes of local cultural products have been arguably limited to their own regions, with only a few exceptions. It is also arguable whether these countries have developed unique local popular culture through the hybridization process.

The complexity of hybridization theory itself is actually well represented in Iwabuchi's work. With the case of Japanese cultural penetration in Asia, particularly in Taiwan, Iwabuchi argues, "The ascent of Japanese transnational cultural power should be considered in the global-local context, which attempts to attend simultaneously to the homogenizing forces of globalization and to transformative local practices in the formation of non-Western indigenized modernity,

so as to understand the question of transnational cultural power" (2002, 40). This means that the hybridization process in the realm of local culture can be categorized into two different perspectives: one is the homogenization process regardless of the mix of two different cultures as a result of a Western-driven simple fusion, and the other is the creation of a unique local culture, transforming indigenized local culture to the level of modern and mundane global culture.

In fact, some argue that hybridity is mainly about the general notion of a mixture. For them, hybridity can be used to describe mixed cultures or the process of mixing genres within a culture (Turow 2008, 2011). A few works in the 1990s appropriated hybridity in the midst of globalization, and they primarily employed hybridity to describe mixed genres and identities (Tufte 1995; Kolar-Panov 1996). What they mainly emphasized was the nature of hybridity as the physical mix of two different cultures; what they did not focus on was whether the fusion of two cultures between Western and non-Western cultures truly avoids a homogeneous culture primarily influenced by Western countries.

However, several scholars argue that hybridization is not simply the mixing, blending, and synthesizing of different elements that ultimately form a culturally faceless whole, and they underscore the need for a critical theorizing of hybridity. As a widely received concept, the recent use of hybridity risks using the concept as a merely descriptive device, that is, describing the local reception of global media texts as a site of cultural mixture, as Kraidy (2002) points out. Several postcolonial scholars (Bhabha 1995; Appadurai 1996; Kraidy 2005; Pieterse 2009) claim that the new global order has to be understood as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, while defying existing center-periphery models.

This implies that, although there are several different perspectives on hybridity in the realm of popular culture and digital technologies, hybridization or hybridity mostly refers to the construction of new culture that emerges from the interweaving of elements between the colonizer and colonized, challenging the validity of any fixed cultural identity (Bhabha 1994; Garcia-Canclini 1995; Meredith 1998). Homi Bhabha argues that "hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal" (1995, 34). As Sun Jung observes, what Bhabha emphasizes is "the indigenous/subordinate culture's ability to discern and reinterpret the authority of the dominant culture" (2011, 11). In other words, hybridization has been defined as the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms and practices (Rowe and Schelling 1991, 231, cited in Pieterse 1995).

Bhabha especially points out, "Hybridity needs to open up 'a third space' within which diverse elements encounter and transform each other as signifying

the 'in-between,' and also incommensurable (that is, inaccessible by majoritarian discourses) location where minority discourses intervene to preserve their strengths and particularity" (1994, 217–18). For him, "hybridity is an interpretive and reflective mode" (53–54), and the local force plays a pivotal role in developing local culture amid hybridization. This in-between zone, which Bhabha terms the *third space,* is where new forms of cultural meaning and production occur, blurring the limitations of existing boundaries and calling into question the established classifications of culture and identity (Meredith 1998, cited in Kim, Yun, and Yoon 2009). As such, hybridization theory by these postcolonial theoreticians has clearly developed its position in criticizing American-driven cultural dominance; however, there are a few issues, of course, and in recent years several scholars have criticized its nature of depoliticization in these postcolonial approaches.

In fact, when cultural producers create hybrid popular culture through the mix of two different cultures, the creation of hybrid culture mainly implies a "depoliticized popular culture" in order to appeal to global audiences. With the case of Japanese animation and popular culture, for example, Iwabuchi (2004) and Lu (2008, 175) claim that in a globalized world, for a non-Western cultural product to become successful, it must lose much of its original "cultural odor" so as to be promoted in the international market as a neutralized product to gain wider audience reception. As Lu (2008) argues, cultural mixing and blurring in anime reflect a broader national desire to enter Western cultural markets, which is the reason characters in anime do not have a Japanese "cultural odor." Iwabuchi (2004) also points out that non-Western cultural products must dilute their origin in order to penetrate Western cultural markets. The internationalization present in anime is actually the result of a self-denial of ethnicity that spread among Japanese in search of Westernization, thus rejecting their unique tradition (Kenji 1997, cited in Wahab, Anuar, and Farhani 2012). Although the practice of cultural odorlessness is beneficial for some local cultural industries targeting the global cultural markets, this notion does not much engage with the practice of the creation of unique local culture.

Unlike these postcolonial theoreticians, Kraidy argues that a merely descriptive use of hybridity by several theoreticians creates two quandaries: "Ontologically, whereas a descriptive approach sees hybridity as a clear product of, say, global and local interactions, I believe that hybridity needs to be understood as a communicative practice constitutive of, and constituted by, sociopolitical and economic arrangements. . . . In addition, a merely descriptive use of hybridity also poses the risk of undermining the political potential that hybridity might or might not have. Concomitantly, if hybridity consists merely of observing,

cataloguing, and celebrating multicultural mixture, the inequality that often characterizes these mixtures is glossed over" (2002, 317–18). What Kraidy highlights is "the mutually constitutive interplay and overlap of cultural, economic and political forces in international communication processes" (333). Unlike many of the postcolonial theoreticians mentioned above, Kraidy does not deny the significant role of critical political economy emphasizing cultural imperialism. His position is relatively a middle ground between cultural imperialism and cultural globalization, although he emphasizes the role of hybridity as an alternative theory to cultural imperialism in understanding the contemporary form of cultural flows. Wei-ching Wang (2008, 47) and Jan Pieterse (2009, 77) also argue that "domination may become more dispersed, less orchestrated and less purposeful because culture can then be negotiated by local and global power," but they believe that structural inequalities still remain that influence the negotiation process.

What we have to determine is whether hybridization negotiates the intersection of the global and the local forces and what the outcomes are, because hybridity should not simply be a form and style, reflecting a new and widespread trend within global popular culture. The hybridization of transnational popular culture should be understood as the ways in which local cultural players, including governments and cultural producers, negotiate with global culture, utilizing them as resources through which local actors create their unique spaces.

However, in reality, this cannot be guaranteed, because "in this time [even] after imperialism, globalization has both expanded the reach of Western culture, as well as allowed a process by which the West constantly interacts with the East, appropriating [local] cultures for its own means and continually shifting its own signifiers of dominant culture" (Yazdiha 2010, 31). In this regard, John Hutnyk already criticized hybridity as politically void:

> Perhaps more confusing yet, the celebration of hybrid cultural activity promotes a seemingly rampant and chaotic mode of creativity. This in itself would be no problem if it did not also allow an abdication. In the context of a valorization of mix, creole, mulatto and mongrel emergence (these are not quite the same things), it sometimes happens that a lesser place is accorded to intentional and targeted forms of politicized cultural production, ignoring both resistance to specific structural and institutional constraints and the almost inevitable hegemonic incorporation of random creativity through diffusion and dispersal of difference and its marketability. (1998, 411)

This means that although several scholars have developed hybridity in popular culture as a response to the multicultural awareness that emerged in the early

1990s, many of them did not recognize the importance of historical-structural inequalities, which are politically significant.

As the transnational cultural flow of Korean popular culture in East Asia during the early 2000s is noticeable, a few scholars (Dater and Seo 2004; Shim 2006; Ryoo 2009; Mori 2009; S. J. Kim 2009; Kim, Yun, and Yoon 2009; M.-S. Kim 2011; S. Jung 2011) claim that hybridization and the following contraflow have happened in Korea as local corporations in the cultural industries, including filmmakers and game publishers, as well as animation and music creators, engage with Western popular culture. They argue that the Korean cultural industries have used the idea of geocultural proximity, resulting in the Korean Wave phenomenon in the Asian markets. As the book clearly articulates the significance of the Asian markets as the primary cultural market for the Korean Wave, it is certain that the Asian markets, including China, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Singapore, both accepted the Korean popular culture first and continue to be the largest markets for the Korean cultural industries. In the 2010s, the success of several cultural forms in the global markets, including Asian markets, has been seen as a symbol not only of Korea's rising cultural power but also of the capability to cultivate cultural globalization; however, we cannot emphasize the significance of the Asian markets, due to their crucial role as importers and consumers of Korean popular culture.

However, it is too early to confirm whether the contracultural flow of Korean popular culture, not simply as intracultural flow within the Asian region but also as contraflow toward the West utilizing hybridization, has been permanent, because the current debate on the Korean Wave needs to be a rigorous, nuanced, and retrospective analysis in the context of the broader society. As Woongjae Ryoo (2008, 2009) aptly puts it, it is significant to incorporate the critical political economy perspective with the culturalist approach, focusing on the text or the audiences, and call for more astute attention to critical political economy as a useful framework to supplement some blind spots found in the hybridization thesis. In other words, concentrated case research of the Korean Wave, through both the culturalist approach as well as the political economy approach in tandem with hybridity theory, can more productively attend to how a national mediascape is transformed through the discursive practices and appropriation of globalization in conjunction with wider historical and social contexts.

The cultural phenomenon of Korean popular culture is more interesting and unique than other countries' cases, including Japanese cultural penetration in Asia, primarily because of its rapid penetration in the global markets in all cultural forms and the increasing role of social media and digital technologies. Therefore, the current form of transnationalism should not be an explanation

of the flow of culture, but an interpretation of the ways in which Korea has appropriated Western culture and utilized it in creating several different cultural products. The hybridization process in popular culture and digital technologies must be comprehended as a more nuanced politicization process than depoliticization of culture.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized as follows. In chapter 2, we investigate the changing role of the nation-state in the context of the broader social structure of society amid neoliberal globalization with the case of the cultural industries, because the concept of the cultural industries to cultural policy is represented through the Korean Wave. It articulates how contemporary Korean governments have developed their unique cultural policies and how they have contributed to the boom of the domestic cultural industries and cultural flows. It specifically argues that neoliberal ideologies have not completely altered the leading role of the nation-state in the Korean Wave despite the dominance of neoliberal turns, emphasizing a small government within the economy and culture. Ultimately, this chapter provides new perspectives toward the New Korean Wave, contrasting it to the original stage of the Korean Wave.

Chapter 3 explores the New Korean Wave in the field of broadcasting. Current scholarship on television programs has analyzed the chief reasons for the popularity of Korean television dramas in Asia, and they have emphasized that Asian audiences like that these programs often reinforce their traditional values. These scholarly works tend to contextualize *Hallyu* as a transnational flow of domestic dramas outside of Korea. Since 2008, however, the Korean Wave in the broadcasting sector has significantly changed because local broadcasters have rapidly developed television programs based on global television formats (a license to produce and broadcast a copyrighted foreign television program) and audience competition shows. They have also begun to diversify their exports, including reality game shows in addition to dramas. This chapter situates *Hallyu* as both transnational cultural production and transnational cultural flow through an analysis of recent program formats and, in particular, several entertainment programs, including audience competition shows, that reflect transnationality. It primarily explores a new trend in the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), which is using a global television format, in order to analyze the transnationality of Korean television programs.

In chapter 4, I investigate the rapid growth and fall of Korean cinema in the global markets. Compared to the heyday of the Korean film industry during the

Hallyu 1.0 era, Korean cinema has witnessed a decrease in both domestic box-office and foreign-export earnings compared to several years ago. Although there are several key factors for this change, including the reduction of the screen quota in 2006, the most significant element is the content itself, because local producers have not been able to create authentic films; therefore, they cannot continue to penetrate other countries as part of the New Korean Wave. Thus, this chapter challenges the fundamental assumptions of the concept of cultural hybridity in understanding Korean cinema. In other words, it studies whether hybridity has generated new possible cultures, which are free from Western dominance, by analyzing the hybridized Korean cinema in terms of genres and themes between the early 1990s and early 2010s.

Chapter 5 investigates animation, which has not been a major topic yet in *Hallyu* research. Korean animation had not previously experienced notable success in terms of creating an original work that was suitable for global cultural markets. Contrary to the historical context of the Korean animation industry, Korea's own computer-generated cartoons have been met with unprecedented levels of global success, which has driven the growth of local animation as one of the major cultural forms. Unlike during the first stage of the Korean Wave, animation has indeed become one of the most significant sectors, despite not yet being comparable to its Japanese counterpart. This chapter analyzes the animation industry in order to understand the major reasons for its sudden growth. It also explores the production system as an exemplary case of the most successful Korean cultural products and maps out its hybrid nature, which is crucial for the analysis of local animation.

Chapter 6 examines the transformation of K-pop in the early twenty-first century in a broader sociocultural context. It maps out whether hybridity has generated new creative cultures, ones that are free from Western dominance, or whether this trend eventually oppresses local music. My aim is therefore to investigate the different cultural stages and transition of popular music in Korea occurring within the unfolding logic of globalization and to interrogate the adequacy of cultural hybridity as a plausible framework to explain cultural phenomena currently under way. In particular, this chapter analyzes the development of English mixed into the lyrics of Korean popular music in order to identify and examine several key factors involved in the rapid growth of K-pop and its influence in the New Korean Wave. From the perspective gained from the combined angles of critical cultural studies and textual analysis, new insights are generated into the emerging discourse of cultural hybridization in Korean popular music.

In chapter 7, I map out the growth of locally based digital games. In the twenty-first century, the New Korean Wave has been expanding with the rapid growth of digital culture, in particular with online gaming. The rapid growth of the Korean digital game industry, including online gaming, and its export into the Western market have raised a fundamental question of whether digital culture has changed the nature of the Korean Wave, from a regionally focused intracultural flow to include a Western-focused contraflow. This chapter attempts to discuss the way in which local online games, in particular MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role-playing games), have advanced contraflow. In addition, it discusses a changing trend in the digital game sector, which has been occurring due to both the increasing role of China's game industries and the emergence of mobile gaming in the smartphone era. It also maps out the process by which Korean online games are appropriated for Western game users in a form of glocalization in both content and structure. It finally articulates whether this new trend can diminish an asymmetrical cultural flow between the West and the East.

Chapter 8 examines the major role of smartphones, because the swift growth of smartphones and their global penetration are a new symbol of the digital Korean Wave. The New Korean Wave has emphasized the convergence of creative content and digital technologies, and the growth of digital and social media has changed the nature of *Hallyu* because the New Korean Wave needs to emphasize not only popular culture but also digital technologies in terms of capital accumulation and national economy. This chapter also investigates the contemporary growth of locally made smartphones and the potential for the development of the logic of technological hybridization. It discusses whether smartphone and social media–driven consumption and cultural production flows are contributing to our current debates on the power dynamics of creative and digital industries across the globe.

Chapter 9 summarizes the major characteristics of the New Korean Wave, and it discusses whether we need to develop non-Western media theories to explain the rapid growth of local popular culture in the global markets or whether we have to apply and utilize current forms of these theories. This final chapter also discusses what we have to keep in mind in further studies on the *Hallyu* phenomenon in the midst of globalization, which will be a good case study for several other emerging local markets.

2

Cultural Politics in the New Korean Wave Era

Since the late 1990s, Korea has emerged as one of the major centers for the production of transnational popular culture. While the influence of Western culture has continued in the global cultural markets, Korean cultural industries have developed a few recognizable cultural products of their own, such as television programs and films. Korea has recently advanced new cultural forms, especially online games, animation, and popular music, and penetrated other parts of the world, including Europe and North America. These Korean cultural products consisting of non-Western cultural forms have consequently become a global sensation because Western audiences as well as Asians are enjoying local cultural products imported from a small non-Western country.

There have been several dimensions that have played a key role in the growth of Korean pop culture in Asia and beyond, such as cultural proximity within East Asia, which encouraged the spread of popular cultures across the region; economic growth, which cultivated a big pool of middle-class consumers in Asia; and technological developments (for example, YouTube), which enabled the rapid dissemination and consumption of cultural content. These elements have certainly contributed to the penetration of Korean popular culture in many countries. However, the most significant yet least discussed factor in the development of the Korean cultural industries and popular culture is the shifting role of the Korean government because changing cultural policies in the Korean context have played a pivotal role in the New Korean Wave.

This chapter investigates the primary role of the nation-state in the cultural industries and the Korean Wave in the context of the broader social structure of society amid neoliberal globalization. It articulates how the Korean government has developed the cultural industries and the ways in which the government has cultivated its cultural policies in global trade, such as export promotion, direct and indirect export subsidies and supports, and the promotion of the nation's cultural image abroad (Throsby 2010). It especially analyzes whether neoliberal ideologies, emphasizing a small government regime, have completely altered state interventionism, known as developmentalism, in the Korean Wave, leading to further discussion of the role of the nation-state. This chapter historicizes the Korean Wave phenomenon according to major policy shifts surrounding media ecology, driving the change and continuity of *Hallyu* over the past eighteen years.

The Nexus of Nation-States and Neoliberalism in the Cultural Industries

Since the early twentieth century, a few Western cultural industries, mainly from the United States, have become major forces in the realm of global cultural flows. U.S. cultural products have continuously influenced other countries, and the U.S. government has supported its own cultural industries, such as film and television (McChesney 2008). In particular, beginning in the early 1980s, the U.S. government, alongside several transnational media corporations, including major Hollywood studios, has forced many other governments to undertake neoliberal reforms, including the liberalization of the cultural markets for Western producers and distributors, resulting in the intensification of the dominance of Western cultural influence. Several countries, such as Canada and France, have partially, if not entirely, resisted forced neoliberal reform in the realm of culture with protective cultural policies, given that their own cultural industries are regarded as significant for both national identity and economic reasons. However, many developing countries, including Mexico and Chile, have arguably adopted U.S.-led neoliberal globalization in order to survive.[1] In the midst of neoliberal globalization, therefore, the debates on the implications of the role of nation-states on cultural policies and cultural flows have been an indispensable subject between global and local forces (T. Miller 2004; Fuchs 2010).

To begin with, several theorists argue that the nation-state loses its power as a meaningful unit in the global economy and culture of today's borderless world as neoliberal globalization theory evolves (Morley and Robins 1995; Giddens 1999; Hardt and Negri 2000; J. Sinclair 2007). The idea behind neoliberalism, which has primarily developed since the early 1980s, is the creation of policies

that maximize the role of markets and profit making while minimizing the role of nonmarket institutions, through deregulation and privatization. Milton Friedman argues, "The government's power must be limited while the private companies operate their maximum freedom in a free market" (1982, 2–3). That suggests that governments should primarily serve corporate interests while reducing any activities that might undermine the role of business. This ideological tide of neoliberalism that has swept over most of the world in the past two decades has had a profound impact on public policies, including cultural policies. Many countries have made significant changes to their administrative machinery to accommodate this ideological shift, including more support for measures intended to harness market forces, contracting out-of-government services, and emphasis on self-help instead of reliance on government services (Jeannotte 2010). As McChesney points out, "Neoliberalism has indeed unleashed national and international politics maximally supportive of business domination of all social affairs" (2008, 15–17).

Hardt and Negri go so far as to argue that "the sovereignty of the nation-states is over, because no nation would be a world leader in the way modern European nations were in the midst of globalization" (2000, xii–xiv). Hjarvard (2003) also emphasizes that the weakening role of the nation-state has resulted in the decreasing role of domestic culture and cultural identity in non-Western countries. Taking cultural flows as a special field of discussion, Waisbord and Morris argue that "the state has been said to find it more difficult to exercise authority over flows of information and cultural commodities" (2001, vii–xxi). In fact, many Asian governments are often criticized as lacking the power to control their cultural policies and leaving everything in the hands of corporations and market decisions as a result of global depoliticization (Chin 2003). As these theoreticians argue, neoliberal globalization engineers the restructuring of national economies, which has resulted in the transnationalization of cultural industries, while witnessing the weakening role of the nation-state.

However, several scholars, including Wu and Chan (2007), claim that contemporary cultural flows are more complex than many globalists who argue for the decreasing role of the government suggest, because a trend of cultural resistance resulting in confrontation of globalization has rapidly grown in several non-Western countries. Ellen Wood also argues, "Neoliberal globalization does not bring about an end of the nation-state but that the state continues to play an indispensable role in circulating and maintaining the conditions of capital accumulation" (2003, 139). These scholars claim that the nation-state and domestic cultural firms have continued to have an influential role in national culture in many countries, even though many local companies and nation-states are not well equipped for the task (Wu and Chan 2007).

Several countries, including Mexico, Brazil, and China, have developed their cultural policies to be supportive of their cultural industries. By considering the trade of cultural commodities as if they were any other goods, and evaluating their direct or indirect impacts on the economy, these countries have sought to promote investments for economic benefits (Pratt 2005). Korea too has advanced its distinctive cultural policy, primarily because its cultural industries have grown in the midst of either conflict or compromise between the country's developmentalism and neoliberal reform. In other words, the Korean government since the mid-1990s has deregulated the cultural industries based on its neoliberal tendencies; however, the government has also directly supported the cultural industries, making the Korean Wave into a showcase window display that policy makers and media scholars need to carefully analyze when it comes to the shifting role of the nation-state. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze why neoliberal ideologies have not completely altered the Korean state interventionism in the cultural industries that became the major part of the Korean Wave.

Transnational Cultural Power: From *Hallyu* 1.0 to *Hallyu* 2.0

The popularity of Korean cultural products in the global markets has substantially shifted as the political cultures within which the Korean Wave is situated and operates evolve. While corporations in the Korean cultural industries have advanced their cultural products and expanded their global penetration, the nature of the Korean Wave has shown dissimilar characteristics over the past eighteen years. As discussed in chapter 1, in order to analyze the development of the Korean Wave, I divide the overall period into two major eras: the *Hallyu* 1.0 era (between approximately 1997 and 2007) and the *Hallyu* 2.0 era (since 2008), and I discuss here the governmental cultural policies directed toward cultural industries and cultural flows in each period. Unlike existing approaches to *Hallyu* that sometimes make little attempt to distinguish or analyze changes over time, I argue that it is not only major shifts over time but also specific state policies that have been instrumental in generating these changes.

Hallyu 1.0, the initial stage of the Korean Wave, started with a few television programs. In the late 1990s, two television dramas—*What Is Love All About* (*Sarangi mwogille* [1997]) and *Stars in My Heart* (*Byeol-eun nae ga-seum-e* [1997])—became popular in East and Southeast Asia, and they provided some glimpses of Korean popular culture (D. Kim and M.-K. Kim 2011). Following the successes of these dramas, Korean broadcasters intensified their efforts to export several programs. Three famous dramas—*Autumn Fairy Tale* (*Kaul tonghwa* [2000]), the story of an undying love between two siblings; *Winter Sonata* (*Kyoul sonata* [2002]), featuring beautiful winter scenery and a touching love story about

a woman and her boyfriend suffering from amnesia; and *Dae Jang Geum* (*Tae Chang-gum* [2003]), a historical drama—became huge hits with Asian viewers in Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, and Hong Kong between 2002 and 2006 (Hanaki et al. 2009). With the rapidly growing popularity of dramas, the total amount of Korean television program exports increased by up to 18.2 times between 1997, when the Korean Wave started, and 2007, when the *Hallyu* 1.0 era ended, from $8.3 million to $151 million (see table 2.1) (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2006a, 2008).

Most of those exports were to other Asian countries. Korean dramas (K-dramas) became some of the most significant cultural products initiating and driving the Korean Wave. Although there were several significant factors for the popularity of Korean dramas in the Asian market, that the majority of works emphasized cultural factors was the key element of comparative advantage in building up the Asian markets for Korean television programs.[2]

The acceptance of Korean cultural products in Asia in the early twenty-first century has been strengthened by Korean films and popular music. Since 2001 Korea has seen an increase in its export of domestic films. Korea exported 36 films in 1997 and 33 films in 1998; however, the country exported as many as 102 films in 2001 and continued to expand its foreign exports in the following years (Korean Film Council 2009), including top-grossing movies at the domestic box office. These movies, such as *Silmido* (2003), *Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War* (*T'aegukki hwinallimyo* [2004]), *King and the Crown* (*Wang ui namja* [2005]), *The Host* (*Koemul* [2007]), and *D-War* (2008), in most cases passed ten million in cinema attendance in Korea and later were exported to Asia and other parts of the world. Driven by these movies' commercial success, Hollywood has remade several Korean films, including *Janghwa, Hongryeon* (2003) (*Changhwa Hongryon chon,* The uninvited [2009]), a psychological horror movie; *Siworae* (2000) (*Siwolae,* Lake house in Hollywood [2006]), a fantasy romance; and *Yeogijeogin geunyeo* (2001) (*Yopkijogin Kunyo*, My sassy girl in Hollywood [2008]), a romantic comedy (Jin 2011b, 100).

The Korean Wave, however, has subsided in a few countries because of government measures to protect national cultural industries in several Asian countries in the early twenty-first century. As the popularity of Korean cultural products rose in Asia, some countries in the region, including Japan, China, and Taiwan, tried to reduce the volume of Korean dramas and films on their local channels, resulting in Korean dramas and films struggling in these countries. For example, the National Communications Commission of Taiwan in 2011 asked several cable channels to adjust their prime-time programming because the number of hours devoted to Korean dramas was deemed too high ("GTV Has

Table 2.1: Exports of cultural products, 1998–2014 (unit: million U.S. dollars)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Broadcasting	10	12.7	13.1	18.9	28.8	42.1	70.3	122	134	151	171	185	184.7	222.4	233.8	309.4	340
Movies	3.1	5.9	7.1	11.2	15	31	58.3	76	24.5	24.4	21	14.1	13.6	15.8	20.1	37	26.3
Animation	85	81.6	85	121.3	89.2	75.7	61.8	78.4	66.8	72.7	80.5	89.6	96.8	115.9	112.5	109.8	110
Music	8.6	8.1	7.9	7.4	4.2	13.3	34.2	22.3	16.6	13.8	16.4	31.2	81.3	196.1	235.1	277.3	310
Games	82.2	107.6	101.5	130.4	140.7	182	388	585	672	781	1,094	1,241	1,606	2,378	2,638	2,715	2,720
Characters	0	65.7	69.2	76.9	86	116	117	164	189	203	228	237	276.3	392.3	416.4	446	490
Manga	0	2.9	3.7	6.8	8.2	4.1	1.9	3.3	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.2	8.2	17.2	17.1	20.9	46
Total	188.9	284.5	287.5	372.9	372.1	464.2	731.5	1,051	1,106.8	1,249.8	1,615	1802.1	2,266.9	3,337.7	3,673	3,915.4	4,042.3

Sources: Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012a, 2006b; Korean Film Council 2015, 46. Since 2008 broadcasting has included independent production firms. Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2014a, 4; Korea Creative Content Agency 2015, 6.

License Renewal" 2011). Of course, anti-Korean cultural-product mentalities do not cause an automatic decrease in the market share of Korean popular culture in these countries. For example, regarding the Japanese market, Seongbin Hwang, a media scholar in Japan, specifically pointed out during my interview in the fall of 2013, "Korean dramas are still popular in Japan; however, cultural polarization emerges among Japanese between those who like *Hallyu* and those who don't like *Hallyu* in the middle of national conflicts between Korea and Japan. Therefore, *Hallyu* remains as one of the most significant forms of foreign popular culture in Japan, although it might not find new fans." The Korean film industry has also witnessed a sharp decline in the value of exports since 2006. According to the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST), the export value of Korean films increased from $7 million in 2000 to $76 million in 2005; however, it fell to $24.5 million in 2006. K-pop also struggled, as the export of Korean popular music declined from $34.2 million in 2004 to $13.8 million in 2007 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2006c; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2011d, 195–97; 2012c).[3]

Therefore, "the Korean cultural industries desperately sought new growth engines to escape from the crisis, and the government alongside corporations within the cultural industries began a serious initiative to turn the trends around" ("*Hallyu* Industries Experienced" 2008, 15). During the process, some of the industries—online gaming and music, in particular—intensified their efforts and reached as far as the United States, Mexico, and France. On the one hand, the Korean online game industry has grown swiftly, and online gaming is the country's most significant cultural product for cultural trade (Jin 2010b). Korea exported $182 million worth of games, mainly to neighboring countries, in 2003; by 2008 the country exported more than $1 billion in games, and this figure grew to as much as $2.72 billion in 2014 (see table 2.1). Whereas several popular Korean products, such as films and television programs, have primarily permeated Asian countries, online gaming has expanded its influence in the Western cultural markets, including North America and Europe. However, since 2008, China has overtaken Korea to become the largest online game producer in the world, and the Chinese video game market is estimated to total $14.8 billion in 2015, compared with $17 billion for the United States, growing at a 20.6 percent compound annual rate (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2012). Korea and China have competed neck and neck to gain status as an empire in the global online game market since then, which is a new trend in the *Hallyu* 2.0 era.

Korean popular music, on the other hand, has become one of the most important cultural forms in recent years. Although K-pop was part of the early Korean

Wave, the country did not attain significant numbers in the global trade. But K-pop has become a new growth engine, driving *Hallyu* with newly decorated idol-group musicians (for example, Big Bang, Girl's Generation, and JYJ) since 2008. In 2014 Korea exported $310 million worth of music, a nineteenfold increase since 2008.

Other than the major culture genres characterizing *Hallyu* 1.0 and *Hallyu* 2.0, there are several factors in determining the separation between the two historical eras. Among them, the most significant differences between the two periods are cultural policies that have influenced the changing nature of the Korean Wave. In the *Hallyu* 1.0 period, the government cultural policy evolved from initial support to indirect intervention and deregulation so that the private sector could advance the *Hallyu* phenomenon. In contrast, the previous Lee Myung-bak government changed its emphasis on cultural policy toward a creative-contents policy and became more involved in the cultural sector than previous governments. The rapid growth of Korean cultural industries and their expansion abroad have been closely related to the government's cultural policies, either directly (a hands-on approach) or indirectly (a hands-off approach) in the midst of neoliberal reform.

Neoliberal Shift of Cultural Policies: From the Arts to Cultural Industries

Although the Korean Wave started in 1997, it is crucial to document the development of the Korean cultural policies right before the initial stage of *Hallyu,* because it was during this time that the government began to apply neoliberal globalization policies to the cultural sector. Since the early 1990s, the Korean government has taken significantly different positions toward the cultural sector in terms of political ideologies and the nature of government intervention compared to the military regime, which was in force until the early 1990s. Cultural policies in Korea prior to the neoliberal globalization era had been driven by the emphasis on cultural identity through the arts. Due to Korea's unusual historical experiences, including the influence of Japanese colonialism (1910–45), the Korean War (1950–53), and the division of the Korean peninsula (1945–present), cultural identity as Korean tradition and nationalism, as well as national culture, had been the primary object of cultural policy (Yim 2002). The pivotal cultural policy objective focused on the arts, such as painting and traditional music, and tried to establish cultural identity while promoting the excellence of the arts, meaning that Korea's cultural policy was largely synonymous with its arts policy (Flew 2007, 174; Yim 2002, 40–41).

The governments after 1993, however, came to acknowledge the economic importance of culture. They created a new priority of approaching cultural industries from an economic perspective instead of a cultural perspective, resulting in an intensification of the commodification and capitalization of cultural products. To give some more detail, "The Kim Young Sam government—the first civilian government after 1961—actively adopted neoliberal globalization in order to survive in the new world of infinite global competition, which became a turning point for the domestic cultural industry" (Samuel Kim 2000, 2–3). The issue of developing the cultural industries during the Kim government, therefore, did not play any major role in advancing cultural values. The governance criteria of neoliberal administrations were based upon productivity and profitability, or, in other words, on business norms (Brown 2006). In January 1994, following the annual report from the Ministry of Culture and Sports, President Kim Young Sam indeed emphasized the importance of cultural products. Kim said, "In the twenty-first century, the cultural industry itself will be the largest industry through the advancement of diverse audio-visual media. Since Western countries compete with each other in the cultural sector, we must develop new cultural products to meet global sense, and big corporations have to invest in the realm of culture" (1994).

The Kim government consequently brought the concept of the cultural industries to its cultural policy, shifted the focus of cultural policy from the arts to commercial cultural industries, and intensified the commodification of local popular culture. Thus, the Korean government has allowed the cultural sector to operate in accordance with the logic of neoliberalism. The Kim government did not entirely follow neoliberal logic, of course. The marketization of cultural production was supposed to reduce not only the state's power and authority over cultural enterprises, but also its fiscal and financial responsibilities to subsidize and support cultural work. The government, however, initiated the growth of the cultural sector and subsidized the cultural industries due to economic imperatives (Tong and Hung 2012).

As its initial involvement, the Kim government supported the audiovisual sector, which became a basis for the growth of the Korean Wave afterward. For example, the government initiated the growth of the film industry by enacting the Motion Picture Promotion Law in 1995 (J. Shin 2005). The new law included diverse incentives, including tax breaks for film studios to welcome *chaebol* (family-owned conglomerates, such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG) capital into the film industry (Paquet 2005). As a reflection of the lack of infrastructure, such as film-shooting areas and technologies, the government focused on this deficiency, as 72.1 percent of the national budget within the cultural industry sector was used for this purpose (K. Kim 2013).

In the Korean context, this continuing role of the nation-state in the midst of neoliberal reform can be identified with Korea's state interventionism. As is well documented, the formation of the Korean economic model had been a state-led economy championing export-led growth since the early 1960s (J. Lee 2010; Yim 2002). During the 1960s and 1970s, the state initiated a rapid industrial transformation from agricultural industry to heavy industry, including shipbuilding and electronics. The state also believed that exports were the only way to boost the Korean economy because of poor availability of natural resources and insufficient accumulation of technology (Gereffi 1990).

When the military regime pursued neoliberal economic and cultural policies, "the developmentalism partially faded out from the cultural sector" (MacDonald 1996, 218). The Chun Doo Hwan (1980–88) and the Roh Tae Woo (1988–93) governments liberalized the cultural market as part of their neoliberal economic policies. They allowed direct distribution of Hollywood films by foreign distributors in 1988. These governments opened the film market due in large part to strong demand from the U.S. government and transnational capital. However, "the Kim government considered the cultural industry as one of the most profitable and cutting-edge industries that the government could support" (Jin 2011c, 129). When the cultural sector became an emerging area for the national economy, the Kim government developed its cultural policy to initiate the growth of the cultural industries. The returned state interventionism substantially influenced the cultural flows of local popular culture, particularly during the initial stage of the Korean Wave.

Neoliberal Cultural Politics in the Early Twenty-First Century

Until the early years of the twenty-first century, the government continued to support the Korean Wave. In order to promote international cultural relations, for example, the government enacted the "Basic Law for Promoting Cultural Industries" in 1999, which states that the government supports coproduction with foreign countries, marketing and advertising of Korean pop culture through broadcasting and the Internet, and the dissemination of domestic cultural products to foreign markets (Article 20). Based on this edict, the government established several events in major Asian cities elsewhere to introduce Korean popular culture.

However, it did not take long before the government realized that it must remain behind the scenes in order not to create antagonism in other Asian countries. Policy objectives began to share the priority of stewarding popular culture toward the Asian region with the goal of creating fewer conflicts with countries that import Korean cultural products. In other words, the government

tried not to hinder Korean cultural penetration in Asia by employing indirect promotion policies, thus avoiding the appearance of instigating Korea's cultural invasion into other countries in the early twenty-first century (Jin 2011b, 116–17). This suggests that the government started to favor hands-off policies that emphasized the deregulation of the market and indirect supports to the trade of cultural products.

"New cultural policies formulated during the Kim Dae-Jung government emphasized the support of government while avoiding any direct intervention" (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2001, 38–39). This anti–state interventionism continued to the end of the Roh Moo-hyun government in a different way. For the Korean government between the late 1990s and 2007, the need for deregulation worked as the practical actualization of its pursuit of neoliberal reform. During this period, the major hands-off policies that the government pursued came in the form of development of independent television producers,[4] changes in the screen-quota system, and indirect promotion policies for the Korean Wave phenomenon.

Among these policies, the change in the screen-quota system best exemplifies the hands-off policy, which has negatively influenced Korean cinema. Amid neoliberal globalization, Korea had maintained the fundamental structure of the screen-quota system, which had contributed to the growth of Korean cinema.[5] However, in 2006 the Roh Moo-hyun government deregulated this policy under pressure from the United States as a precondition for starting talks for a U.S.-Korea free-trade agreement (FTA), which means that the role of the government in the film sector decreased. It also implies that domestic cultural policy had been linked to new instruments of global governance, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and free trade agreements. These international perspectives limited the ability of the nation-state to develop both social and economic policies for the benefit of citizens and domestic interests in order to ensure the impact of neoliberalism in the Korean political context (Jeannotte 2010).

Because President Roh was considered as one of the most progressive politicians, people who worked in the cultural industries expected that Roh would develop an antineoliberal globalization policy in the realm of culture, as he promised. Surprisingly, however, he actualized a small government in exchange for the growth of the national economy. President Roh originally emphasized creativity, diversity, and dynamism in the cultural sector in the inaugural stage of the government. Then, however, Roh suddenly pursued growth of the national economy by introducing his bold step to move toward a $20,000 per capita income level, up from around $9,000 in the early 2000s (Y.-H. Choi 2013). During his keynote speech at the International Conference on Growth Engines of Korea,

held in Seoul on July 24, 2003, Roh said, "Korea is on the verge of breaking the deadlock of a $10,000 per capital income era and is envisioning the growth toward a $20,000 per capital income era as exist in several advanced economies. The core strategy for achieving our goal of accomplishing $20,000 per capita income is to develop the growth of the cultural industries of the next generation" (Roh 2003).

The $20,000 per capita income era was heralded by both the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI), representing the interests of several hundred big companies, including Samsung, Hyundai, and LG, and the Samsung Economic Research Institute. President Roh unexpectedly accommodated their agenda as a national goal (C. Park 2003). As a politician before his presidency, Roh thought that social democracy would be the most significant issue for the nation. As president, however, he quickly changed his agenda after consecutive meetings with FKI members who expressed their concerns about the potential economic recession of early 2003 and trusted that the growth of the economy would be the most significant issue (T. Lee 2012). Once he shifted his political agenda, the government, including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT), had to change their policy priorities. Securing the U.S.-Korea FTA in order to advance the national economy was a major impetus on the part of the Roh government, with the support of the FKI and individual corporations. As a result, it can be argued that the government scapegoated the screen-quota system to facilitate the FTA. Jong-Honn Kim, chief delegate for U.S.-Korea FTA negotiations, stated in a press conference, "The reduction of the screen quota is to create favorable conditions for FTA; the only thing to help the negotiations between the two countries is reducing the screen quota" (S. M. Hong 2010,10).

The consequence of the reduction of the screen quota, from 146 days per year to 73 days per year, from July 2006 onward has been severe. The number of foreign films, mainly from Hollywood, imported into Korea has increased by 117 percent, from 253 films in 2005 to 551 in 2011, as Korean theaters needed to fill their screens with Hollywood films (Korean Film Council 2011; 2012a, 5). More significantly, the market share of domestic films had dropped, from 63.8 percent in 2006 to 42.1 percent in 2008 (Korean Film Council 2009), although it slightly increased in 2012. The total registered film viewership also decreased 5 percent in 2008, the first decrease in the market in decades, and movie viewers especially avoided domestic films while increasingly watching foreign films (Korean Film Council 2008, 2). It is also evident that exports of domestic films plummeted, from $76 million in 2005 to only $13.6 million in 2010 (see table 2.1) (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012d). These new developments are certainly boosting the fortunes of American movies in Korea, and it

is not unreasonable to argue that the reduction of the screen quota has caused the recent crisis in both the domestic market share and Korea's foreign export.

As will be detailed later, the Roh government also cut the budget for the cultural industries. The phase of globalization in the Korean film industry in the early twenty-first century arguably implicates the relative weakening of the nation-state. During much of the early twenty-first century, the Korean government seemed to be an exemplary case of the neoliberal emphasis on small government and limited governmental intervention in the cultural industries.

Toward Creative Contents Industries in the New Korean Wave Era

Cultural policy in Korea has changed again since 2008. Unlike the Roh government, the Lee Myung-bak government has developed new policy measures to advance the cultural industries and the export of cultural products, emphasizing the significance of content in conjunction with digital technologies. There were a few significant policy changes in developing *Hallyu*, such as the increase of the government budget in the cultural industries sector, the integration of government agencies, and the introduction of the notion of a creative content industry, which comparatively emphasized the importance of video games and K-pop as the major cultural products to be supported for foreign export.[6]

Most of all, "The government budget demonstrates the changing nature of the government's cultural policy. Since the budget is a representation in monetary terms of governmental activity" (Wildavsky and Caiden 2000, 1–5), it is vital to analyze the budget in order to interpret the major characteristics of each government's cultural policy. Over the past eighteen years, the government budget for the cultural industries sector has significantly increased from only 54 million won, comparable to $5.4 million, in 1994 to 284.9 million won in 2013, although there were some fluctuations in the 2003–8 period due to the government's hands-off policies (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 41). In particular, as a percentage of the budget of the MCST, the budget toward the cultural industries sharply increased from only 1.8 percent in 1994 to 13 percent in 2012 (table 2.2). Since the government increased its budget to the media policy sector, the overall budget for cultural industries and media policy areas accounted for 18.5 percent of the ministry budget in 2012. Given that the budget of the MCST accounted for less than 1 percent of government expenditure most years, it means that the budget toward cultural industries in the form of direct subsidies and expenditures has substantially increased.

Table 2.2: Government budget in the cultural industries (unit: million Korean won)

Year	Government budget	Ministry budget	Budget for cultural industries
1994	47,626.2	301.2	5.4
1995	56,717.3	3,838.0	15.2
1996	62,962.6	459.1	18.9
1997	71,400.6	853.1	13.2
1998	80,762.9	757.4	16.8
1999	88,485.0	856.3	100.0
2000	84,919.9	1,170.7	178.7
2001	106,096.3	1,243.1	147.4
2002	116,119.8	1,398.5	195.8
2003	115,132.3	1,486.4	189.0
2004	120,139.4	1,567.5	172.5
2005	135,215.6	1,585.6	191.1
2006	146,962.5	1,738.5	135.3
2007	156,517.7	1,425.0	128.4
2008	174,985.2	1,513.6	150.8
2009	196,871.2	1,735.0	242.2
2010	201,283.4	1,876.2	256.1
2011	209,930.2	1,910.3	249.1
2012	223,138.3	2,093.3	279.8
2013	236,225.3	2,287.6	284.9
2014	250,800.0	2,320.8	305.7

Sources: Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013b, 41; 2014b, 31; 2014c, 17. The budget in this table includes both general accounts and special accounts, excluding special funds.

However, as discussed, the Roh government intensified the hands-off cultural policies. The overall budget of both the cultural industries sector and the percentage of the budget of the whole ministry during his presidency decreased. At the end of the Kim Dae-Jung government (2002), the budget for the cultural industries was 195.8 million won (14 percent of the ministry budget); it fell to 135.3 million won and accounted for 7.8 percent of the ministry budget in 2006, as the Roh government actualized a small government regime in the cultural industries. In particular, the Roh government abrogated the Cultural Industry Promotion Fund in 2007, which was established in 1999 to support corporations operating in the cultural industries, resulting in the plummeting of financial support to the cultural industries.

As table 2.2 indicates, in 2007 the budget for the cultural industries was recorded at 128.4 million won, the lowest since 2000 (Y. Park 2012; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 41). Although the Roh government supported the arts—as part of Roh's original emphasis on social democracy—which had not been highly funded by previous governments, it did not do much to

promote the cultural industries, either financially or legally. As McChesney and Schiller argue, "Proponents of neoliberalism in many countries claim that cultural trade barriers and regulations harm consumers, and that subsidies and legal protections even inhibit the ability of nations to develop their own competitive cultural firms" (2003, 6). Previously presumed to be antineoliberal, the Roh government reified these neoliberal reforms and therefore turned into one of the most perceptible neoliberal states as far as the cultural industries are concerned in the contemporary Korean era.

The Lee government changed the environment surrounding the cultural industries. The Lee government, which was the most conservative government of the past eighteen years, applied neoliberal norms everywhere and primarily dealt with the cultural sector using the same standard. However, the government supported the cultural industries because of their importance to the national economy in the twenty-first century. The Lee government significantly increased the budget, from 128.4 million won in 2007 to 284.9 million won in 2013. The percentage of the budget for the cultural industries sector of the ministry also increased, from 9.0 percent in 2007 to 13.6 percent in 2010.[7] Furthermore, in 2010 the government established the Contents Industry Promotion Law and decided to invest an unprecedented sum of $160 million through 2013 in order to situate the contents industry as a national strategic industry. One of the major policy agendas of this fund was to promote the cultural flows of K-pop and other cultural genres in several regions, including North America and Europe (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2011b).

Although there are several reasons the Lee government pursued these kinds of progressive cultural policies, it is certain that the government took these hands-on approaches primarily because of political and economic imperatives. On the one hand, the Lee government wanted to differentiate itself from the previous left-wing Roh government in the cultural sector, and so the first and foremost change came within the national budget for the cultural industries (J. Park 2010). The Lee government needed some new policy initiatives during the period of the shift by the government toward conservative tendencies, and it selected the promotion of cultural content as one of the major cultural policies (K. Kim 2013). Since 2010 the Lee government has also developed cultural diplomacy[8] within the foreign policy framework. "The notion of culture based public diplomacy has been framed as (1) bilateral diplomatic relations celebration and cultural event promotion, (2) two-way cultural exchange support, (3) conferences hosted by the Culture Ministry, and (4) the expansion of Hallyu" (Kang 2015).

On the other hand, the growing awareness that the cultural trade could be economically profitable and boost Korea's image overseas has re-created a supportive attitude within the government toward promoting cultural exports. The Lee government has thus pursued the marketization of popular culture through its cultural policies. After the annual report from the Ministry of Culture and Sports in March 2008, President Lee emphasized that "the advanced nation that we aim for is the cultural state. The cultural contents industries are the growth engine and will become some of key industries in the future. Therefore, we must work hard to achieve our goal in this field" (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2008). The Lee government also supported these areas partially because it planned to utilize them to advance related industries, including tourism, a medical version of *Hallyu,* and the character industry (Won 2012).

Other than the budget, the policy changes from hands-off to hands-on approaches in the cultural industries were made through two major strategies. To start, the Lee government created the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in 2008. The creation of the MCST was crucial for the cultural industries, because the new ministry was the result of the convergence of the existing Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Information and Communication. When the Lee government reshaped its executive branch, it wanted to develop synergy effects through the convergence of the popular cultural sector handled by the MCT and digital content functions controlled by the MIC (K. Lee 2009). The convergence of telecommunication and cultural content became more of an issue requiring government stewardship.

For the convergence of the two, the Lee government benchmarked other countries' cases, such as the United Kingdom and Australia. As Terry Flew clearly points out, some countries paid attention to the use of public policy to promote technological change by incubating the content industries as new growth industries, and they established national media and information and communications technology (ICT) industries as players at the table of the emergent global information economy (Flew 2007, 21–24). The Korean government followed suit and pursued the growth of information and cultural industries, converging these two areas in order to effectively deal with the industries in the context of content industries. Through absorbing the software policy function of the (now defunct) MIC, the government began to directly initiate and support the content industries. As one newspaper concisely reported, the major cultural policy of the Lee government could be summarized as strong government intervention in the cultural industries ("Cultural Policy" 2008). The Lee government effectively supported or controlled (or both) the Korean content

industries. As Dan Schiller argues, "National governments play a key role in the media and cultural sector through unremitting political intervention that is paradoxically necessary to actualize something approaching a free-market regime in the media sector" (1999, 2), and the Lee government rebuilt its state intervention in the cultural industries.

Meanwhile, the Korean government created the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) in 2009 and incorporated three existing agencies—the Korean Broadcast Institute (1989–2009), the Korea Game Industry Agency (1999–2009), and the Korean Culture and Contents Agency (2001–9)—into this new agency. Previous governments had created these agencies in relation to the culture and content industries, and these bureaus played a key role in different cultural areas (Korea Creative Content Agency 2012b). However, the Lee government wanted to have an effective government arm dealing with almost all cultural sectors in the midst of the rapid growth of digital and social media. Today, KOCCA is within the portfolio of the MCST and works on the basis of governmentally administered programs. In fact, its most significant agenda is to stand beside those aiming for the promotion of the cultural industry, and its goal was to develop Korea into one of the world's top-five content powerhouses by 2013 (ibid.).

Of course, this does not imply that the Lee government developed the creative industries due to issues of national identity or national arts, because it clearly supported cultural content in relation to the Korean Wave in the name of economic imperatives. "That's why some criticize the cultural policies of the Lee government as corporate business strategies to make profits" (Y.-H. Choi 2013, 257). The Lee government placed a cultural policy emphasis on the market, downplaying the importance of collective and citizen-based concerns (Clarkson 2002).

Meanwhile, the current Park Geun-hye government (2013–) has been continuing and even intensifying its hands-on policy in the cultural sector. After winning the presidential election in December 2012, Park appeared at the screening of the 3D animation film *Pororo: The Racing Adventure* in January 2013 and expressed her intention to place more support for bringing innovation, creativity, and wealth to the cultural sector. Park stated, "Watching the growth of *Pororo* [as one of the most popular Korean animation programs] over the years, I have come to have great hopes for our creative industries. One of my pledges as a presidential candidate was to promote cultural industries as a new growth engine for our country, and I will try to realize my word" (Do 2013). Indeed, in February 2015, the Korean government especially decided to invest $345.8 million in nurturing the domestic animation and charter industries between 2015

and 2019 to help them tap deeper into overseas markers (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2015). Park already promised that she will work on expanding the national budget for cultural projects and investments. The government seeks measures to allocate 2 percent of the national budget to culture, up from 0.9 percent in 2010, which is comparable to countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, whose cultural budgets averaged 1.9 percent of their national budgets during the same period (Presidential Transition Team 2013).

The cultural sector historically rests between political arguments justifying some protection and economic arguments supporting free trade (Maule 1989). However, recent governments have taken a distinctive position in the cultural industries sector. With some exceptions, they attempt to have an effective government arm dealing with almost all cultural sectors in the midst of the rapid growth of digital and social media for the national economy. The Korean government has continued to develop programs to promote cultural products. Driven by a new systematic export strategy that incorporates private firms in the cultural industries and the government, the cultural penetration of Korean popular culture, including online gaming and K-pop, has increased in many countries. New cultural policy highlights its competitive edge in the international market and measures to support cultural exportation. In particular, "The transnational flows of Korean popular culture are not just linked back to the nationalized imagination of the economy, but the reconstruction of the nation-state through a development framework" (J. Lee 2010, 7).

Neoliberal reform has been the recent ideology encompassing politics and economy, but when it comes to cultural policy, it has not fundamentally changed the underlying shape in the Korean context. With a few exceptions, the role of nation-states has not been minimized or reduced in size so much as reorganized and made to serve the interests of economic marketization. In the realm of culture, the developmental state is not dead, but it is being changed as political and economic conflicts are played out (S. Lee and Hewison 2010). Certainly, the deepening globalization of culture appears to impose some constraints on certain kinds of national-level economic and cultural policies. But the restriction of the nation-state is best characterized by a significant shift in its functions and internal structures rather than some absolute diminution or reduction in its roles or responsibilities (ibid.). The neoliberal reforms in several fields, such as economics and education, have gained strong footholds. The neoliberal cultural policies do not imply an end to government intervention, though. They call on the nation-state for more support of cultural industries and cultural flows. In other words, neoliberal globalization does not imply a monolithic agenda in

Korea because it takes dissimilar shapes in different political contexts in tandem with the Korean Wave, and neoliberalism works in vastly volatile ways in its confrontation with Korea's developmentalism.

Conclusion

The proponents of globalization claim that nation-states have lost their power in the realm of economics and culture. What they argue is that the national boundary is gone and cannot continue to function to shape people's cultural identities and cultural sovereignty. However, "The power of the nation-state does not exist in isolation but is formed and developed through engagement in international relations. It is problematic to generalize the phenomenon and argue that nation-states are losing power over their cultural sovereignty in general" (Chin 2003, 79). Far from the nation disappearing with globalized commerce, "hyper-nationalism and a semi-secret state presence are integral to many countries and even to the U.S. cultural industries and crucial to its empire" (T. Miller 2010, 143). As Maxwell points out, "Domestic national governments still play significant roles in the formation of cultural policy to protect cultural sovereignty, although the national state is overshadowed by neoliberal transnational phenomena" (1995, xxviii).

Although it has taken the core of a liberalized trade regime, the case of Korea is convincing proof that the relationship between the nation-state and the growth of cultural power has been decisive and that the role of the government is even increasing. The Korean government has applied neoliberal globalization approaches to its cultural industries and more recently the creative industries. However, the reality has been more complex than expected. They acknowledge that the domestic cultural industries have substantially grown when the government actively supports the development of the cultural sector. The Korean government has to facilitate the marketization of popular culture, as much through its economic as its cultural policies. Whereas neoliberal norms call for small government in the realm of culture, the Korean government has taken a major role because the cultural industries need active governmental intervention to grow as commodities, not as part of the national arts.

Under neoliberal reform, the primary role of the Korean government has been somewhat decreased, as can be expected, but the nation-state remains and unexpectedly intensifies its role in popular culture. Thus, the Korean Wave is an exemplary case suggesting that globalization has not completely substituted or overridden nation-states. Although seemingly overpowering, neoliberal cultural policies have not entirely altered the underlying contours of the role

of the government (Sánchez Ruiz 2001). While implementing its commercial identities, the government, alongside the cultural industries, still plays a significant role in the Korean context.

Of course, the government's intervention invokes several concerns, regardless of the fact that it promotes the global presence of Korean popular culture. In particular, as neoliberalism has strengthened since the 1990s, a greater concern for culture as a commodity has begun to take hold (Jeannotte 2010). Recent governments have shifted their approaches from hands-off to hands-on, and neoliberal attitudes have placed cultural policy emphasis on market and consumer-based aspects of the creative industries. They do not, however, emphasize the significance of collective and citizen-based concerns for cultural diversity and identity. This means that Korean cultural policies operate primarily in the service of corporate interests, though making them appear that they are serving the general Korean public's interests. Korea's cultural policy is not framed by the notion of public interest, and the Korean government has not been actively involved in preserving national culture.

PART II

Transnational Popular Culture

3

Transnational Television Programs

In the Korean Wave tradition, television programs became the most significant cultural form given that *Hallyu* started with the export of a few television dramas in the late 1990s. Korea previously never enjoyed regional as well as international acclaim for its popular culture, and the country was historically concerned more about the influx of foreign cultures—be it Japanese or American—than the advance of its own (Joo 2011, 489–90). Since the late 1990s, however, Korean broadcasting corporations have developed their own television programs and exported them to neighboring countries and eventually other parts of the world. The transnational recognition of Korean television programs has become noticeable and pioneered the popularity of other popular cultural products, such as films, animation, and music, especially in Asia.

The Korean Wave in the broadcasting sector has significantly changed since 2008, because broadcasters, both networks and cable channels, have rapidly developed new television programs based on global television formats—a license to produce and to remake a copyrighted (foreign) TV program—including audience competition shows. They have also begun to diversify their exports of new programs, including reality shows and game shows in addition to dramas, which are considerably different from the first stage of the Korean Wave. At the same time, Korean broadcasters have increased their import of Western television programs and formats. Consequently, the import of programs and formats surpassed the export of programs and formats for the first time in ten years in

2011, which leads us to reinterpret the Korean Wave in the realm of broadcasting, because Western influences are again increasing.

This chapter documents these recent developments characterizing the New Korean Wave in the realm of the broadcasting sector. It discusses television *Hallyu* as both transnational cultural production and transnational cultural flow. Admitting the continuing importance of dramas in the Korean Wave, it analyzes the growth of global formats, including audience competition shows, in order to understand the major characteristics of local formats in tandem with hybridity. In the realm of drama, it examines the change from ready-made dramas to format dramas in the New Korean Wave era. Then it investigates the ways in which Koreans consume the image of *Hallyu* and the way it is represented in Korean audition programs (those depicting contestants auditioning for various kinds of roles). Unlike the case during the early 2000s, the New Korean Wave has been heavily influenced by transnational participation and audiences. By employing a textual analysis of a few television programs within a historical context, it also maps out whether localized global formats guarantee the creation of new cultural spaces.

Transnational Flows of Television Formats

In the broadcasting industries, technology was available to record television programs as they were broadcast on air in the 1950s. Since then, "International TV trade flows have been traditionally dominated by finished programs, such as films and TV series, many of them produced in Hollywood" (Chalaby 2012, 37). Canned or finished television programs had been the form in which television shows traveled around the world. Other than a few Western countries, nations around the world had no television technologies, no know-how, and no capital to produce their own television programs, and they had no choice but to admit Western-made television programs, which has been the primary form of transnationalization in the audiovisual sector.

However, a more recent phenomenon in television program flows has emerged in the form of the television format. The commerce of formats is not new. For decades, formats of reality and fiction programming have been produced and sold in global markets, but more recently format television has taken the industry by storm (Waisbord 2004, 359–60; Moran 1998). The format revolution radically changed the nature of these flows when, "in the late 1990s, concepts adapted from territory to territory began to cross borders in great numbers" (Chalaby 2012, 37). The format is a kind of recipe or guide to the remaking of a program adaptation in another territory. "The format pro-

gram is devised, developed and broadcast in one television market. Once this has occurred, there is an opportunity to license a re-broadcast of the program in other parts of the world. What is put to air is a new program produced in this new territory using the format of the original as a template that helps to direct the remaking of the adaptation" (Moran 2008, 461). Therefore, "a format can be defined as a show that can generate a distinctive narrative and is licensed outside its country of origin in order to be adapted to local audiences" (Chalaby 2012, 37).

More specifically, the term *(global) television format* refers to a "total body of knowledge systematically and consciously assembled to facilitate the future adaptation under license of the program" (Moran and Malbon 2006, 7). Formatting in this context functions as a "distinctive form of joint venture" in which the "franchise facilitates production networks, cost savings, transfer of knowledge and the exchange of license fees" (Keane and Moran 2008, 158). Moran and Malbon (2006, 20) define a television format as "a set of invariable elements in a serial program out of which the variable elements of individual episodes are produced." In comparison to game shows and other reality show formats, genre adaptations (for example, *bro'Town* and *Shortland Street*) are considered more "open-ended," offering more "opportunities for the registration of national elements," potentially to "the point where adaptation and the original have very little in common" (Moran 1998, 106, 140). Accordingly, the format is generally conceived in opposition to the transnational model of program import-export trade. Unlike a finished or canned television program, a format is easily replicated and the framework for adaptation licensed through the international television market for local adaptation.

Format purchasing has become popular with broadcasters in the early twenty-first century, mainly because they are able to save costs, to avoid the risk involved in creating something original, and to save the time required to develop a new format. "In an age of fierce competition, they enable broadcasters to offer local programming—always an audience favorite, while managing risk (with the knowledge that the same concept has a proven track record in other markets) and driving down costs (through the progressive refinement of the production model)" (Chalaby 2012, 37). Formats signal an increasing synchronization and standardization of the commercial model of television around the globe and are often perceived as ideal solutions "to deal with the resilience of national cultures" (Waisbord 2004, 360) not only by international and domestic media companies but also by state institutions (Lustyik and Smith 2010).

Local and national audiences invariably prefer to see a program that looks and sounds like one of their own. They would prefer a program that is attuned

to their sense of who they are. The idea of the television program format has evolved with this situation in mind. While television formats are rapidly becoming a major business norm for several Western countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, a few non-Western countries have also developed their own formats and exported them to other countries in the twenty-first century. In the midst of the Korean Wave, the Korean broadcasting corporations have especially become active in formatting, although some of them are originally from other countries.

Television Dramas in the Korean Wave Tradition

Since the late 1990s, Korean broadcasters have developed several well-made dramas. The growth in the number of television channels in the early 1990s developed new local producers,[1] as "the reorganized communication apparatus in turn furnished unprecedented supranational cultural products" (Miege 1989, 21). This timely increase in domestic competition produced a higher quality of dramas in the wake of the post-1997 economic crisis. Korea experienced the worst economic recession in 1997 developed mainly in the financial and corporate sectors, and broadcasting companies needed to produce television programs by themselves instead of importing them from foreign countries due to budget cuts. Korean broadcasters dramatically decreased their import of foreign programs, from $57.2 million in 1997 to $27 million in 1998, about a 50 percent decrease, while starting to gradually increase their exports, from $8.3 million in 1997 to $10 million in 1998. Since 1997 the export of television programs increased about 30 percent per year, and the amount in dollar value exceeded the import of foreign programs in 2002 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2004, 255).

Korean broadcasters have advanced several unique domestic programs, and serialized TV dramas called miniseries—running typically from sixteen to twenty-four episodes, with each episode lasting about fifty minutes—have been the major driving force of the Korean Wave (Joo 2011). The miniseries has enjoyed a particular boom with melodramas, which are the cornerstone of Korea's television industry (Paquet 2011). Korean television dramas have succeeded in going into regional markets. Serials such as *What Is Love All About* (1997) and *Stars in My Heart* (1997) became very popular and established an interest in Korean popular culture in several East Asian countries (Yin and Liew 2005).

As expected, the flow of television programs can be partially made possible when foreign audiences enjoy transnational popular culture. Fans in East Asian countries have favored some Korean programs for several reasons, including

the quality of the programs, pricing, and cultural affinities. For example, in the eyes of Chinese buyers, the quality of Korean programs is almost as good as that of Japanese dramas, especially with the noticeable improvements in Korean shows over the past few years, but the cost is far less. In other words, often compared with soap operas and characterized by emotional story lines centering on families or heart-wrenching love stories, Korean TV dramas were initially considered as cheap alternatives to their Japanese counterparts. In 2000 the unit price of a Japanese drama was $5,000–$8,000 in the global television trade market; the unit price of a Korean drama was only $1,326 in 2001 (S. H. Kim 2003). In 2000 Taiwanese Gala TV paid $1,000 for an hour of a Korean drama compared with $15,000–$20,000 for a Japanese one. By 2005, with the increasing popularity of K-dramas, a Korean TV drama outperformed its Japanese counterpart in unit pricing, between $7,000 and $15,000, compared with between $6,000 and $12,000 for a Japanese one (Onishi 2005).

During my November 2012 interview in Seoul with a television producer who has worked for more than twenty years at KBS, he explained, "The price edge of domestic television programs had become a crucial factor for the growth of the Korean Wave in broadcasting. The quality of domestic television programs was relatively lower than other Western countries, including Japan; however, several Asian countries started to import Korean programs primarily due to the pricing factor, although there were several elements, including cultural proximity among Asian countries."

Korean dramas are also considered emotionally powerful by many Asians, and their actors are willing to travel to promote them (Onishi 2005). In addition, many people in Asia find American and Japanese cultures irrelevant to their reality and feel uncomfortable with their emphasis on violence and sex, although many Asian countries are ready to accept Western values (Jin 2011b). As such, the popularity of Korean dramas in the Asian cultural market cannot be explained only through cultural proximities or the quality of programs. As the notion of the Korean Wave implies, it came unexpectedly due to several elements constituting the sudden penetration of Korean dramas in the region.

Against such a backdrop, around 2000 KBS sparked a regional craze for Korean television dramas when it aired *Autumn Fairy Tale* in East Asian and Southeast Asian countries. The Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) later sold another popular Korean program, *Stairways to Heaven* (*Cheon-guk eui Gyedan*), a tragic story of a young couple who fall in love and finally get married, to Japan's Asahi TV for $1 million in 2004 (H. I. Shin 2004). Between 2004 and 2006, two other famous dramas, *Winter Sonata*, about a Western-educated architect and amnesiac who recovers his lost childhood, memory, and Korean identity when

he returns to Seoul, and *Daejanggeum*, a popular MBC period-drama series, also became huge hits with Asian viewers.

By country China initially was the primary market importing Korean dramas; later, the *Hallyu* phenomenon began to tighten its grip on Japan around 2003, when the twenty-hour, twenty-episode television series *Winter Sonata* was broadcast in Japan. Since Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai (NHK), Japan's national network television, first aired *Winter Sonata* in 2003 on its satellite channel (it has subsequently been broadcast nationwide several times), it achieved immense popularity among Japanese audiences, especially among middle-aged Japanese women. *Winter Sonata*'s unprecedented popularity opened the floodgates for the Korean tsunami to wash ashore in Japan (Hanaki et al. 2007). Korean dramas eventually became prevalent in many Asian countries and several Western countries, with Russia and Latin American countries also enjoying Korean dramas.

Due to the rapidly growing popularity of these programs, the total value of Korean television program exports increased by as much as 27.4 times between 1995 and 2007, up from $5.5 million in 1995 to $151 million in 2007 (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2009a). In 2007 the majority of Korean cultural products were consumed in Asia, especially Japan (57.4 percent), Taiwan (18.4 percent), and China and Hong Kong (8.9 percent). Although there have been some fluctuations, Japan has continued to be the major market for Korean television programs, with the proportion of the Japanese market consisting of as much as 62.3 percent in 2012 (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 199) (table 3.1).

Many actors and actresses, including Yong Joon Bae (*Winter Sonata*), Ji-Woo Choi (*Winter Sonata*), Young Ae Lee (*Dae Jang Geum*), Jae Wook Ahn (*Star in My Heart*), and Byung-hun Lee (*All In*), primarily in the *Hallyu* 1.0 era, and Min-ho Lee (*The Heirs*), Ji-hyun Jun, and Soo-hyun Kim (*My Love from the Star*), in the *Hallyu* 2.0 era, have become Asian stars, enchanting Asian audiences. As these *Hallyu* stars' popularity shows, the widespread appeal of *Hallyu* dramas partially depends on what might be called the transnational visibility of the performers (S. Park 2010).

Among television program exports, dramas have continued to take the largest share, up from 76.8 percent in 2002 to 91.9 percent in 2008, followed by documentaries and entertainment (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c; S. H. Kim 2003). The proportion of dramas peaked in 2008, and since then it has dropped a bit, to 90.7 percent (2009), then 87.4 percent (2010), and 81.9 percent in 2011, with a slightly higher percentage in 2012, which has been another major characteristic of television in *Hallyu* 2.0 (Korea Creative Content

Table 3.1: Export of Korean TV programs to major countries (unit: $1,000)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Japan	42,740	65,511	47,632	53,494	65,621	65,271	49,712	102,058	112,087	110,776
China	8,041	9,313	7,978	5,294	4,512	6,339	15,568	17,241	10,999	21,875
Hong Kong	1,787	3,505	4,463	3,033	3,585	4,483	5,386	4,027	2,162	5,318
Taiwan	11,392	11,942	20,473	17,130	7,003	11,565	28,438	21,051	14,587	17,038
Singapore	—	1,150	2,066	2,227	1,978	2,548	2,001	3,259	3,188	1,448
United States	—	2,281	732	791	747	1,909	2,814	3,522	12,565	8,374
Others	10,501	12,183	15,500	11,295	10,474	12,130	23,155	17,782	24,130	26,574
Total	74,461	105,885	98,844	93,264	93,920	104,245	127,074	168,940	179,718	191,403

Sources: Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 199; 2012a, 210, 327; Korea Creative Content Agency 2012a, 12; Ministry of Science, ICT, and Future Planning 2014a, 133. The data include only network broadcasters, excluding some areas (DVD sales and sales to foreign Korean broadcasters).

Agency 2012a; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2009a). In 2011 documentary (11.5 percent) and entertainment (5.1 percent) made up the second and third major television program genres, respectively.

However, once we divide television program exports between networks and cable channels, it tells a different story. During the same year, the largest genre from networks was drama, which accounted for 83.6 percent, followed by documentary (12.3 percent) and entertainment (3.3 percent). Among cable channels, dramas were still the largest, but they consisted of only 59.4 percent, with entertainment accounting for as much as 29.6 percent. Although cable channels are still small in terms of their market share in the Korean broadcasting sector, their influence is gradually growing, and therefore nondramas are becoming significant as programs for domestic audiences and foreign viewers. For example, *Running Man* (SBS), which is a variety show, has been popular in many Asian countries since 2011. "The versatile format for *Running Man,* where celebrities compete in games of wit and athletics, continues to do phenomenally well, changing locations overseas to the delight of local fans in Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and most recently Macao, and featuring famous regional guest stars like Jackie Chan in March 2013" ("TV Trends" 2013, 17). In my correspondence with many college students and early career businessmen in Vancouver, Canada, several of them said that they were enjoying Korean variety shows. One male businessman, age twenty-five, explained, "I watch Korean television programs, in particular, variety shows, almost on a daily basis. As of now, my favorite Korean programs are *Running Man* (SBS), *Infinite Challenge* (MBC), and *No Oven Dessert*—a cooking show aired on tvN between 2013 and 2014, as well as *Emergency Man and Woman* (drama on tvN)." Another businessman, age twenty-nine, also said, "Due to my busy schedule, I don't see television often. However, I like some of Korean variety TV shows, including *Running Man*. I like it because each episode is so different, which makes it very interesting. Also, they invite many guests in their show and visit many different places, so I can learn many different entertainers and places in Korea, and sometimes other countries."

As will be discussed, as the reputation of dramas has decreased in the *Hallyu* 2.0 era, several nondrama genres are gradually replacing dramas, in particular for the younger generation, in many parts of the world. Although some of them like dramas, they enjoy variety shows because they eliminate the need to follow the complicated story lines of miniseries, which makes a big difference for global youth. Of course, this trend does not necessarily mean the significant decline of K-dramas. Instead, it will be a temporary setback because people's penchant, particularly in Asia, cannot be changed easily. However, as Western-

ers traditionally like sitcoms, quiz shows, and variety shows, this new trend, which expands major program genres in the Korean Broadcasting System, is a timely and necessary practice, as long as Korean broadcasters target the Western markets as well.

Across Border Formats: From Western Countries

While Korean dramas in Asian countries have continued to be the major genre, there have been interesting changes in the Korean broadcasting industries in recent years, primarily because broadcasters have paid considerable attention to television formats. Cable channels have especially focused on several formats, including reality audition shows, and they have exported some of them as formatted programs since around 2008. Cable channels emphasize nondramas mainly because they cannot compete with networks in the realm of dramas due to their lack of budget and expertise. They provide some niche markets with entertainment programs, which results in big differences between networks and cable channels. Once cable channels were successful with reality shows, though, networks also adopted this trend. The local broadcasting industries have become active in formatting, although some of their formats were originally from Western countries.

To begin with, Korean broadcasters have increased their import of format programs from Western countries before creating their own format programs. Like many other countries, Korean broadcasters prefer game or reality shows as major formats. The widespread popularity of reality television in the late 1990s accelerated a transnational process of program format adaptation. Like coproductions, "format adaptation helps companies reduce risk and uncertainty by working a format with demonstrated success" (Kraidy 2005, 104). For example, television programs such as *Ugly Betty* and *Who Dares Wins* all broadcast on April 19, 2009, on New Zealand's main network channels, give evidence to the current popularity of hybrid media texts that were earlier described as repetitions with little difference. Korean broadcasters, both networks and cables, have also imported several formats, including *One vs. 100*, *Minute to Win It*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *Super Viking*, and *Brain Battle* (see table 3.2).

Surprisingly, though, Korean broadcasters have no hesitation to import these format programs. As Kraidy points out, "Some Arab countries, including Kuwait, have opposed reality TV because of the fear that the learning rituals embedded in reality shows would lead Islam youth to abandon their traditions wholesale in order to adopt Western modernity wholesale" (2010, 138). In the context of Korea, there are no indications of resisting Western reality shows. It

Table 3.2: Major imported formats

Broadcasters	Program titles	Genres	Original productions
KBS	*One vs. 100*	Quiz	Netherlands
	Boys over Flowers	Drama	Japan
MBC	*Minute to Win It*	Quiz	United States
	Dancing with the Stars	Variety	United Kingdom
	Brain Battle	Quiz	Japan
	Brain Survivor	Game show	Japan
OnStyle	*Super Model Korea*	Reality show	United States
	Project Runway Korea	Reality show	United States
QTV	*Love Taxi*	Reality show	United Kingdom
	Mom vs. Mom: Wife Swap	Reality show	United Kingdom
SBS	*Super Viking*	Variety	Japan
TVN	*Korea's Got Talent*	Talent show	United Kingdom
	Triangle	Quiz	Netherlands
	Opera Star 2011	Talent show	United Kingdom

Sources: Korea Creative Content Agency 2011b, 8; H. R. Kang 2011.

is not necessary to oppose entire reality shows, or, in general, foreign programs; it is crucial, however, to adapt selectively and modify them based on local cultures shared by people, which is one of the most significant characteristics of hybridization. Korean broadcasters, however, primarily ignore their opportunity to think over the role of television formats due to their emphasis on both cost and ratings.

The local broadcasting industries have indeed started to increase their import of foreign programs owing to the growth of cable channels. In 2008 Korea steeply increased its import of foreign programs and formats, from $64.9 million in 2007 to $149.3 million, a 130 percent growth. Korea has continued to increase its imports, and in 2011 imports ($233.9 million) surpassed exports ($222.4 million) for the first time since 2002 (figure 3.1). Korea has expanded its export of television programs to foreign countries, primarily in Asia; however, the import of television programs, including formats, is mainly from the United States (87.8 percent) (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2011b, 2012b). This means that Korea has heavily relied on Western programs and formats, and it is arguably clear that globalizing TV formats alongside programs are a potential force of cultural homogenization in Korea. Although Koreans prefer to watch programs that are reflective of their cultural or local orientation, what passes for local production is sometimes merely a localized version of Western popular culture, as Gordon (2009) discusses with the case of Jamaica's TV networks.

The recent growth of foreign programs and Western formats has shifted the major characteristics in broadcasting. Most of all, it is crucial to under-

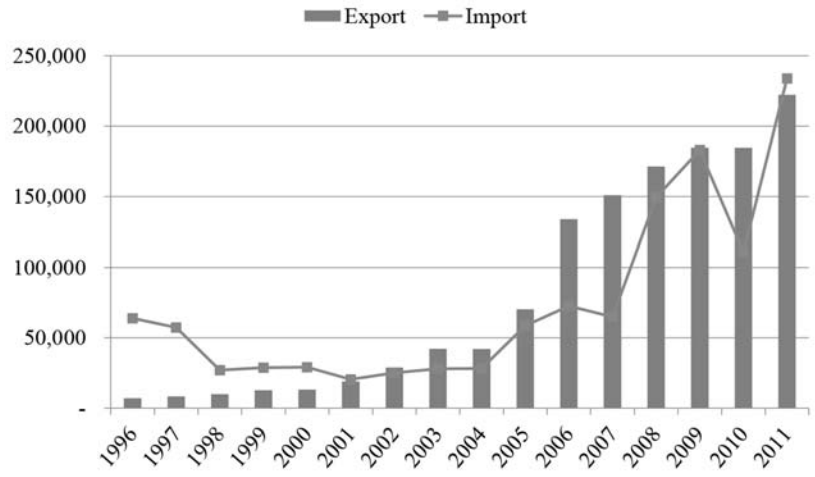

Figure 3.1: Flow of television programs (unit: $1,000). *Sources:* Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012a, 4; 2011b; 2007; 2006a, 30; 2004, 255; 2014a.

stand cultural proximity, which has been considered the primary reason for the growth of local television programs in the same region. As media scholar Joseph Straubhaar points out, "Audiences will tend to prefer programming which is closer or most proximate to their own culture: national programming if it can be supported by the local economy" (2000). This indicates that the audience's familiarity with the language and the cultural context gives local producers a competitive edge over foreign programs. Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham (1996) also explain the importance of this notion of geolinguistic regions to capture the increasing complexity of international television flows. *Telenovela* in Mexico has indeed been famous in several Latin American countries, based on the use of Spanish as a first language. The flow of media products across East Asia has accelerated the discussion of the rise of geocultural markets as defined by regions, such as Latin America and Asia (Hesmondhalgh 2013). Therefore, regardless of the increasing role of Hollywood films and American pop music in non-Western countries, the broadcasting sector has been a cultural realm in which local people enjoy domestic programs over foreign programs. Previous scholarship on television programs in the Korean Wave tradition also emphasized the chief reasons for the acceptance of television programs, in particular dramas in Asia, and they claimed that Asian audiences prefer Korean television dramas based on cultural proximities (Hanaki et al. 2007; Leung 2008). After conducting ethnographic fieldwork, they argued, Asian audiences like Korean dramas because they believe that Korean dramas often reinforce their traditional values.

However, with the rapid growth of global formats, the notion of cultural proximity is not continuing to play a key role in explaining the Korean context because local broadcasters widely adapt global formats originated by Western countries in addition to foreign programs. Although local broadcasters, including Korean producers, slightly modify the formats, they cannot change the original themes and styles fundamentally, resulting in the dominance of Western culture. Of course, format, instead of rebroadcasting of the original programs, partially reflects the notion of cultural proximities. Producers understand that local audiences ask that on-screen figures act and sound like them, that situations and places shown feel familiar and recognizable, and that stories told have to do with their world (Moran 2008). The idea of the television format has been evolved with this notion in mind. "In short, people would prefer a program that is tuned to their sense of who they are. Licensing the re-broadcast of a finished or canned program allows for very little cultural adaptation in a particular market. However, with a television format, what the trade seeks to export is the successful commercial knowledge and know-how bound up in a program that will help ensure its adaptation and remaking in another territory" (ibid., 461). The issue is that broadcasters cannot avoid cultural differences, although they can change casts, narratives, and customs. Likewise, as cultural proximity theory cannot explain the reasons audiences in Western countries like Korean dramas, it falls short in explaining why local audiences in Korea enjoy Western programs, either finished or formatted.

Regarding major television programs, we also need to comprehend that networks and cable channels have gone in two different directions. Again, networks have continued to develop dramas and exported them to foreign countries; however, cable channels have increasingly relied on Western programs and formats. When people turn on TV in Korea, they can watch many American channels, such as sports (ESPN), movies (HBO), and news (CNN). Many local channels have also heavily relied on formats in the early twenty-first century. With the rise of East Asian media cultures, Iwabuchi argues that "globalization processes have enhanced media culture production capacities of various non-Western actors. This testifies to the relative decline of the supremacy of American media cultures and questions the credence of the Western cultural imperialism thesis" (2010b, 199). However, as far as cable channels are concerned, the current globalization process cannot be an alternative interpretation of the recent trend in the Korean broadcasting industry, because cable channels have massively imported Western programs, including formats.

Local TV Formats Go Global

With the rapid increase in the number of global formats in the local broadcasting industries, Korean broadcasters have developed their format programs and increased their exportation to other countries. Although there are many television format genres, Korean broadcasters have developed and exported three major formats: drama, reality audition show, and quiz show. The majority of format programs are dramas, followed by entertainment and quiz shows. As discussed, globally, game and reality shows are major format genres. In Korea drama is the most significant format genre created by local operations. Broadcasting companies previously exported canned and finished dramas, and the same corporations are now developing format dramas. Consequently, several Asian countries, including China, Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines, have developed their own versions of Korean dramas through format and license contracts while still importing Korean programs. *My Girl* (2007), *Hotelier* (2007), *Full House* (2008), *Coffee Prince* (2008), and *Successful Story of a Bright Girl* (2010) are all exported to these countries as a format based on their success in Korea. Several Korean dramas reflecting the boom of K-pop, such as *You're Beautiful* (2009) and *Dream High* (2011) have become popular in several Asian countries, including Japan, and these dramas have expanded the fan base from people in their thirties and forties to include those in their preteens and teens and early twenties as well. As the most recent move, ABC in the United States was also looking to the Korean format show *My Love from the Star* for its next breakout hit in September 2014 (Goldberg 2014).

Among these, *You're Beautiful* is a drama about a fictional boy band, A. N. Jell, and the relationship between its members when a female, posing as her twin brother, joins the group. A Japanese remake of this drama was released in Japan in July 2011. Japan's Asahi TV had already aired the drama *Hotelier* in April 2007, based on a format that was bought from MBC. The same broadcasting network exported another popular drama, *Full House*, to the Philippines and Vietnam. MBC also exported *We Got Married,* an entertainment program, to Turkey, while exporting *Coffee Prince* to Taiwan and the Philippines. SBS also sold several licenses to Asia, including *Banjun Drama* to Indonesia and China and *Temptation of a Wife* to China (see table 3.3).

Korea has not been able to create its own successful finished dramas in recent years in the midst of the popularity of format dramas. Although *Queen Seon Duk* (2009), *Dong Yi* (2010), and *My Love from the Star* (*Byeoreseo on geudae* [2014]) (the latter especially has been attributed to the video service on the Internet

Table 3.3: Exports of format and license

Categories	Year of sales	Title of programs	Countries
Drama	2006	*Delightful Girl Choon-Hyang*	China
	2007	*Hotelier*	Japan
	2007	*My Girl*	Indonesia
	2008	*All about Eve*	Vietnam
	2008	*Coffee Prince*	Philippines
	2008	*Full House*	Vietnam, Philippines
	2008	*My Name Is Kim Sam Soon*	Philippines
	2008	*Queen of Games*	China
	2008	*Stairway to Heaven*	Philippines
	2009	*Delightful Girl Choon-Hyang*	Vietnam
	2009	*Infamous Seven Princesses*	China, Vietnam
	2009	*Smile You*	China
	2010	*Autumn Fairy Tale*	Philippines
	2010	*Coffee Prince*	Taiwan
	2010	*Successful Story of a Bright Girl*	Taiwan
	2010	*Temptation of a Wife*	China
	2014	*My Love from Another Star*	China, United States
Entertainment	2006	*Match Made in Heaven*	China
	2007	*Banjun Drama*	Indonesia
	2011	*I Am a Singer*	China
	2011	*We Got Married*	Turkey
	2013	*Super Star K*	China
Quiz show	2006	*Dojeon Golden Bell*	Vietnam
	2008	*Dojeon Golden Bell*	China

Sources: Korea Creative Content Agency 2011a, 50–54; Ko 2013; Goldberg 2014.

and mobile services in China)[2] have continued the legacy of Korean dramas in Asian countries, the viewership of these programs in Asia is not comparable to predecessor shows. Asian broadcasters are looking for the next *Winter Sonata* or *Dae Jang Geum*, though Korean television producers have not made new hit dramas for a while. Given this circumstance, Korean broadcasters have created drama formats as a new engine for the broadcasting sector.

Meanwhile, Korean broadcasters have made several nondrama formats, including reality shows, which were not seen much previously. Although these programs cannot be compared to dramas in terms of the popularity in foreign countries, they have become a new major genre that Korean broadcasters face. Korean networks develop and sell several entertainment shows. With the huge success of *Super Star K*, as will be detailed later, Korea went on to develop a similar reality audition show in Indonesia. In March 2012, INDOSIAR, an Indonesian broadcaster alongside Indonesia Korean TV, and Samsung created an Indonesian version of *Super Star K*, named *Galaxy Superstar*. The show is a collaborative project between Korea and Indonesia. More than ten thou-

sand participants from five different cities have gone through the preliminaries, and only the top eleven remain for the finale. The top-eleven contestants were trained under the Rainbow Bridge Agency's "Korean artist incubation training" system to receive the same vigorous training that has made K-pop the worldwide phenomenon it is today. Everything leading up to the debut in Indonesia was broadcast through *Galaxy Superstar* (J. Han 2012).

Again, once the format program is developed and broadcast into one television market, there is an opportunity to license a remake of the program in other countries. Likewise, the Indonesian broadcaster is taking the same format model, this time one developed by the Korean broadcaster. In this sense, transnationality in the broadcasting sector occurs in two different stages: the first is the transformation of U.S. programs into Korean programs, followed by another transformation of Korean programs into other countries' programs via format trades. Quiz shows created by Korean network broadcasters are also becoming popular in a few countries. KBS has sold the formats of *Dojeon Golden Bell*, a quiz show targeting high school students, to a Vietnamese network and China's CCTV, and it also exported *Infamous Seven Princesses* to Vietnam and China as well (see table 3.3).

As such, with growing sales of TV program format licenses in the global broadcasting content market, Korean broadcasters, which focused on exporting ready-made TV programs, are now turning their eyes to format sales. Format export, of course, goes beyond the simple transfer of ideas. Exporters send scriptwriters and producers to advise on the production of the whole program (HanCinema 2007). Since 2008 Korea has also increased format exports, primarily in the form of sale of drama scenarios or remake licenses. In the case of the sales of drama licenses, there were only three cases before 2006. However, this figure began to increase, to fifteen in 2007, eighteen in 2008, twenty in 2009, and twenty in 2010 (Korea Creative Content Agency 2011b, 50). The commodity known as the format package includes "not only a licensing agreement but also a wealth of documentation of the previous local iterations, production notes and history—often including graphic design elements, musical theme, and cues, certain packages also include audio-visual materials and onsite consulting advice" (Oren and Shahaf 2012, 2–3).

Admittedly, the advantages of television formats may result in a decrease in the popularity of Korean television programs in foreign countries in the long run. On the one hand, one of the major reasons for the boom of reality formats in many countries has been for financial reasons. Reality TV shows, including *Super Star K*, gained their momentum in the milieu of relative financial scarcity in the early twenty-first century. With the introduction of several comprehen-

sive television channels, including JTBC, TV Chosun, and Channel A in 2011, competition among television channels has become severe, and local broadcasters are leaning toward formats in order to save costs while avoiding any significant failure. Economically, "Reality TV shows fit the needs of producers and distributors alike for cheaper programming. These programs largely did away with higher-priced stars; instead they appropriate average Joes who want to be stars" (Raphael 2004, 124). Unlike the U.S. market, however, the Korean broadcasting environment is relatively small, and it is not easy to find new stars who possess talent. With the rapid increase in similar reality television shows, the quality of these talent shows cannot be guaranteed.

On the other hand, domestic formats are very different from Western formats, which make the programs worse. Many American reality TV shows shared a common competitive nature: "Contestants were vying with one another for a cash prize and were engaged in building alliances and betraying allies" (Reiss and Wiltz 2010). As their major characteristics, "these formats emphasize complicated narratives, speedy stories, and participants choosing their side on between good and bad" (S. K. Hong 2013, 39). For example, *Survivor* mainly focuses on competitions among participants in a cruel way because they betray their friends and team up with former enemies in order to win the games. Koreans do not like this kind of aggressiveness. Therefore, other than competition shows, including *Super Star K*, these formats are experiencing difficulty in finding audiences.

During my interview in summer 2013, Ji Hoon Park, a Korean media scholar, aptly explained the current condition in the broadcasting sector: "Korean dramas are mainly targeting the Japanese market, and broadcasters must cast some K-pop idol members because Japanese audiences who are major consumers do not watch Korean dramas without K-pop musicians. Korean broadcasters are able to create programs, either formats or nonformats, by casting them. The issue is that they are not able to find some K-pop stars with talent, which result[s] in low-quality dramas in several cases."

The New Korean Wave in the broadcasting sector shows the growth in the entertainment area, including reality shows, and the versatile convergence between traditional dramas and entertainment areas, including popular music shows. However, these new trends cannot guarantee the advancement of the quality of programs, because broadcasters are mainly keen to make profits through these new forms. Because the reality TV format is not likely to go away, it is critical for broadcasters to deal with not only production costs but also the quality of the programs in order to maintain the current pace of the New Korean Wave in the global markets.

How to Understand Transnationality in Reality Shows

As television formats, and in particular reality shows, rapidly become popular, the notion of transnationalism in popular culture has fundamentally changed. Transnationalization is used to describe "a condition by which people, commodities, and ideas cross national boundaries and are not identified with a single place of origin" (Watson 1997, 11).[3] Television formats represent the contemporary notion of transnationality, because they are symbols of nationless cultural products. What is significant in the Korean context is that the transnational cultural flow of local popular culture should not be an explanation for the flow of culture from Korea to Asian countries anymore, as Korea has appropriated Western culture and utilized it in creating a number of cultural products, including reality show programs.

More specifically, reality TV encompasses a variety of specialized formats or subgenres, including most prominently game shows and dating programs (for example, *Blind Date* and *The Bachelor*). In the twenty-first century, reality TV has added one more distinctive format: the talent contest (for example, *American Idol* and *The Voice*) (Ouellette and Murray 2004, 3–4; Ji Hoon Park and Baruh 2010, 1). Reality TV programs are characterized by their hybridized genres. On the one hand, placed within their production context of format franchising, franchises such as the *Idol* programs reveal how concepts are licensed for international markets and adapted to local audience preferences. On the other hand, the glocalization strategy is a form of hybridization.

In explaining the notion of hybridity, Robertson (1995) introduced the concept of glocalization: the successful global transfer of products to different localities, by making modifications for such variables as culture, language, gender, or ethnicity, which emphasizes the interaction between the global and local—explicating that the local strategically incorporates the global by particularizing the universal (J. Cho and Lee 2009). These glocalization processes are "based on collaboration between the owners of the program, the licensee, and the contracted production crew, who customize the program for local markets under the supervision of the original producers" (Baltruschat 2009, 54).

On the global stage, reality TV competitions are nothing new, but the boom of audition programs started in Korea only a few years ago. Although Korea is a latecomer in television format production, the reality show craze that has dominated local television for the past several years does not show any signs of abating. The boom started with the success of *Super Star K*, a Korean version of *American Idol*, on M.net Korea (a cable music channel) (Jang 2011). *Super Star K* is linked to the development of *American Idol.* The *Idol* format is a reality TV

contest with the aim of finding a pop idol and recording artist by staging nationwide auditions (Baltruschat 2009). *Super Star K*, however, did not purchase the license, although it somewhat copied the original structure of *American Idol.*

Super Star K began its first season on July 24, 2009, and it attained great success, as the viewing rate reached 8 percent (1 percent is a standard for the success of programs on cable channels). Season 2 gained more success, as the viewing rate reached more than 18 percent—the highest among all cable channels. Given that the most significant purpose of reality TV is to enable the producers and broadcasters to reduce production costs while achieving ratings success (Ji Hoon Park and Baruh 2010, 3), *Super Star K* has successfully fulfilled its main goals, which became a model for other Korean networks and cable channels to follow. Season 4 of the show has discovered many new artists who have gone on to become K-pop stars, including In-Kook Seo (winner of season 1); American-born John Park, who was the runner-up for *Super Star K* season 2; Miss A's Suzy; Jewelry's Park Semi; Infinite's Hoya; Huh Gak (winner of season 2); and Roy Kim (season 4 winner), to name a few.

There are several factors that have accounted for the sudden growth of this reality program, including fair competition regardless of gender, age, race, and appearance, and an audition process that maximizes the participation of viewers, because it is the audience's votes that decide the star.[4] The audiences who become accustomed to the language and format of competition feel like they enjoy an omnipresent authority that they never experience in reality (Woo 2012). Audience competition shows empower the freedom of expression and individualism, which has been one of the major causes for the success of the programs. *Super Star K* as a Western format of talent show brought each person an opportunity to actualize his or her own dream of being a celebrity. Moreover, while participants enjoy freedom of expression by singing and dancing, they also feel the same expression because participants can vote for their favorite singers and dancers while posting their support to "fan cafés" with the growth of social media. As Livingstone (2007) points out, through blogs, Web pages, and fan cafés, the Internet serves as a channel, providing information and a public sphere for individuals to not only listen to societal dialogue but also to express opinions.

However, what makes *Super Star K* most unique is its authority with global auditions based on the success of K-pop and K-dramas, meaning that the overall popularity of the New Korean Wave has substantially helped a few reality shows in developing their foreign locations. While *Idol* programs in the United Kingdom and the United States heavily focus on the national competition, the Korean version has emphasized the transnational competition, which is con-

sidered one of the major factors for the success of the program. *Super Star K* began to use the image of *Hallyu* in the audition on a full-scale level. Starting in season 2, *Super Star K* specifically held auditions in other countries, starting with Los Angeles. Season 3 expanded global auditions into various other cities, such as New York, Beijing, Tokyo, Sendai, and Osaka. Season 4 auditions added Sydney, Australia, to the lineup.[5] Once participants passed elimination at the audition, they got a round-trip air ticket to Korea for the next level of the competition. Of course, *Super Star K* has also encouraged foreigners living in Korea to participate as well.

Foreign competition of *Super Star K* has attracted many participants, from Koreans who are living in these other cities to foreigners. When *Super Star K3* took place in Beijing in 2011, as many as thirty-two hundred people participated. As a reflection of the booming K-pop sensation, many of them sang famous Korean songs, such as Park Bom (You and I), Big Bang, Super Junior, and Girls' Generation. The majority of participants were foreigners: Chinese (45 percent), Koreans who study and work in China (30 percent), Korean Chinese (15 percent), and other minorities (10 percent) (*Super Star K3* 2011). When *Super Star K4* took place in Sydney on July 15, 2012, about a thousand people swarmed to the audition. Producers expected the lines to be full of Korean students, but there were more local foreigner contestants than expected. Because the preliminaries usually involve K-pop singing and dancing, most contestants took a shot at singing K-pop songs, including 2NE1's "Lonely."

In other words, the recent popularity of K-pop has become a primary reason for the growth of the competition shows because foreigners and Korean diasporas who love K-pop and are interested in success in Korea have become major participants of these shows. Kim Tae Eun, the producer of the show, said, "Perhaps because of the great popularity K-pop has been garnering in the world, many foreigners applied with popular [Korean] idol singers' songs. It was even hard to tell whether we were in Korea or Australia if we just listened to the songs. *Super Star K4* has become more global, letting us look forward to more unique performances" ("*Superstar K4* Takes the Audition Battle" 2012).

Super Star K also added YouTube and Facebook auditions for people who do not live in major foreign cities, which symbolizes the convergence of the old media (television) and the new media (social media), featuring one of the major traits of *Hallyu* 2.0 television. Korean audition programs invite foreign participants and Koreans who live throughout the world to significantly gain more authority for the global audition (Y. K. Choi 2011; Paek 2012).

Due to the noticeable success of *Super Star K,* other broadcasting firms, both networks and cable channels, jumped on the bandwagon of reality audition

programs. Thus, Korean broadcasters have invested in the format programs, not only because they can save costs, while avoiding the risk involved in creating something original, but also because they witnessed the success of *Super Star K,* which is not licensed but still uses a format structure. *Super Star K* has changed the landscape of the Korean broadcasting scene, which has long revolved around the three network broadcasters. The popularity of the show has grabbed the attention of advertisers, leading networks to invest heavily in the show (Yoon-mi Kim 2010).[6] There were ten survival audition programs on air in the summer of 2012, including *Dancing with the Stars* on MBC, *I Am a Singer* on MBC, *Kim Yu-na's Kiss and Cry* on SBS, and *Korea's Got Talent* on tvN. Most of these programs compete for prime-time weekend spots. Broadcasters cite lofty aims for these shows, such as discovering talented singers and actors and even bolstering the spirits of job seekers (H. S. Shin 2011). As in the cases of *Super Star K* and *Star Audition,* some of these reality shows have utilized both Korean diasporas and foreigners, emphasizing their transnationality. Reality competition shows are popular, but as such shows spring up like mushrooms, the quality of participants can be compromised, and in singing competitions audition judges' standards can produce a similar vocal style (Jang 2011).

MBC, one of the three major networks, immediately started a competition show, *Star Audition: The Great Birth* (*Witaehan Tansaeng*), in November 2010. *Star Audition* is a singing competition that is basically in the same mold. It did go further, however, by taking video applications submitted online as well as holding auditions in several other countries, including the United States, Japan, and China (Jang 2011). From the beginning, *Star Audition* planned to recruit foreigners to constitute a major portion of the participants. When the program selected around 120 semifinalists through the preliminary competitions, about 20 percent of them were foreigners or from the Korean diaspora living in other countries. As such, the Korean creative industry irrefutably remains the linchpin in the protean architecture of *Hallyu*. Nonetheless, *Hallyu* as a transnational cultural phenomenon is profoundly dependent on the cultural masonry carried out by a legion of underrecognized "craftsmen," namely, overseas fans and participants in several events, which are now part of the production process. Yet the belief that the origin and ownership of *Hallyu* are in the hands of Korea and Koreans is an egregiously false assumption (J. B. Choi 2015).

Super Star K, Star Audition, and a few more programs certainly adapt the original formats of Western singing competitions, such as *American Idol* and *The Voice,* and adjust and contextualize them into a local perspective. It is notable that the local program changes the original form and how the program deals with the Korean diaspora. As Hyo Kyung Woo documents, "*Star Audition* develops a mentor system

to differentiate it from the Western audition programs; after an elimination five judges change their roles into mentors and choose their mentees for training. Such a teacher/student relationship in the audition reflects the top-down Korean education system and its cultural respect to the elders as authorities. The mentor system aims to produce and teach unprepared participants to be professionals. While Western programs focus on current performances of participants, Korean audition programs tend to focus on the potential and the way to develop it" (2012, 12). This is the result of a modification of the original format, and it certainly reflects locality, regardless of the fact that it does not change much of the original format. As Joseph Straubhaar points out in the case of *telenovelas,* "The localization and adaptation of imported television format elements have been part of the hybridity transnational television" (2012, 173). Through the modification process, which is a mix of global and local elements, Korean broadcasters have capitalized on hybridity in order to appeal to both national and global audiences. From dramas, though to a lesser degree, to reality shows, their local adaptations demonstrate features of hybrid formats insofar as they integrate elements of diverse genres in the current Korean television production structure.

Hallyu 2.0: Transnationality and Koreanness

Korean diasporas play a major role in the process as part of increasing foreign participation. Unique to *Hallyu* and other media products (Asian or otherwise) that are consumed outside of their location of production is the unsettling of epistemic boundaries concerning the definitions of diasporic consumption. "The interest in Korean popular culture outside of Korea today, is kept alive by a flexible citizenry of consumers who comprise both ethnic Korean communities and non-Koreans. They are similarly dependent upon the speed and availability of media networks and technology, and may gain access to these products through the television or the Internet" (Yin and Liew 2005, 208). In recent years, major Korean networks have produced a proliferation of reality television programs that feature transnational adoptees of Korean descent and their return to their birth country. The television shows, however, signal to both domestic and international audiences that the culture as a whole cares about transnational adoptees. Furthermore, "The televised welcome of ethnic Koreans who are culturally Western provides a space in which to examine the fascinating figure of the transnational adoptee and of personal—and politically implicated—narratives of separation and adoption" (S. Park 2010, 151–52).

Korean diasporas such as John Park, Pae Su Jong, and Paek Chong Kang who appeared in audience competition shows indicate how Korean society

consumes and tames its otherness in the context of Korean nationalism. These diasporas who look Korean but do not have Korean nationality function as mediators that connect the local and the world (Woo 2012). As Kachig Tölölyan indicates, "Ethnic diaspora is the exemplary communities of the transnational moment, which has become the paradigm in this understanding of transnationalism" (1991, 5, cited in Vertovec 1999). Previously, Korean broadcasters enjoyed their regional penetration first based on Korean Chinese or Korean Japanese. This old notion of transnationality has changed with the reality shows, primarily because Koreans living in the country are now enjoying television shows representing ethnic Koreans. The New Korean Wave in conjunction with transnationality has shifted cultural flows, from Korea to other countries and from other countries to Korea, although they are still marginal.

Hallyu as a transnational phenomenon is often seen as the logical outgrowth of Korea's growing economic status and power in Asian geopolitics and the global arena (Yin and Liew 2005). As Eun Young Jung points out, "The Korean Wave may not be as 'Korean' or as 'authentically Korean' as people might imagine." Korean culture is popular overseas, she argues, partly because it is "transnational and hybrid" and "involve[s] combinations of local and foreign elements at multiple levels" (2009, 78). The recent boom of audition competition shows indeed implies the way in which Koreans want to understand *Hallyu* as a new transnational movement.

Super Star K and *Star Audition* fully use people from foreign countries through *Hallyu* in order to build positive images of Korea and national pride. In this context, it is essential to understand that these reality shows actualize the norm of globalization, emphasizing interconnection and interdependency of all global areas. The meanings and consequences of transnational cultural practices used to rest on local audiences' understandings and experiences of transnational popular culture (Sujeong Kim 2009). As *Super Star K* and *Star Audition* demonstrate, though, Korean broadcasters appropriate transnationality in creating programs that would not have been seen much in previous years. In this regard, James Lull has already maintained that "contemporary cultural hybrids are then further mediated by the production of deterritorialized cultural styles created in new physical locations, and by the reintroduction of new cultural syntheses back into the 'original' locations—for example, Taiwanese culture entering the People's Republic of China, or Mexican-American culture returning to Mexico" (2000, 157).

Again, as Watson (1997) attests, transnationalization is used to describe a condition by which people, commodities, and ideas cross national boundaries, and as we have seen, Korean broadcasters widely use foreigners for reality

shows. If *Hallyu* is a transnational movement to let people in the world meet Koreanness, then it also forces Koreans to confront the otherness and to rethink and redefine what "Koreanness" or "being Korean" would mean in this globalized context (Woo 2012).[7] As the profile of the average consumer of Korean popular culture outside of Korea changes from diasporic communities in New York, Los Angeles, or Sydney to include "non-Koreans" in East and Southeast Asia, cultural products made by Korean television corporations have been well received as among the most successful local cultural products (Yin and Liew 2005). However, Koreans living in the country are now consuming transnational culture, not made by foreign countries but made by domestic television corporations in foreign countries.

What is interesting is that the current form of local culture is itself transnationalized through the hybridization process, which means that it is not easy to designate the origin of a particular local culture. Therefore, although the growth of local popular culture is certainly the result of the interplay between the local and the global forces, we need to cautiously approach interpreting the current form of hybrid transnationality in the realm of popular culture.

The wave could not wake by itself without content provision from the cultural industries in Korea. But this does not disprove that fans outside Korea are the bona fide "producers" of the *Hallyu* phenomenon. The "elsewhereness" or exteriority, ironically speaking, is central to the axis of *Hallyu* governance, an axis formed where content production merges with cultural production. In other words, the web of governance in the *Hallyu* phenomenon is woven along the interaction between content production, mainly by the creative industry in Korea, and cultural production, by the overseas fans of Korean cultural products (J. B. Choi 2015). However, it is also essential to understand that fans are not only consumers and producers but also now a major part of *Hallyu* in that they participate in the process as talent.

Although reality shows have developed a new transnational youth culture, in fact there are some concerns because they are all the same: contest, scathing assessment by a panel of judges, votes from viewers, and elimination of losers. Broadcasters say they cannot help this because the sameness is inherent in the format of reality TV. But it is probably more accurate to say that broadcasters have learned to condone outright copycatting by their rivals if their own program becomes a hit (H. S. Shin 2011). There are also signs of overheated competition, as broadcasters fight over a limited number of viewers, mainly targeting youth. Some criticize Korean broadcasters for plagiarizing American shows made a decade ago when they should be putting their heads together to come up with creative ideas to promote Korean pop culture. In that sense, while

several hybrid reality shows in the Korean context based on global television formats are seeking diversity by inspiring new forms of programs, arguably it is also true that hybrid local reality shows based on popular formats indicate a growing penchant toward imitation and hesitation to stimulate creative programs.

Conclusion

The Korean Wave in the broadcasting sector has shown distinctive development over the past eighteen years. Korean broadcasters have traditionally exported dramas to neighboring countries. Since 2008 the Korean broadcasting industry has changed its emphasis in the New Korean Wave era. Amid the popularity of reality shows globally, however, Korean broadcasters have paid attention to television formats, in particular reality shows. Korean broadcasters have keenly adjusted to the shifting media ecology, and consequently the transnational flow of television programs has changed. On the one hand, broadcasting corporations have continued to produce dramas, which are the most significant TV genres in Korea; on the other hand, they expand their investments in new areas, utilizing global television formats.

The adaptation of Western formats has been partially localized in Korea, and the rapid growth of television formats has implied the consequent growth of transnationality in cultural production and cultural flows. As Chalaby (2005) explains, for much of its history television has been closed, bound to a national territory. Foreign broadcasters were not allowed to transmit into a national territory, and attempts to do so were seen as breaches of sovereignty. However, a transnational media order is coming into being that is remapping media spaces and involving new media practices, flows, and products. An international reach is no longer the preserve of Western-based conglomerates, as an increasing number of smaller media companies from the developing world are expanding overseas, as in the case of several Korean broadcasting corporations. Many Korean television channels are at the heart of the transformation of regional media cultures, most noticeably in Asia.

Television formats have also fundamentally changed the old notion of transnationality. Before the boom of television formats, broadcasters in both Western and non-Western countries focused on canned television programs. Broadcasters in Korea now focus on formats, and they represent transnationality. Unlike audience competitions shows such as *The Voice* and *America's Got Talent,* which primarily pay attention to American citizens, the reality shows made in Korea, including *Super Star K,* have paid more attention to Korean diasporas and for-

eigners. Korean broadcasters have started to admit to "otherness" instead of "Koreanness." Therefore, the rise of Korean television programs has developed through the nexus of formats and transnationality in the Korean Wave context.

Finally, it is vital to understand that partially localized global formats in Korea do not guarantee the successful hybridization of entire formats because the style and genre originated in Western countries, and their ideas are still embedded in localized television programs. It cannot be claimed that the Korean broadcasting sector has again been dominated by the West; rather, it is certain that the impetus behind the hybridization of several television formats in the Korean context can be found not so much in producers' creativity as in economic imperatives. Korean broadcasters have to advance well-developed hybrid programs and formats driven by local forces in order to avoid any serious Western influence while playing a major role in the global broadcasting sector.

4

Cultural Globalization in Korean Cinema

Korean cinema has been one of the most significant cultural genres in the Korean Wave. Whereas television programs initiated the sudden growth of the Korean cultural industries, resulting in the boom of Korean popular culture in Asia, local films intensified the Korean Wave. In particular, due to the swift development of domestically produced Korean cinema relative to foreign exports, the Korean film industry has been considered a very distinctive non-Hollywood cinema since the late 1990s. In the first several years of the twenty-first century, Korean cinema has experienced major growth in the midst of Hollywood's growing global control.

The picture for Korean cinema was not always rosy, though. Korean cinema was projected to have continued growing success as domestic film producers began finding new audiences in North America and Europe; however, it has witnessed some turmoil due in part to the reduction of Korea's domestic screen quota since 2006. Korean cinema was once one of the most significant components of the Korean Wave; now, the local film industry has become the least important, lower than other cultural sectors, including television, popular music, animation, and online gaming, in terms of the value of foreign exports. Several factors have contributed to the rise and fall of Korean cinema in global flows, such as capital investment, changing government policies, hybridization of film texts, and the increasing role of Hollywood major studios in the domestic market.

This chapter examines the swift change experienced by the Korean film industry in conjunction with the Korean Wave. It investigates the primary causes of the roller coaster–like shifts within Korean cinema, including government cultural policies due to the significant role of the government in the midst of neoliberal globalization. It then maps out the nature of cultural hybridity in domestic films by comparing hybridized films between the *Hallyu* 1.0 era and the *Hallyu* 2.0 era. By textually analyzing film genres and themes of 240 films produced domestically between 1989 and 2012, it explores not only the ways in which Korean cinema develops hybridity in domestic films, but also whether hybridity has generated new possible cultures that are free from Western influence. This eventually leads us to determine the major characteristics of hybrid Korean cinema in the *Hallyu* 2.0 era and its future direction in the global film market.

Korean Cinema in *Hallyu*

The Korean film industry has experienced a huge change over the past two decades. It had suffered an almost complete demise due to the heavy influence of the U.S. government and Hollywood major studios after the Korean government removed local barriers to imported films in 1988 (J. Shin 2005). The Korean film industry seemed to be almost dead amid the onslaught that followed from Hollywood films, taking only 15.9 percent of the national market in 1993, down from 34.2 percent in 1985, just before the market liberalization in Korea (Joo 2011, 491; Korean Film Council 2009). However, the rapid pursuit of globalization by a civilian government since 1994 has substantially influenced the film sector because new cultural policies have contributed to the swift structural change of the film business. When the Kim Young Sam government (1993–98) began to adopt the globalization logic, it also initiated the resuscitation of the film business. In other words, the Kim government followed a neoliberal globalization strategy, which implied a small government. However, the government did support the film sector, albeit cautiously. These contradictory approaches have been unique in the Korean context because they act as major forces driving the different shifts that Korean cinema has experienced (Jin 2006; Shim 2006).

To begin with, the neoliberal cultural policies of these previous governments expedited foreign investment in the domestic film industry, in both production and exhibition. This is unlike the previous market liberalization, which happened only in the distribution sector. Foreign film majors have played a key role in direct distribution via their branches in Korea under the authoritarian regime since 1988; however, transnational cultural majors have invested in the

Korean film industry, both in production and in exhibition sectors, since the mid-1990s (Jin 2011c). They formed strategic alliances with domestic capital to produce motion pictures in Korea. The major Hollywood studios have developed an elaborate power structure to forge relations with independent producers, subcontractors, and distributors. By holding on to their power as international distribution networks, the majors have tried to dominate the film industry (Aksoy and Robins 1992, 8–9). The new trend of foreign involvement in the Korean film sector was also possible because the Korean government demanded domestic companies, including the largest *chaebols,* get involved in the global market so as to integrate the domestic cultural industries within the global cultural system. The government's changing cultural policies have resulted in a boom in Korean cinema (Jin 2006).

To specifically support this goal, the government enacted the Motion Picture Promotion Law in 1995. Through the new law, the government would provide tax incentives for film production, attracting corporate capital, in particular large conglomerates such as Samsung and Hyundai, into the film industry, because the government believed that major companies with a large capital base would become one of the main elements for the revitalization of the domestic film industry (Shim 2008). Since then, the Korean film industry has been notable because there has been a consistent rise in domestic market share, attendance at films, and the number of cinemas that have opened. The market share of domestic films produced by Korean producers was 49.7 percent in 2001 and 63.8 percent in 2006 (Korean Film Council 2009). While largely replacing foreign films at home, Korean cinema soon began to play an increasingly visible role in transnational markets (Joo 2011). Korea has expanded its export of domestic films in Asia, and several Korean films have also received international film awards.

As a few Korean dramas initiated the *Hallyu* phenomenon in the broadcasting sector, *Hallyu* especially expanded in cinema with the regional success of a few blockbuster films, including *Shiri* (1999) and *JSA/Joint Security Area* (2000). Taking Japan as an example, *Shiri* sold more than 1.2 million box office tickets. Given the tumultuous relationship between Japan and Korea, it was rather surprising to see the successful debut of *Shiri* in Japan. Due to the Japanese colonization of Korea from 1910 to 1945 and the memory and legacy of forceful assimilation during the Japanese colonization, the two countries have had a relatively hostile relationship. In the realm of popular culture, Japan did not impose any ban on Korean popular culture; however, it mostly remained indifferent to its former colony, which was seen as inferior both racially and economically. Under these circumstances, *Shiri* became the first Korean film to open nationwide in Japan in 2000, grossing more than $15 million (Joo 2011). *JSA/Joint Security Area,*

another Korean film released a year later, also did well, earning more than $10 million at the box office in Japan. In 2002 Japan alone accounted for 43.8 percent (or $6.58 million) of the total export revenue of Korean films, followed by China (13.6 percent) (Korean Film Council 2003, 15). As discussed in chapter 6, alongside BoA (a famous K-pop singer), these Korean films have paved the road for Korean television programs, which became popular in Japan starting in 2003.

Following *Shiri*'s success, the films *My Wife Is a Gangster* (*Jopok Manura* [2001]) and *My Sassy Girl in Hollywood* also reached number one at the box office in several Asian countries, including Hong Kong and Singapore. Some Korean films, such as Park Chan-Wook's *A Tale of Two Sisters* (*Janghwa Honglyeon* [2003]) and *Oldboy* (2004), went on to achieve commercial success in a few Western film markets.

The Korean film industry has witnessed significant changes in its foreign exports. Korea rapidly increased its export of films, from only $20,000 in 1985 to $11.2 million with 102 films in 2001. Korea continued to increase its exports, from $31 million in 2003 to $76 million in 2005, which was a 6.8-fold increase between 2001 and 2005. When the Korean film industries achieved the $76 million mark in 2005, it was the only year that the export of Korean films exceeded the import of foreign films. The total value of foreign imports in 2005 was $46.8 million (figure 4.1).

This exceptional level of success for Korean cinema did not last long. At the height of Korean films' global popularity, Korean filmmakers and distributors were optimistic that they would become an enduring icon as a non-Western film

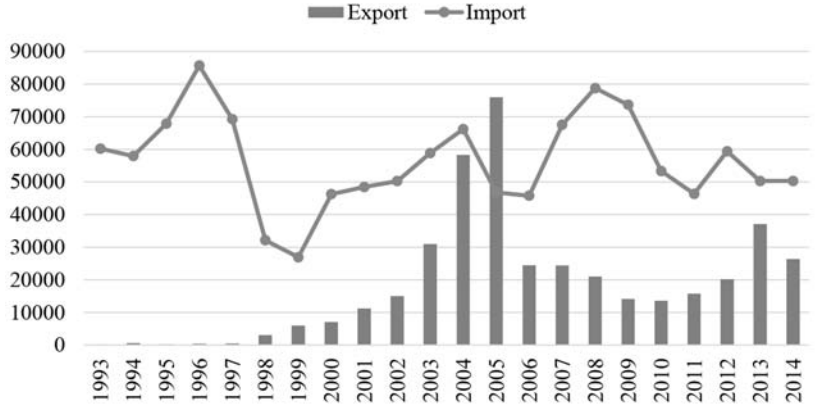

Figure 4.1: Korean cinema, trend of export and import, 1993–2013 (unit: $1,000). *Sources:* Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 174; 2014b; Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2008, 46; 2004, 285, 293.

industry worldwide. However, only one year later, the Korean cinema frenzy had subsided in the global film markets, and Korean cinema's control of global cinema screens and consumer consciousness was beginning to fade.

Korean cinema since 2006 has seen a downturn following the change in the screen-quota system by the government in the midst of the free-trade agreement negotiations with the United States. The screen-quota system had arguably contributed to the development of the Korean film industry. The Korean government unexpectedly changed this crucial cultural policy under pressure from the United States before the FTA between the two countries was finalized. Since 2003 the United States had made several attempts to reduce or abolish the Korean screen-quota system, with success coming in July 2006 with the reduction from 146 days to 73 days a year. Hollywood subsequently boosted its presence and revenue from the Korean box office, as it once did until the early 1990s (Jin 2011a).

Consequently, the market share of domestic films plunged from 63.8 percent in 2006 to 50 percent in 2007 and to 42.1 percent in 2008 (Korean Film Council 2009). Korean movie producers have experienced difficulty in finding funds and competing with foreign films in recent years. In other words, "A major catastrophe in the Korean film industry erupted around 2007 and 2008 and continued into recent years. A collapse in export revenues, widespread losses at the box office, and bursting of a film financing bubble led many in the film industry to declare a crisis" (Paquet 2011, 18). The export of Korean films plunged from $24.5 million in 2006 to $13.5 million in 2010.

Korean film is the only cultural genre that has not attained a capital surplus in the global cultural market. While domestic cultural industries, including broadcasting, video game, music, animation, and character industries, have enjoyed net surpluses in the global cultural market, the Korean film industries have not enjoyed the same level of capital surplus other than in 2005. In 2010 the export of animation recorded revenues of $96.8 million, while the import of animation was only $6.7 million. Likewise, the game industry made as much as $1.364 billion of net profits. However, the export of Korean films was recorded at $13.5 million, while the import of foreign films was $53.4 million, which resulted in a net deficit in the foreign exchange account of $39.9 million for the Korean film industry. The export of Korean films increased somewhat to $26.3 million in 2014 (Korean Film Council 2013; 2015, 46); however, it is not yet comparable to its highest mark in 2005.

As for film-sale territories, Asia has always been the major export region for Korean films, and in 2012 Asia accounted for 71.6 percent of exports, up from 60 percent. North America accounted for 14.2 percent of total exports,

followed by Europe (12.2 percent). Films such as Venice Golden Lion winner *Pieta*, disaster film *Tower*, 3-D animated film *Speckles: The Tarbosaur*, and sci-fi omnibus *Doomsday Book* sold well to Europe. By country Japan was the top buyer of Korean films in 2012, with $9.67 million, up 164 percent year-on-year, although China became the largest market in 2014 (Korean Film Council 2015).[1] Films that did well in Korea such as *All about My Wife* (*Nae anaeui modeun geot*), *Architecture 101,* and *Nameless Gangster: Rules of the Times* (*Bumchoiwaui Junjaeng*) sold well, and CJ E&M's branch in Japan contributed with direct distribution (Korean Film Council 2013; J. Noh 2013). As will be discussed in the remaining sections, blockbuster-style action and comedy movies ranked among the top in terms of attendance numbers in both Korea and Japan; however, they rarely appeal to Western moviegoers because they do not want to watch Hollywood-style movies made by non-Western moviemakers. What they primarily want to watch are movies touching on local mentalities and cultures instead of films copying Hollywood majors.

It is evident that the successes of a few domestic films made in the early 2010s boosted the export of domestic films once again. Some media, including *Korea Times,* even claimed that the Korean movie industry was in a new renaissance (Yun 2013). Korean cinema perhaps regained its momentum; however, the country heavily relies on a few successful movies. In fact, a few blockbuster movies, including *The Host* (2006), *Masquerade* (2012), and *Thieves* (2012), achieved huge success with 10 million viewers each. When the 2014 movie *Roaring Currents* was released, Koreans rushed into theaters, resulting in an all-time-high audience viewership, with 17.6 million moviegoers, which consisted of 35.1 percent of Koreans (Korean Film Council 2014). The contemporary accomplishment of Korean cinema, however, raises several fundamental concerns, mainly because only a few blockbuster movies result in financial success based on the monopolistic or oligopolistic market structure of the film industry. Therefore, we need to see more developments to confirm that local film corporations are strong enough to recover from the recent recession triggered by the change of the screen-quota system. There are certainly some ups and downs in the cultural flows, but much longer trends may show more concrete data on the role of Korean cinema in the global cultural markets.

Hybrid Korean Cinema, 1989–2012

Since Korea has experienced the rise and fall of its film market and the exportation of locally created movies due in large part to its relationship with the United States and Hollywood, it is crucial to understand the major character-

istics of how Korean domestic films, particularly hybrid Korean cinema, have been influenced by Hollywood films. Because the exports of Korean domestic films rely on the quality of those movies, it is necessary for us to comprehend the major characteristics of hybrid local films. There are several significant factors to understanding the nature of Korean cinema, such as the involvement of capital, directorship, script, and special effects. In particular, it is vital to consider whether the local cinema industry creates new forms of films through the hybridization process.

With this in mind, I have analyzed domestic films in terms of film genres (a general categorization of films) and themes (the basic conceptual or intellectual premise underlying the specific work of selected domestic movies). The sample films selected for this analysis are 240 films produced domestically between 1989 and 2012. The top-ten highest-grossing films, based on annual reports by the Korean Film Council, were chosen per year because only a few films dominated the market. Although the period from 1989 to the mid-1990s was before the Korean Wave tradition, it certainly provides some historical background for the growth of Korean cinema because the changing cultural policies amid neoliberal globalization over this era were crucial in the reconstruction of the Korean cultural industries, in this case the film industry. During this entire period, there were several major historical events directly influencing the Korean film industry in the prelude to the Korean Wave.

First, the Korean government opened the film market to major global film studios, particularly those in Hollywood, in 1988; therefore, 1989, the period immediately following the introduction of liberalization in the film market, has been selected as the starting point of the analysis. Second, the Korean government initiated the resurrection of the Korean film industry through legal and financial measures starting in 1995. The early twenty-first century was also significant in the film sector because domestic capital, in particular large conglomerates, withdrew from the film market, resulting in financial difficulties for the film production companies. Last, the country changed the screen-quota system in 2006, so it is necessary to analyze the results of the changed cultural policy up until 2012 when the film industry finally started to regain its momentum and increased its market share and level of foreign exports. This last period we identify as the New Korean Wave, particularly in comparison to the period from the late 1990s and the early 2000s, partly because Korean cinema in this period experienced a huge change in terms of foreign exports.

Therefore, the overall period can be analyzed in four different eras. First is the period 1989–94 (60 films, pre–Korean Wave era)—mainly the era of the worst recession after the liberalization of the film market. Hollywood majors

had since 1989 begun to penetrate the Korean film market, and as a result Korean local cinema descended into a dark period. The second is the period from 1995 to 2000 (60 films, including the first part of the *Hallyu* 1.0 era)—primarily the era of globalizing and hybridizing, when the government actively adopted the trend toward globalization in order to survive against global competition. The third period, 2001–6 (60 films, the second part of the *Hallyu* 1.0 era), was characterized as a continuation of the hybrid era, but different from the second period. The second and third periods overlap primarily because domestic film producers adopted Hollywood styles, skills, capital, and effects, which resulted in the hybridization of domestic films; however, these two periods were also different because during the third period, independent producers, instead of large capital, were major players after domestic-based transnational corporations (for example, Samsung and Hyundai) left the production market.[2] The last (2007–12) period (60 films, the New Korean Wave era) is especially important because we can evaluate the results of ten years of hybridization in film content. In other words, we can see whether Korean producers were able to create a unique local cultural space to either challenge Hollywood films or develop local identities—people's mentalities and sociopolitical agendas characterizing a rather unique Korean society, including the South-North Korea division, democracy, and social class issues. This means that the last period might provide firm ideas about the role of local film industries that claim their own power in resisting global forces.

Hybridization of Korean Films: Genres

As the number of movies increased during the early days of cinema, many films began to resemble each other and fall into certain types or genres. Several film scholars have developed their definition of genre as a category, kind, or form of film distinguished by subject matter, theme, or technique. As Thomas Sobchack (1975, 196) explains, they list more than seventy-five genres of film both fiction and nonfiction. There are categories within categories and categories that overlap and are not mutually exclusive, which implies the difficulty of accurately defining the individual genres.

Movies, especially contemporary Korean films, are also difficult to categorize because they often combine characteristics from different genres. Given the lack of serious scholarship on Korean film genres, to define a genre by identifying its differential characteristics is a prerequisite to any serious discussion of Korean cinema (Min, Sook, and Kwak 2003). Korea's film industry is indeed revealing itself to be open to struggle over its meaning and status at home and abroad,

so questions of genre have a crucial role to play (Stringer 2005, 95). In order to identify hybrid Korean movies and compare them with Hollywood film genres, including westerns, action, comedies, horror, musicals, and romances, Korean films chosen for analysis were categorized by their major characteristics.

In Korean cinema, among the 240 films analyzed, slightly fewer than half (49.6 percent) were dramas, followed by comedy (22.5 percent), action (14.5 percent), and horror/thriller movies (9.26 percent). Others included adult, science fiction, war, western, and documentary. This means that in Korea, only nine movie genres provided the top-10 grossing films annually, with three genres (drama, comedy and action) responsible for 86.6 percent of the highest-grossing movies between 1989 and 2012 (table 4.1).[3]

As can be seen, only a few of these genres are successful in Korea because moviemakers mainly produce familiar movies that can be imitated. These data show that Korean audiences like dramas and comedies, and film producers heavily focus on a few successful genres. Although the situation has dramatically changed over the four different periods previously outlined, it also confirms that drama, especially melodrama, is the most favored genre, because it clearly reflects Korean society. As Hye Seung Chung points out, although the early Korean cinematic melodrama derives in part from the example of Hollywood, melodrama has become a national specificity due to the former's focus on ordinary lower-middle and working-class citizens as opposed to the latter's gravitation toward upper-middle-class bourgeois housewives and widows: "The Korean society of the 1950s and 1960s was torn apart by postwar poverty and chaos, so melodrama sided with underprivileged masses suffering social and familial alienation in the shadowy margins of modernization and economic development. Thus, in terms of its aesthetic characteristics and semantic ingredients, Korean melodrama was seldom divested of its realistic, socially conscious core" (Chung 2005, 119). The early Korean dramas not only hybridized Korean and Hollywood signifiers (costumes, languages, and soundtracks) but also mixed Hollywood melodramatic tropes and realistic Korean aesthetics and issues.

Table 4.1: Film genres between 1989 and 2012

Period/genre	Drama	Comedy	Action	Horror/thriller	Others	Total
1989–1994	45	3	8	2	2	60
1995–2000	26	11	15	6	2	60
2001–2006	21	25	5	6	3	60
2007–2012	27	15	7	8	3	60
Total	119	54	35	22	10	240

Source: Data compiled from the annual report from Korean Film Council between 1989 and 2012.

More specifically, during the first period, among the 60 films analyzed, drama dominated (45 movies; 75 percent), followed by action (8 movies), comedy (3 movies), horror/thriller (2), and others (2). Drama, including melodramas, constituted the largest portion of domestic movies each year. In 1989 there were only two genres in the top-10 grossing films: 9 dramas and 1 adult film. As a continuation of trends from the 1970s and 1980s, dramas were receiving warm attention from moviegoers. Several dramas, including *Rainbow over Seoul* (1989), *Marriage Story* (*Kyeolhon iyagi* [1992]), *Seopyonje* (1993), and *To You from Me* (*Neoege na reul bonaenda* [1994]), got distinctions as the top grossing films for their respective years. Since the mid-1980s, again, drama has taken a turn toward critical realism or social drama, which delivers social messages, such as those based on student movements, class issues, and democracy. Whereas melodramas and historical films with soft-core pornographic elements were the major trend, the 1980s and the early 1990s saw various directions searching for a new filmic aesthetic (Min, Sook, and Kwak 2003, 65). However, following the market liberalization in 1989 and increased direct distribution rights for Hollywood major studios, the Korean film industry suffered near-total demise.

During the 1995–2000 period, when the first Korean Wave started, the number of Hollywood-style action and comedy movies rapidly increased, while dramas significantly decreased. Back then film producers still focused on dramas because the audiences loved traditional values, although several directors began to produce comedies. Among the 60 films analyzed, dramas accounted for the largest share; however, the number of dramas decreased to 26 (43.3 percent), compared to 45 (75 percent) in the first period, while comedy and action movies soared. During the first period, there were only 8 action and 3 comedy movies; however, action consisted of 25 percent (15), followed by comedy 18.4 percent (11) in the first several years of the *Hallyu* era. Action and comedy together consisted of 43.4 percent of the top-10 grossing films, which was a new phenomenon in Korean cinema history. There were several significant changes in terms of film genres during the second period. Some Korean film producers had focused on crime and police stories since the movie *Two Cops* (1993), which was the first major crime and cop film in the 1990s, became a huge success. Several film producers started to produce similar movies, including *Two Cops 2*, which ranked first among the top-grossing films of 1996, followed by *Nowhere to Hide* (*Injeong sajeong bol geot eobtda* [1999]). Of course, it is premature to conclude that Korean film producers gave up melodrama, because they have incorporated melodramatic elements into big-budget blockbuster films like *Shiri* (1999) and *Haeundae* (a.k.a. *Tidal Wave* [2008]) (Paquet 2011, 19). However, the

focus has shifted toward more commercial and entertaining genres than pure melodramas.

Meanwhile, the majority of comedies among the films analyzed were associated with love stories. The so-called romantic comedies, including *Dr. Bong* (1995), *Mister Condom* (1997), and *Jjim* (1998), signaled the arrival of a very popular genre in the late 1990s, although the stories often involved sexual discourse. As is represented by a number of crime and cop movies, as well as comedies, the Korean film industry produced films hybridized with commercial Hollywood content. Instead of maintaining its own unique genre of drama, Korean cinema began utilizing more entertainment-driven films to ensure the continuance of the profitability of the Korean film industry.

During the third period (2001–6), this trend continued, while comedy was gaining more popularity. Among the 60 films analyzed, there were 25 comedies (41.6 percent), while there were 21 dramas (35 percent). Unlike in the second period, during this period action movies plunged to 5, primarily because the major conglomerates who made blockbuster-style action films left the film market, while horror/thriller movies became popular in Korean cinema. There were only 2 horror/thriller movies during the first period; however, the number increased to 6 in the second period and another 6 in the third period. This number rose to 8 in the fourth period.

The comedy genre itself has changed, from romantic comedies to action comedies. Starting in the late 1990s, several comedy movies dealing with gangs became a popular new trend, partially because movie production companies with lower budgets had to turn their focus from action movies to action comedies. There had been some successful gang comedy movies during the period 1995–2000, including *Attack the Gas Station* (*Juyuso seubgyuksageun* [1999]). However, action comedy movies rapidly became one of the major genres during the early years of the 2000s, including *Kick the Moon* (*Shinlaui dalbam* [2001]). In 2002 *Marrying the Mafia* (*Gamuneui yeonggwang*), a gang action comedy, ranked first among the top-10 grossing films of the year, and *Oh! Brothers* (2003), *Marrying the Mafia 2* (2005), and *My Boss, My Teacher* (*Tusabu-ilche* [2006]) were also popular.

Meanwhile, during the last period, 2007–12, this trend changed slightly, as dramas became the major genre once again (27 films; 45 percent), while comedy was the second largest (15 films; 25 percent). As a continuation of previous periods, action movies accounted for only 11.6 percent, while horror/thriller movies increased. Interestingly, the nature of drama has changed over the past decade or so, because unlike during the 1970s and 1980s dramas between 1995 and 2012 were not melodramas, which had been the most important genre in

Korean cinema in earlier years. From the mid-1990s until 2012, dramas were mostly connected to crime, street gangs, and rotten cops, similar to many Hollywood movies, instead of family and social issues featured earlier.

While some recent dramas reflect sociocultural values embedded in Korean society, such as the Korean War (*The Front Line* [2011], *71: Into the Fire* [2010], *Welcome to Dongmakgol* [2005], *Taegukgi* [2004], *Silmido* [2003]) and sociocultural issues (*Silenced* [2011], *Barefoot Gibong* [2006], *Maratoon* [2005]), many dramas are also crime action movies (*Nameless Gangster* [2012], *The Unjust* [2010], *Running Turtle* [2009], *Another Public Enemy* [2005], *Friend* [2001]). Some Korean film producers have specifically focused on crime and police stories since the 1990s.

The majority of Korean films are hybridized through genre blending, resulting in the mixture of dominant Western entertainment genres and domestic themes; therefore, it is now very rare to see melodramas or meloromantic movies. Only a few such movies have commanded significant box-office success each year, including *Architecture 101* (2012), *Close to Heaven* (*Nae sarang nae gyeotae* [2009]), *My Wife Got Married* (*Anaega gyeolhonhaetda* [2008]), *You Are My Sunshine* (*Neoneun nae unmyeong* [2005]), and *All for Love* (*My Lovely Week* [2005]). Since the mid-1990s, science fiction–genre movies have appeared in Korean cinema. Unlike in previous decades, sci-fi/fantasy (*D-War* [2007]) and horror/thriller (*Deranged* [2012], *The Client* [2011], *Moss* [2010], *Thirst* [2009], *Typhoon* [2005], *The Big Swindle* [2004], *Memories of Murder* (*Sarinui chueok* [2003], and *2009 Lost Memories* [2002]) are among the major Hollywood genres, although they have often been categorized in other genres, which have made it to the top in the domestic box office (Jin 2013).

As Darcy Paquet argues, "Melodrama is the cornerstone of Korea's television drama industry and many viewers consider melodramatic modes of storytelling to be inherently native" (2011, 19). Several directors, such as Kang Je-gue, Yoon Je-gyun, and Hur Jin-ho, have attempted to refine melodrama through more subtle means of expression and a focus on everyday life. Therefore, this specific genre was well developed, at least until the early 1990s, and was rich with unique national values, such as the division of the country, democracy, and its social values (for example, class issues, income divide, and Confucian mentalities), which were distinctive to Korean culture. Melodrama is still significant because Korea is particularly prone to embracing a melodramatic sensibility (Abelmann 2003).[4] Korea has modernized and democratized in a surprisingly short time, and melodrama is good at portraying how rapid swings in fortune, or difficult societal conditions, affect individuals (Paquet 2011). The situation is not the same now because Korean cinema has been commercialized, emphasizing economic imperatives, as in the case of Hollywood movies, rather

than serious social issues or national values in the midst of globalization. Korean cinema has not only looked back at the past but also planned the future; therefore, many directors are developing new commercial genres. Of course, that does not mean that melodramas and romance movies have disappeared. Instead, several movies are hybrids between comedy and romance and between comedy and drama, resulting in the growth of romantic comedies and comedy dramas as major genres in Korean cinema.

Hybridized Korean Films: Themes

Although it is not surprising to see the change in genres through the hybridization process, what we have to also consider is whether these commercialized films also touch on several significant national themes, such as ideological conflicts (the Korean War and the division of South and North Korea), political issues (democracy), and traditional culture (national beauty and arts). As a major element in deciding film genres, theme is defined as a basic conceptual or intellectual premise underlying a specific work or body of works (Kaminsky 1985). Film themes determine whether the content of film includes some national identities, such as ideological conflicts, political and social issues (including the military governments, student movements, unemployment, and immigration abroad), and some issues from traditional culture such as Confucianism, including its preference for boys and strict social restrictions for women (S. Oh 1999).

Themes in local movies are especially significant because they represent some of the major characteristics of the Third Cinema. As Heather Tyrrell analyzed with the battle between Bollywood and Hollywood, "A constant process of negotiation between East and West takes place in Bollywood films, operating both in terms of style (narrative continuity and acting styles), and in terms of content (the values and ideas expressed in the films)" (1999, 261). National cinema used to concern itself with the lives and struggles of people in the nation, whereas entertainment predominates in Hollywood's commercial themes, including action, horror, western, and comedy. Theorization around cinema and globalization has largely been structured in terms of a basic opposition between Western commercial and culturally imperialist cinema and the Third World's noncommercial, indigenous, and politicized cinema (Tyrrell 1999).

Thus, it is essential to understand whether newly hybrid Korean films are concerned with ordinary people's lives and their struggles or whether Korean cinema mainly considers achievement for domestic cinema in the sense that it has obtained know-how in special effects comparable with Hollywood. It is

complicated to use predominant themes in Korean films as a standard in deciding movie characteristics, as these have rapidly shifted, as is the case with genres, and so at times they seem aligned with Hollywood's commercial formulas and at other times opposed to them.

Regarding themes during the first period, more than 30 percent of films touched distinctively on social issues and national values embedded in the Korean context as dramas dominated box-office hits. Several films, including *North Korea's Southern Army* (1990), *Silver Stallion* (1991), and *Tae Back Mountains* (*Taebaek Sanmaek* [1994]), dealt with the issues of the North-South division and the Vietnam War. Several other films, including *Come Come Come Upward* (*Aje Aje Bara Aje* [1989]), *Seopyonje* (1993), and *Hwa-eom-gyeong* (1993), showed national values such as Confucianism and featured Buddhism-related human stories. As a reflection of the democratization issue under the military regime before 1993, some domestic films also dealt with social matters, including democracy, student movements, and class issues (*Passion Portrait* [1990], *Human Market, Oh, God!* [1989]). During this period, the major genre was drama, and commercial Hollywood genres were not yet popular. Many domestic films were literally concerned with the lives and struggles of people in the nation.

However, during the second period, themes touching on social and national issues rapidly gave way to crime action and comedy movies. Indeed, only two movies, *Shiri* (1999) and *Joint Security Area* (2000), dealt with North-South Korea issues, while *A Petal* (*Kkonnip* [1996]) portrayed the brutality of the military regime that seized political power through a massive massacre in Gwangju in 1980. Meanwhile, *A Hot Roof* (*Gyae-got-un nalui ohu* [1995]) portrayed feminist issues, and *A Beautiful Youth Chun Tae Il* (1995) touched on the labor movement. As such, only a few films dealt with national and social issues. Domestic film producers could emphasize these issues, primarily because they were free from severe censorship, which was a major characteristic of the military regime. "The concept of a Korean cinema was a counter-practice to the dominant films—commercially oriented U.S. films—in the domestic market, and a revolt against the oppression of the government's strong censorship. Korean filmmakers have begun to actualize the concept and the task of national cinema, dealing with subject matters that had been prohibited by censorship" (Min, Sook, and Kwak 2003, 11).

Among these films, *Shiri* has been acclaimed as a new Korean cinema in style, because it succeeded in reflecting two different cultural tendencies between Korean history and Hollywood techniques and skills. It portrayed the confrontation between North Korean soldiers who were dispatched to South Korea as spies and South Korean antiterrorist agents. The movie is not very original due

to the fact that it was mixing Hollywood-style narratives and action with an old-fashioned yet refreshing Korean story. However, it contains a story that draws on strong Korean national sentiment to fuel its drama (Kyung Hyun Kim 2004), created as a deliberate homage to the "high-octane" action cinema made popular by Hollywood throughout the 1980s. This espionage action thriller won over domestic audiences with a story centered on the continuing Cold War tensions between North and South Korea in the midst of loosening censorship, and its success was made possible by Hollywood-style action and blockbuster-scale production values, including the first helicopter scene in downtown Seoul in Korean cinema history. However, most films produced domestically during this period ignored the serious issues confronting Korean society while focusing on more commercial genres such as comedy and action.

The third period is not much different from the period preceding it. Regardless of criticisms made by several social groups, including film critics and college students, regarding the lack of unique films dealing with serious social issues or national values, film producers already embedded in commercial values continued their course, as only a few films touched on important social issues; in fact, these films consisted of only 10 percent of the films analyzed. For example, *Silmido* (2003), *Taegukgi* (2004), and *Hanbando* (2006) are successful movies portraying the Korean War and South-North division issues, whereas *Hi, Dharma* (2001) talked about national values (Buddhism). The movie *18-May* (2006) also portrayed the brutality of the Chun Doo-Hwan regime that seized political power in 1980. With these exceptions, there were no particular films dealing with national values, social issues, or political ideologies.

During the last period, 2007–12, about ten (16.7 percent) films could be categorized as films that touched on sociohistorical themes. This means that the number of domestic films dealing with traditional themes slightly increased. In particular, *Old Partner* (*Wonang sori*, literally "Sound of a cowbell"), made in 2008, became the first documentary to be on the chart of the top-ten grossing movies of the year. The movie was about a relationship between a forty-year-old cow and an old farmer in his eighties set in a small rural town. The film was a surprise success and had attracted more than two million viewers as of March 1, 2009, setting the record for the highest-grossing independent film in Korean film history. The film *71: Into the Fire* (2010), which was made in commemoration of those who fought during the Korean War, raised awareness of the existence and importance of the student-soldiers during that period. *War of the Arrows* (*Choejongbyeonggi Hwal* [2011]) is a historical action film set after the second Manchu invasion of Korea. Meanwhile, several films touched on contemporary social issues. For example, *The Crucible* (*Dogani* [2011]) is based on actual events

that took place at a school for the hearing impaired in Gwangju, where young deaf students were the victims of repeated sexual assaults by faculty members over a period of five years in the early 2000s.

Domestic Korean movies have, again, swiftly adopted Hollywood themes, focusing on entertainment instead of the lives and struggles of people in the nation. Blockbuster-style action and comedy movies all ranked among the top-ten movies in recent years. Until the early 1990s, national cinema worked with social, political, and cultural practices. Since its earliest beginnings, Korean cinema has developed the cinematic traditions of melodrama and social realism, which emerged from the specific social contexts in Korean history; Japanese colonialism, South-North division, military governments, and strict censorship. However, since the beginning of democracy in 1993, the Korean film industry has shown little interest in these issues, in part due to the commercialization of the Korean cinema.

Korea has achieved democratization, though several issues, such as the continuing national division, legacy of colonialism, and the socioeconomic divide, are worsening. Through their movies, Korean filmmakers did not create new forms of culture. Hollywood films as global standards reign supreme, while local cinema primarily tries to copy or follow what Hollywood has done. The primary trajectory of globalization, not only in capital and structure but also in content, is still from the West to the East. Although the structural issues, including the reduction of the screen quota, have certainly influenced Korean cinema, hybridized film content has also played a key role in the Korean film industries. Although several well-made Korean films have made it onto the global market, many films have not penetrated foreign markets despite their domestic successes primarily because the films are arguably versions of one or more Hollywood films. It can be argued that the recent crisis in Korean cinema in the New Korean Wave era has been the result of the nexus of neoliberal government policy emphasizing economic imperatives and hybrid domestic films not resisting Hollywood but instead accommodating Hollywood formulas.

Hybridity in Korean Cinema in the New Korean Wave Era: Film Text

Although there are many hybrid movies, several, including *The Thieves* (*Dodukdeul* [2012]) and *Masquerade* (*Gwanghae: Wangi Doen Namja* [2012]), have been very successful in the domestic box office during the *Hallyu* 2.0 era. However, they have not been able to penetrate Western markets, even if they have made some brief appearances in North America and western Europe.

In fact, *D-War* (2007) became a top-ranked hybrid movie within Korea but failed to penetrate the Western markets. *D-War,* directed by Shim Hyung-Rae, is a fantasy film with heavy use of computer graphics, best known in Hollywood sci-fi movies. *D-War* attracted 8.4 million viewers in Korea (Korean Film Council 2009) and demonstrates its hybridization in several ways: the mix of Korean story line, capital with a Western location (Los Angeles), language (English), computer graphics, and majority of the cast Western (Americans). The foundation of *D-War*'s story line relies on the Korean legend of the Imoogi.[5] The main and supporting characters were also all played by actors from the United States. The only Korean cast members who took part in the film were those who appear during the beginning sixteenth-century scenes that introduce the legend. Consequently, the bulk of the scenes were filmed in English. These choices were made deliberately in order to appeal to international markets (J. Cho and Lee 2009).

However, *D-War*'s attempt at global appeal was not successful. In the United States, it was not attractive because Americans did not like another version of a Hollywood sci-fi movie. In the United States, it earned only $4.1 million ("Shim Hyung-Rae's Movie" 2009). Both aesthetically and economically, *D-War* has not been acclaimed in the global film market, because the movie is about producing a Hollywood movie by a Korean director, instead of overcoming Hollywood by creating a new form of culture resisting Hollywood dominance. Some may wish for the export of highly artistic or well-made blockbuster movies to the American market. Realistically, however, this is impossible for the time being (Jeong Il Oh 2007).

Meanwhile, during the New Korean Wave era, two of the most successful movies, *The Thieves* and *Masquerade,* are good representatives of hybrid movies that were not very successful in the Western markets. To begin with, *The Thieves*—Choi Dong-hoon's fourth feature film—is a good example of a hybrid domestic film. It is a vibrant and complex heist movie with one of the most high-profile casts ever assembled for a local production. Although the filmmakers deny that it was influenced by *Ocean's Eleven,* produced by Steven Soderbergh in 2001, the Korean Film Council (2012a) confirms the connection, and the movie has become one of the most successful Korean-style action movies in history. Many action scenes are heavily influenced by Hong Kong cinema, which makes sense given the locations and the stars cast. What's more is that these elements are well woven into the narrative and herald what may be a new era for Korean cinema, one in which international coproductions are a viable mechanism for making commercially successful fare (Conran 2012). A debonair caper that brings together Korean and Chinese cat burglars for a diamond heist in Macao,

The Thieves owes much to the sparky gamesmanship and glamour casting seen in Soderbergh's *Ocean* series, as well as to the physical verve and unpretentious goofiness of 1990s Hong Kong action films such as John Woo's *Once a Thief* (1991) (Maggie Lee 2012).

Regardless of the fact that some movie critics claim that *The Thieves* is very similar to *Ocean's Eleven,* it shows many similarities with Hong Kong films, which have emphasized gang and crime genres. This implies that *The Thieves* utilizes multinational characteristics to create a very entertaining commercial movie. While a few critiques claim this as a Korean-style crime/action movie, it is also evident that the movie has been created through hybridization strategies. It is premature to confirm this as a Korean-style action movie, because it does not develop any sociocultural values embedded in Korean society. As hybrid movies, *D-War* and *The Thieves* certainly create a mixing and branding of two different cultures.

Finally, *Masquerade,* Chang-min Choo's film, is another example of a hybrid domestic film. *Masquerade* takes place in the early 1600s, during Korea's Joseon dynasty. The film is based on the contrasting reputations of King Gwang Hae. In the film, as King Gwang Hae's life is being threatened within the palace, he directs his chief royal secretary, Heo Gyun, to find someone who looks just like him to serve as a temporary body double. When the king suddenly falls ill due to a mysterious poison, his body double, Ha Seon, is asked to secretly substitute for the king by Heo Gyun. Lee Byung-hun plays both King Gwang Hae, ruler of the land, and Ha Seon, a lowly jester. As Ha Seon gradually begins to step into political situations, he starts to make decisions that are unlikely to be made by King Gwang Hae, which causes a stir among his enemies within the palace. *Masquerade* was a huge hit, with 12.3 million admissions, while earning $88 million, which was the second highest behind only *The Thieves* in 2012 (Korean Film Council 2013, 20).

This box-office hit caused some controversy because of its similarity to the 1993 Hollywood film *Dave.* On the one hand, some media, in particular *Dong-A Ilbo* (a daily newspaper), reported that there were at least eighteen similarities between *Masquerade* and *Dave* and made bold headlines ("Is Gwang Hae a King of Plagiarism?") (B. Min 2012). In fact, Do Seung Ji, the eunuch who runs the palace in *Masquerade,* and the head secretary in *Dave* have a similar role; the queen in *Masquerade,* who has grown apart from the king, and the first lady in *Dave,* who has become fed up with the president's constant cheating, are similar as well. In both movies, there is also a bodyguard who becomes so attached to the replacement king or president that he is willing to risk his own life. Usually, when an existing movie's story is used as inspiration, the rights are bought and

a remake is made. CJ E&M, the company that funded *Masquerade,* did not buy the rights to *Dave,* as they had not referred to the movie in any way. They stated that although the overall theme may seem similar, they believed that they are two different movies ("Movie *Masquerade* under Fire" 2012). However, it is almost sure that *Masquerade* has been influenced by *Dave.* Many scenes took after *Dave.* As a movie critic from the *Washington Post* explains, the movie also dusts off a plot used by Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* and Akira Kurosawa's 1980 film *Kagemusha.* Stylistically, *Masquerade* has much more in common with the latter (M. Jenkins 2012).

The key point is whether *Masquerade* is a simple copy of *Dave* or whether it is a hybrid movie mixing a Hollywood style with a Korean film tradition in creating a new form of culture. There are certainly interesting scenes that one might consider as unique new cultures portraying local mentalities, including old Korean politics. For example, following his instincts, Ha Seon increases taxes on the wealthy and bans exploitation of the poor. Such actions make the fake king even less popular with his advisers than the man he is impersonating. A crisis is inevitable, but when it arrives the double finds he has some loyal supporters and one unexpected ally (ibid.). In that sense, it exemplifies authentic local politics, and the director creates a mixing and branding of two different cultures. However, it is arguably not strong enough to create the third space. Although, it is evident that the movie has been created through hybridization strategies, it is not easy to confirm this as a Korean-style movie because, with some exceptions, it does not develop many historical or cultural values that are embedded in Korean society.

As these films prove, the Korean film industry has hybridized domestic films in terms of structure, including style and special effects, but is still Westernized in content with its incorporation into globalization. In the *Hallyu* 2.0 era, Hollywood's influences could not be denied in these cases, because domestic producers tried to make another form of Hollywood films, which are homogenized, not authentic. As Kraidy argues, "Hybridity is not merely the synthesizing of different elements to form a culturally blended whole, nor should it be construed as an in-between zone where global and local power relations are neutralized in the obscurity of the mélange. Rather it is the dialogical re-inscription of various codes and discourses in a spatio-temporal zone of signification" (1999, 472).

In Korean cinema, many production companies and directors have one after another tried to produce and even copy Hollywood-style action movies. As one film critic points out, "The Korean cinema is heading for Hollywood style blockbusters as if the globalization of domestic films lies in the copy of Hollywood" (K. Choi 2005). However, Korean cinema has not sustained its glory

because of its struggles in content, although a few commercial movies have been successful. Western moviegoers dislike the copies of Hollywood-genre movies, and they enjoy dramas reflecting national values and social issues, either hybrid or pure domestic genres, such as *Taegukgi: The Brotherhood of War* (2004) and *Welcome to Dongmakgol* (2005). While admitting that several well-made Korean films have boosted national cultural industries, many domestic films are not attractive in the global markets because global audiences do not want to watch Korean-made Hollywood-style movies. The domestic-made commercial hybridized movies are not global-ready movies yet.

Critical Interpretation of Hybridized Korean Cinema

Understanding cultural hybridity is crucial because it reveals the process in which others enter and blend into another culture and then become incorporated into that local culture. It displays a process of cultural mutation or so-called cultural globalization in contemporary cultural lives (W. Wang 2008). Hybridity theory in Korean cinema optimistically chants for or empowers the cultural capacity of the local in the processes of hybridization. Some claim that hybridity implies the leading role of the local and believe in the emerging role of Korean film producers in the hybridization process. Hybridity theorists believe that hybrid culture avoids becoming homogenous because the demands of the local shape cultural products; therefore, America's influence in other cultural industries is beginning to slip, although Hollywood remains a global powerhouse (Consalvo 2006). Some scholars, including Sun Jung, firmly claim that "the cultural imperialist perspective is inadequate to explain the current phenomenon of hybridity in Korean cinema because it ignores the hybridized presence of Korean cinema through the articulation of difference through post-colonial mimicry" (2011, 12).

Unlike the optimism of the theories of cultural hybridity, however, the representation of the local culture gives way to connotations and value standards based on Western ideas (W. Wang 2008), so cultural hybridity is related to an unequal power balance. The concept of hybridization especially falls short in acknowledging structural inequalities, and it has allegedly become a neocolonial discourse that is complicit with transnational capitalism (T. Friedman 2000). The global flow of images, though read actively by world audiences, is still very uneven and markedly one-sided in its power to capture world markets (Shome and Hedge 2002). This means that the theory of hybridity intentionally or unintentionally ignores the commercial and capitalist nature of the global expansion process (Mosco 2009). Current theories of hybridity indeed often

ignore several significant elements, in particular power relations, not only in terms of political-economic power relations but also in terms of cultural influences between two different cultures, as well as the nature of hybrid films. Under the logic of capitalist production, hybridization inevitably has inherent limitations, and we cannot be pointlessly optimistic about the idea that hybrid culture is democratic, resistant, diverse, and more purposeful. Hybridity is often criticized as depowering and containing apolitical concepts (W. Wang 2008).

Several postcolonial theoreticians, such as Appadurai (1996) and Bhabha (1994), strike back at imperial dominance by recourse to hybridization as an affirmative strategy of resistance to global forces. However, as seen in Korean cinema, in many cases local producers cannot guarantee cultural pluralism and diversity because the local film industry produces only a limited number of genres, particularly commercially driven Hollywood genres. Korean cinema is still not powerful enough to become the subject in the dynamic processes of hybridization because many local producers have mimicked what Hollywood has done instead of creating new cultural forms to overcome Hollywood.

Hybridity is seen as a strategy of cooperation used by the power holders to neutralize difference; however, hybridity is another expression of globalization diluting the negative impacts of Western forces (G. Wang and Yeh 2005). The birth of the third space requires more than a process of dialectic discourse and reflective interaction through which ideas, values, and class are negotiated and regenerated. "Without this element, hybridity is not much more than a simple mixing and hybridizing to include forms that blend different elements" (ibid., 188). Again, hybridity should be the site of resistance against imperialist powers; however, Korean cinema has not been able to resist Hollywood's dominance in content.

As the genres and themes of Korean movies demonstrate, many film producers have copied so-called moneymaking genre movies, such as comedy and horror movies, especially sexy gangster comedy movies. Several directors have utilized a style that mixes indigenous cultural elements with regional and Western influences, and they are also responsive to contemporary domestic affairs and politics, as in the case of *Shiri* (1999) and *Joint Security Area* (2000) (J. Shin 2005, 56–57). Instead of further developing aesthetic and social movies, however, the majority of hybrid movies have become commercially oriented entertainment movies. Although several movies have not been commercially successful, many hybridized films are unable to penetrate the global markets. During my 2015 interview with film critic Darcy Paquet, he clearly states, "Several blockbuster-level movies with hybridization strategies are not successful, both nationally and globally, primarily because they do not reflect unique Korean mentalities

and/or identities. Korean cinema needs to understand that the most significant matter in the hybridization process is to develop Koreanness, which eventually attracts Korean movie fans." He also expresses, "Many independent films touching upon several social issues are not welcomed in both theaters and film festivals because the current climate surrounding Korean cinema favors those who wish to prevent such debate; therefore, either big-budget movies or low-budget movies have difficulties in developing diversity in Korean cinema." In fact, many Korean film producers cannot produce a politically and aesthetically viable third space in the midst of the commercialization of domestic movies. If hybridity simply means the mixture of two different cultures, Korean cinema would be one good case to prove this trend. However, as long as hybridity is about the creation of a new cultural space beyond the simple fusion of two cultures, the local film industry has not successfully hybridized, with only a few exceptions.

Conclusion

Korean cinema has partially hybridized itself in mingling two different cultures, particularly with Hollywood. Cultural hybridization in Korean cinema is happening as local producers interact and negotiate with global forces. The content of domestic films has consequently shifted, mainly from dramas formerly emphasizing serious social issues to utilizing commercial entertainment formulas. However, as seen in recent years, the domestic film industry is not stable due in large part to its not creating new cultural forms. The hybridization itself is not necessarily bad for Korean cinema, because it is imperative, in some sense, and the mix of the two different cultures could create the new cultural space. The issue is that the majority of films have by and large failed in creating the third space, because the display of the cultural factors of hybrid Korean films is Western centric and neglects Korean sociocultural values to fit Western tastes. It is perhaps naive to attempt to maintain a purity in culture in some unadulterated form in the midst of globalization; however, one must also remember that rootless hybrid cultural products, which are a rather simple mixture of two different cultures, cannot resist global forces. As Dennis Galvan maintains, "Hybridity suggests that emergence of new, blended species, varieties, forms or bodies from formerly distinct origin types. But notice that within the hybridity discourse, the origin types remain extant, unperturbed, and pure. However, since hybrid is the work of someone with special position, the ability to single out origin forms, remove them from their national context and deliberately mix them in a controlled way is crucial to identify who they

are between the global and local forces, because in many cases, foreign forces are still major players" (2010, 203–4).

It is premature to say that domestic popular culture constructs its own cultural spaces, not as a simple mixture of two different styles, formats, and content but as a resource to create new spaces, encompassing domestic cultural specificity as well as dominant Western cultural genres. Korean cinema has gradually regained its supremacy in the New Korean Wave era, while other genres, such as K-pop, online gaming, and animation, have advanced hybrid forms of local culture and increasingly penetrated Western markets. In this regard, how to develop hybrid films, not only mixing Korean stories and Hollywood styles but also creating new local cultural forms based on hybridity, is the most significant issue for Korean cinema in the *Hallyu* 2.0 era.

5

Hybrid Local Animation's Global Appeal

In the global animation markets, several Western countries have been dominant with their well-made animation programs. The prime-time animated satire series *The Simpsons* (1989–present) has been the standard-bearer for the United States, and perhaps one of television's finest animated programs ever. *The Simpsons* became a global cultural icon by the turn of the twenty-first century, "holding the *Guinness Book of World Records* titles for the longest-running primetime animated series and the most celebrities featured in an animation series and being critically praised and bestowed with numerous national and international honors" (Lustyik and Smith 2010, 341).

Japanese animation has been especially popular throughout the world. "Anime started in Japan as far back as the 19th century as a product of artistic interaction between Japanese, European, and American cultures combined with new printing and media technologies" (Otmazgin 2013, 69). "Since 1963, though, when the 30-minute episodic series *Tetsuwan Atom* (known as *Astro Boy*) debuted, more than 1,000 TV anime (animated programs) have been produced in Japan up until the early 21st century. Japanese anime accounted for 60 percent of the world's animated-cartoon series" (Chen 2012, 44), as *Sailormoon* and *Pokémon* had been global sensations between the mid-1990s and the early twenty-first century. When *Sailormoon* appeared in the United States in the fall of 1995, it was already the number-one children's action-adventure television show in Japan, France, Italy, and Hong Kong (Grigsby 1998). The Japanese cartoon and

video game franchise *Pokémon* was also broadcast in sixty-five countries and translated into more than thirty languages prior to 2002 (Douglas 2002).

The extraordinary level of success for these Japanese animations did not last much longer, though. At *Pokémon*'s height of popularity, Nintendo executives were optimistic that they had a product like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck that would become an enduring icon worldwide. However, "by the end of 2000, *Pokémon* fever had subsided in Japan and the United States, and only one year later, *Pokémon*'s control of shelf space and consumer consciousness was beginning to fade globally" (Tobin 2004, 3). Japanese animation in the United States had generated considerable economic revenues, reaching a formidable peak in 2003 with more than $4.84 billion in sales. In the following years, however, the numbers dropped, and it was recorded at only $2.74 billion in 2009, mainly due to the saturation of low-quality anime series in the market (Kelts 2006; Japan External Trade Organization 2011, 39; Otmazgin 2014).

Interestingly enough, in the early twenty-first century, Korea jumped into the global animation market with several unique characters. Unlike other cultural products, such as television programs, films, and popular music, the Korean animation industry has been an underdog in the cultural industries and the Korean Wave. However, the Korean animation industry has gradually developed its own characters and expanded its exports, not only to neighboring countries but also to Western countries. Although it is still in the burgeoning stage, with the popularity of a few Korean animations, such as *Pororo the Little Penguin, Pucca,* and *Roboca Poli,* animation has come out of the blue in Korea and become a new cultural form that represents the New Korean Wave. In this regard, Ôtsuka and Ôsawa (2005, 278, cited in Otmazgin 2014) have already argued that Korean anime productions are likely to take over Japan in the future because of the growing creativity and dynamism of the Korean market, although it will not happen anytime soon.

This chapter examines Korea's animation industry, which has not been a major cultural form in *Hallyu* research. It investigates the historical, cultural, and economic forces that have shaped Korea's animation characters in the context of the debates on globalization utilizing the framework of hybridity. It analyzes the texts of a few animation characters, including *Pororo,* in order to understand the major reasons for the sudden growth of the Korean animation industry. In particular, it maps out the hybrid nature of Korean animation, which is the politicization of local popular culture. In the Japanese context, the idea of odorless cultural products is considered as popular culture's depoliticized internationalization, which is one of the primary reasons for the success of some local cultures in the global markets (Lu 2008). By using Korea's animations, however,

I challenge the notation of the depoliticization of popular culture. Finally, given that American and Japanese animation characters have exerted a huge influence since the early development of Korean animation, and taking into account the inclusion of elements of hybridization in production, this chapter discusses the ways in which the domestic animation industry has become popular in the global market.

From Subcontractors to the Creative Animation Industry

Korean animation did not experience a noticeable success in terms of creating an original work that was suitable for global cultural markets until the early 2000s. Although Korea had been creating its own animation films since 1936 and had several popular animation characters (J.-Y. Kim 2006), including *Hong Gil Dong* (1967), *Robot Taekwon V* (1976), and *Dooly the Little Dinosaur* (1987), they did not make a tangible global appearance. Compared to films and television programs targeting almost all age groups, the animation market focused on preschool children and teen demographics that were too small to be economically viable in Korea, so large cultural corporations and television networks were not interested in animation. The animation industry was also not highlighted as a major part of the Korean Wave because the country had had only a few well-made animation characters, including *Dooly the Little Dinosaur* created between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. In other Western countries, including Japan, cultural producers and policy makers have emphasized the importance of animation and related industries. For example, Japanese *Pokémon* has been produced in several different cultural forms, from games to animation series and from films to merchandise (Allison 2006). Due to its massive influence on other cultural industries, animation has been significant; however, the Korean government and media corporations did not prioritize animation as a serious cultural form until the early twenty-first century.

As a result, the production of the majority of Korean animation characters was made through the original equipment manufacturing (OEM) format subcontracted by the United States and Japan until 2007, and only a few animation corporations could create their own animation characters. A few Korean broadcasting corporations and animation companies in the 1960s, including DongYang Broadcasting Company and Daewon Animation Corporation, started to produce Japanese animation characters as subcontractors, which continued as a primary business for the Korean animation industry until the early 2000s (Y. Shin 2008; A. Yoon 2009). Many Korean animation studios were "involved in subcontracted production for the Japanese TV animation industry which

recruited lower-paid workers in other Asian countries instead of better-paid Japanese animators" (J.-Y. Kim 2006, 69).

The Korean animation industry has steadily increased in recent years. Several animation corporations have developed their production skills based on know-how accumulated during OEM production and have started to produce their own animation characters, resulting in the development of the domestic animation industry. In 2002 there were only 163 firms in the animation industry, and in 2005 there were 200 corporations, including both production and distribution; however, by 2012 this figure had increased to 341 companies (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c). These animation corporations have created several popular animation characters, which have gained an unprecedented level of success worldwide and have driven the growth of Korean animation as one of the major domestic cultural products.

Among them, *Pororo*—Korea's computer-generated animation character—which was first broadcast in November 2003 on the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS), has achieved huge success both nationally and globally. *Pororo* was developed by several corporations, including Iconix Entertainment, Ocon, SK Broadband, and EBS, all Korean firms, alongside the effort of subcontracted North Korean animation company Samcholli (*Pororo the Little Penguin* 2003). *Pororo* has sold to many countries, and its fame has snowballed into merchandising, iTunes, fashion, and a notebook computer for kids by Samsung. Almost any child's product has *Pororo* stamps on it, ranging from diapers and chopsticks to cell phones and laptops (Y. Kang 2012). In a children's marketplace where trends tend to peak within one year, *Pororo* has exceeded almost ten years of operation and even in 2013 was generating new products and profits, as Japanese *Pokémon* did until the early twenty-first century. The Korean animation industry has witnessed a fundamental shift from the subcontractor-level periphery to one of the most advanced industries in terms of the nature of its creativity, as *Pororo* certainly exemplifies.

Pororo has indeed been sold in markets literally across the world, including East Asia, South Asia, Australia, and western Europe, and its popularity has percolated into even remote villages. *Pororo* aired on the Yoyo Channel, the most popular kids channel in Taiwan, from the beginning of May 2005. *Pororo* started being broadcast from September in the same year on Hungama TV in India, where it is airing at noon for twelve minutes from Monday to Friday. Hungama TV, which operates the Indian kids network operated by UTV Software Communications, was launched in 2005 and features a mix of live action and animation targeting preschoolers up to tweens (*Pororo the Little Penguin* 2005). In 2005 *Pororo* recorded the highest viewing rate of 47 percent in TF1, the largest terrestrial broadcasting channel in France (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and

Tourism 2012a). In 2006 *Pororo* aired on Chinese CCTV and Japanese Fuji TV as well. As of late 2011, the program aired on Australian, French, Italian, Singaporean, and Indian channels. It has been aired in Norway, the United Kingdom, and on Disney Junior (Asia). Up to 2011, *Pororo* had been sold to 150 countries (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012a), although it has not yet appeared on any American channels.

The acceptance of *Pororo* in countries around the world other than the United States has triggered a massive influx of other Korean animations into many countries. For example, *Pucca* is loved by fans in 170 countries and is a media franchise from the Vooz Co., Ltd., now owned by Disney. The main character, Pucca, is the ten-year old niece of a Chinese noodle-house owner.[1] Meanwhile, *Iron Kid* began airing across the United States, topping the ratings list of network channels. *King of Card Mix Master* had been exported to 25 nations and *Janngeum's Dream* to 27 by 2006. These cartoons for kids are emerging as a new edge of the New Korean Wave ("Korean Wave Turns" 2008).

Consequently, the Korean Wave has expanded to the children's cultural product market in the early twenty-first century. In 2006 Korea exported $66.8 million worth of animation; however, this figure went to up to $115.9 million in 2011 (table 5.1). The sales in the animation sector, including characters themselves, also soared by about 120 percent, from $233.8 million in 2005 to $514.3 million in 2011 (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 182; 2012d, 269; Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2006a, 318). In other words, due to the recent popularity of several successful animations, toy makers, book publishers, and filmmakers both domestically and globally are interested in collaboration with these domestic animation firms; therefore, including the character industry, animation has become one of the most significant in the Korean cultural industries. Because children who appreciate Korean pop culture are likely to continue consuming it as they grow up, it is significant to foster business focused on children's products. In fact, "Disney implements a strategy to catch the consumers when they are young by targeting children," because "Disney values are internalized by consumers during childhood" (Fung and Lee 2009, 198–99). The New Korean Wave has not planned this well-known strategy of global brands; however, through the recent growth of local animation in the global markets, Korea has automatically constructed a highway for the local cultural industries.[2]

Against such a backdrop, animation has become one of the most viable cultural forms of the New Korean Wave. As noted, until 2006 the majority of the animation exports were from original equipment manufacturing, consisting of almost 60 percent of the exports in the field. In 2002, for example, subcontracted animation made up as much as 89.4 percent of total exports of animation characters. Due to the fact that the United States and Japan were two major countries

Table 5.1: Exports of Korean animation (unit: $1,000)

Export patterns	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Animation (creative products)	26,801	36,894	43,837	50,602	60,575	81,485	72,815	71,070
Animation (OEM)	40,033	35,876	36,746	39,049	36,252	34,456	39,727	38,775
Total	66,834	72,770	80,583	89,651	96,827	115,941	112,542	109,845

Sources: Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 182; 2010a, 261; 2014d, 224.

that were asking Korean animation corporations to produce their characters, they constituted 92.5 percent of the entire exports (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2006a, 318). The proportion of the OEM rapidly decreased, and in 2006 about 40 percent of export revenues came from new animation programs created by Korean producers. In 2007, for the first time in Korean history, creative animation products surpassed OEM products, and in 2013 about 65 percent of the exports in animation consisted of creative products originally produced locally (see table 5.1).

Unlike several other cultural forms, such as television programs and film, the Korean animation industry has successfully broken into Western markets, including the United States and countries in western Europe, as their primary markets, with Asian countries making up a much smaller share. While the largest foreign markets for television programs and films have been East Asia, particularly China, Japan, and Taiwan, the animation industry has focused on Western markets. For example, when Korea exported $112.5 million worth of animation in 2012, the largest market was North America (52.6 percent), followed by Europe (22.6 percent) and then Japan (19 percent). North America and Europe together consisted of 75.2 percent of Korea's animation exports, which could not be seen in other cultural forms (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c) (table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Export of animation by region (unit: $1,000)

Countries	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
China	1,136	1,356	1,577	1,659	1,712	1,603
Japan	16,851	17,369	18,810	21,688	21,421	19,969
Other Asian countries	469	967	1,151	1,183	1,235	1,185
North America	47,568	50,358	52,463	59,397	59,167	60,355
Europe	12,387	16,496	19,527	28,556	25,433	25,144
Others	2,172	3,105	3,299	3,458	3,574	1,589
Total	80,583	89,651	96,827	115,941	112,542	109,845

Sources: Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013b, 181; 2012a, 287; 2014d, 222.

Domestic television shows and films have not made significant inroads into Western markets; however, a few cultural sectors, including recent popular music, online gaming, and especially animation, have substantially increased their exports in North America and Europe. Animation is at the forefront of this new phenomenon, characterizing the New Korean Wave in terms of the expansion of its major target regions to North America and Europe. This has occurred partially because Korea has produced the animation characters of these countries through the OEM process; naturally, these countries (for example, the United States and Japan) became major importers of Korean animation characters. Of course, as with many other Western animation characters, much of their revenue is driven by merchandise tie-ins,[3] with overall revenue reaching $5.3 billion as of December 2011. Unlike during the first stage of the Korean Wave, animation alongside characters has become one of the most significant cultural sectors, though not yet comparable to its Japanese counterpart.

The Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Local Animation Industry

Although opinions vary on how much socioeconomic as well as cultural contexts account for Korean animation's global appeal, many attribute it to Korea's advanced digital technologies and talents. Their global appeal has also relied on their delicate capitalization of animation in several different ways, including the appropriation of a supersystem of entertainment and the division of international labor, as well as hybridization. To begin with, digital technologies have taken a pivotal role in the development of characters. *Pororo*'s developers utilized 3-D computer animation skills, as Korean characters are mostly created using 3-D computer software these days. Characters used to be created through a laborious system of drawing on paper, but Korea's advanced digital technologies have enabled much easier creation of elaborate images ("Korea Makes Big Strides" 2007). Unlike previously successful Japanese animations, such as *Pokémon* and *Sailormoon,* the current achievement of Korean animation has relied on digital media because they are new delivery systems. Preschool kids and young children could enjoy *Pororo* and others through YouTube and iTunes, as *Pororo* was released through iTunes in December 2011 so that parents could easily buy and download some episodes for their kids.

Talent itself is also crucial capital for Korean animation's popularity. Korea is home to legions of gifted animators, and Korean animation's global appeal suggests that Koreans can sell stories as well as drawing skills. Korean animators have for many years done much of the heavy lifting on American TV shows

("Of Penguins and Politics" 2011). They have, and still are, working with studios like Fox and Nickelodeon to help produce widely popular shows like *The Simpsons, Family Guy,* and *SpongeBob SquarePants,* among others.

Rough Draft, which is one of the Korean studios in constant communication with all of the major animation and motion picture studios in the United States, has its fingerprints on the large majority of animation viewed in the United States for one simple reason: talent (Ratto 2012). As discussed, the Korean animation industry has been subcontracted by many Japanese animation firms, and Korean developers have learned skills through the OEM production. As Alex Ha, a thirty-one-year-old native of California who works at Rough Draft Studios, points out, "The Korean animators are known for being far superior when it comes to technical skill. The large bulk of the industry's work has been to receive initial drawings and mock-ups from foreign studios and do final detailing and eventual completion. Even the world-wide phenomenon known as anime sends the bulk of its work to Korea for finalization" (ibid.).

The realm of animation has certainly been imperialistic, meaning several Western countries, as well as Japan, have appropriated cheaper and skilled Korean artists because in labor-intensive cultural industries, including television, film, and animation, Western-based cultural firms have no choice but to appropriate the division of international cultural labor. As Toby Miller and Marie Leger explain, "Life-cycle models of international products suggest they are first made and consumed in their center, in a major industrial economy, then exported to the periphery, and finally produced out there, once technology has become standardized and savings can be made on the labor front" (2001, 102). Goods and services owned and vended by the periphery rarely make their way into the center as imports (T. Miller and Leger 2001); however, the Korean animation industry has changed this traditional wisdom and become one of the major animation exporters to Western countries.

Likewise, the recent accomplishments of Korean animation imply the ideological convergence of digital technologies and creativity. Compared to other cultural products, including film and television programs, animation needs considerably more advanced cutting-edge digital skills for its production. Unlike previous animated characters that artists drew themselves, digital technologies take over the chores, and talented artists can focus on creating images and stories. Cultural creativity and digital artifact have converged in the case of recent Korean animation characters. Consequently, Korean animation corporations have developed their own creative animation characters, which has resulted in the growth of the animation industry in the early twenty-first century.

Meanwhile, Korean animations, including *Pororo,* are the product that has most efficiently capitalized on emerging marketing trends. As Iwabuchi claims, "Animation and game characters are playing an increasingly significant role in the multimedia business. Video game characters are intertextual and can be used in a variety of media, such as movies, TV series, comics, toys and associated merchandise" (2004, 63). Marsha Kinder (1991, cited in Iwabuchi 2004) also describes the multiple possibilities of transmedia intertextuality as representing a supersystem of entertainment that has come to be a dominant force in the global entertainment business. The developers of *Pororo* and other child animation characters have believed that animation characters would be the main feature of such a supersystem.

Unlike previously animated movies and television series, *Pororo, Pucca,* and *Roboca Poli* prove how the supersystem works. As briefly explained, *Pororo* was first created as an animated television series. It then almost simultaneously appeared on various merchandise featuring popular *Pororo* characters. Pororo's fame has snowballed into merchandising for children. It secured sixteen hundred merchandise items garnering 12 billion won a year from royalties. Almost any child's product in Korea has *Pororo* stamps on them, and it would be disingenuous if families with children claimed not to have a *Pororo* product in their house (Y. Kang 2012). Unlike *Pingu*—a 1986 Swiss-made television animation series characterizing a penguin—*Pororo* wears a pair of cute goggles and a helmet to represent the dream of flight, and this is particularly unique because these aspects are parts of the merchandising. As such, the development of the *Pororo* supersystem has become a new business model capitalizing a niche market targeting preschool kids. *Pororo* comes preloaded with twelve *Pororo the Little Penguin* episodes, movies, *Pororo* puzzles, and a coloring game, perfect for younger school-age children. It is also capable of word processing, and the only multitasking feature available is playback of the content.

Pucca was an animated online e-card service made in 2000. The popularity of the e-card increased so rapidly in both Korea and the rest of Asia that it was licensed by Jetix in 2004, who also acquired television rights for the service. *Pucca*'s fame has snowballed into a DVD release, books, and key-chain books, fashion, and video games. She appears on around twenty-six hundred different types of merchandise, including the cell phone accessories that first made her famous in 2001. Total sales of *Pucca* products in 2006 came to well over 300 billion Korean won, matching those of any midsize company ("Korea Makes Big Strides" 2007). Pucca, the character with slit eyes, wearing strong red and black, was the centerpiece of a design contract with Benetton, so thirty-nine

Pucca items are being sold in its 1,796 stores worldwide. In Europe it was even used as a promotional product for a McDonald's Happy Meal for kids, as Pokémon did until the early twenty-first century (B. Kim 2012). As these animation characters prove, the capitalization process of this seemingly small market has exemplified the snowball effect due to its actualization of the entertainment supersystem.

Last, but not least, international collaborations have been unique in Korean animation. In the case of *Pororo,* from late 2002 to early 2005, a North Korean firm called Samcholli took some of the subcontracting jobs for Iconix Entertainment, working on animation, including modeling, texturing, and rendering. At that time, the United States had trade sanctions against North Korea, and thus the U.S. government scrutinized the process, but it had nothing to do with its trade ban. The successful overseas debut of *Pucca* was also the fruit of a multinational collaboration. Korea's Vooz Character Systems developed and marketed *Pucca,* the United Kingdom's Jetix put up the funds, Canada's Studio B produced the animation, and an American writer took care of the story ("Korea Makes Big Strides" 2007).

In the area of distribution, the global success of *Pokémon* was primarily handled by Warner Brothers, one of the major Hollywood studios (Iwabuchi 2004), which also broadcast the half-hour cartoons on its own TV channel Kids WB. However, Iconix has not developed international collaboration with foreign distributors. As one company's marketing personnel explained during my telephone interview in October 2012, "The company gets individual contracts for the distribution of *Pororo* in a few countries; however, the company has its own distribution division." As she explains, Iconix has not exported *Pororo* to America because it does not have any big distributor. Although opinions vary on this unusual situation, Jong-Il Choi, chief executive officer (CEO) of Iconix, states that a few major American distributors proposed collaboration for the U.S. market. However, the terms were not fair because they planned to garner the majority of profits in return for *Pororo*'s appearance in the U.S. cultural markets (J. Kang 2012).[4]

Unlike *Pororo*, later Korean animation characters have appropriated what Japanese animation utilized—meaning *Pucca* has relied on partnerships with global corporations for its global success. The focus and penetration of *Pucca* into the global market have been handled by Walt Disney, Warner Brothers, and Veneton (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2011a). Animation characters for kids globally are the most political and capitalized area because developers are sophisticated in garnering commercial profits through international collaboration and hybridization. With the sudden growth of several animation

characters, Korea has become one of the emerging countries in creating products that not only capture children's imaginations but also target their money to yield enormous revenues.

Characteristics of *Pororo* in Media Texts

Pororo's major text is distinctive due in large part to its different formats than previous animation characters and hybridization strategies. In Korea most TV animations are based on popular cartoons because familiar characters easily get a favorable response from audiences (Chen 2012). However, *Pororo* is not based on any popular cartoons. *Pororo* is also not the Korean version of any licensed television animation formats. Instead, it has been modeled on globally circulating Western animation characters, in particular Pingu, in the same way that *Pororo* has a male penguin named Pororo as the star. *Pororo*'s inspiration also included Mickey Mouse—the Walt Disney icon—and Japan's most adored character, Hello Kitty, who has been cherished for nearly forty years (Y. Kang 2012). Iconix meticulously studied the story lines, theme music, and other aspects of Western preschool hits such as *Teletubbies* ("Of Penguins and Politics" 2011), which is an unusual children's program designed for very young viewers in the first stage of language acquisition (Lemish and Tidhar 2001).

Pororo has changed the ways big production companies approach animation in Korea. The *Pororo* television program has been on since 2003, and the fourth season started in August 2012. Until the third season, one season consisted of fifty-two episodes, unlike popular Japanese animation TV series normally comprising twenty-six episodes per season. In Japanese TV, one animation episode lasts thirty minutes (Chen 2012); however, in *Pororo*'s case, given that it mainly targets young children under seven years old, one episode runs only around ten minutes or less. During my telephone interview in October 2012, a public relation manager at Iconix explained that "the fourth season of *Pororo* started with twenty-six episodes, and each episode lasts eleven minutes primarily because the broadcaster asked to have thirty-minute length programs. Two episodes alongside ads are sufficient for the thirty-minute slots."

Because *Pororo* has garnered so much success in Korea, there is now a lot of competition to follow that style and demographic. Every studio is trying to produce programming for the infant age group. Korea's animation industry naturally and inevitably is targeting much younger audiences than it used to (Ratto 2012). There was no particular animation directed at the teenage audience, however. At one point in the 1990s, studios were becoming accomplished at making animation for teenage audiences, but this is no longer the case. Many

teenagers these days simply are not at home as much. In the past, Saturday-morning and weekday-afternoon cartoons were common in Korea. But now, with the entry of private institutions for tutoring into the everyday lives of most children from elementary through high school, the sentiment among animation studios is that children simply are not sitting in front of televisions during those hours. So if the only children at home are preschool to kindergarten age, the focus of animation will be directed toward that demographic (ibid.).

More important, *Pororo*'s textual characteristics are unique. Pororo is a brave little penguin, but there were already many popular penguin-based characters all over the world. Developers needed to differentiate Pororo from all the others, and they came up with a pilot penguin that represented children's dreams, a penguin's dream of wanting to fly. Il-ho Kim, one of its producers (as CEO of Ocon), during an interview with a broadcaster, stated that they gave him a pair of goggles and a helmet to represent that dream. A flightless bird was given a dream of flight. That impossible dream gave life to the show *Pororo* and endeared the character to countless children, who were also reaching for their seemingly distant dreams ("*Pororo the Little Penguin,* a Korean Animation Character" 2012).

Pororo also does not shy away from any challenge and strives to achieve his dream of flying high in the sky. The series revolves around the adventures of Pororo and his friends, who live in the snowy village of Porong Forest, where they often encounter challenges and learn practical and moral lessons in each episode. In addition, *Pororo* characterizes kids through several animals. The program has several animal characters who are friends of Pororo: Poby (a warm-hearted baby bear), Crong (a baby dinosaur who is a troublemaker), Loopy (a rosy-cheeked little beaver who is extremely sensitive and shy), and Eddy (a very clever and stubborn little fox). Later, Petty (Pororo's girlfriend, who is a friendly and sociable penguin) and Happy (a hummingbird) joined the program. They have distinct personalities and different interests that sometimes cause little (and sometimes not so little) happenings in their calm white world. But they are all good friends and know how to help each other in times of trouble (*Pororo the Little Penguin* 2003).

For example, in one of the first episodes, titled "I Wish I Could Fly" ("Dreaming of Flying" in the English version), Pororo, after reading about birds flying, starts to think that he too can fly. Climbing up to a rooftop with great expectation, Pororo finds that his wings are too short to fly. Trying with bigger wings and helped by Eddy's rocket, Pororo still falls. In an attempt to cheer up Pororo, Poby thinks of an idea and takes everyone to the sea and asks Pororo to try flying. Pororo finally flies into the water as if he is flying in the sky. Remember that he is a little penguin.

Their catchy, easily pronounced names, none of which are Korean names, and playful behavior represent the happy world of childhood, similar to *Teletubbies,* which revolves around four childlike nonhuman characters—Teletubbies—differing from one another in size and color, known respectively as Tinky-Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa, and Po (Lemish and Tidhar 2001). While *Pingu* was a famous animation and is still popular in many countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, India, and Japan, it has only penguins as friends for the protagonist, whereas *Pororo,* characterizing the penguin, has diverse animal friends who are unique in their personalities and represent children of a similar age. Therefore, it is possible that the child audiences are able to identify themselves with one or more of these animal characters (I. Kim 2007). Meanwhile, Korean-made animations for preschool kids, including *Pororo,* utilize repetitive narratives and slow formats so that preschoolers enjoy those programs themselves, unlike animation targeting children that focuses on educational goals.

When it comes to animation targeting adults, there are a range of conventionally accepted norms of the genre, such as the use of politically incorrect themes, self-referencing, intertextuality, dysfunctional characters, stereotyping, and base humor (Lustyik and Smith 2010). Among the many animation characters for children, these characters have often been superheroes or princes and princesses. Animation targeting preschool kids is not the same, though, and Korea's preschool animation characters are far from those models. Pororo is not perfect and gets into trouble, but kids easily relate to him by watching him solve problems in his own way and having fun with his friends (Y. Kang 2012).

Pororo's popularity also stems from its aura of cuteness that attracts fans across ages and genders. Penguins and other characters are young and child friendly, and even elementary schoolchildren love these characters. Pororo is a cute 3-D character—a blue and white petite penguin sporting an aviator helmet and goggles—that appeals to children. Of course, cuteness is not the only resource. Pororo is an adventurous five-year-old penguin who dreams of flying and lives on a snowy island with six other animal friends. Compared to previous animated creations, including *Dooly, Michel, Chiro and Friends,* and *Robot Taekwon V,* among others, which mostly targeted elementary schoolchildren, *Pororo* lowered the target range to between three and seven years of age. It was a strategic decision to target an age group that young because the company learned it was the weak spot for Japanese animation markets (ibid.). Due to those several features, *Pororo* has become successful both domestically and globally. Korean animation characters, including Pororo, have changed the fan base of the Korean Wave, because it now includes very young children

and their parents, as opposed to those mainly in their thirties and forties in many Asian countries.

Hybrid Local Animation for Global Audiences

Whether of Western origin or locally based, cultural producers have appropriated hybridization as one of the major strategies to broaden their markets. Animation is particularly a forerunner in this context because the major target of animation characters is the child market for which producers can easily utilize global standards. For children, nationality is not a big deal, and as several animation characters, including Pokémon, indicate, it is not unusual to target global audiences instead of only national audiences. For Korean animation producers who are targeting preschool kids, it is obvious to appropriate hybridization. Korea's animation has been comparatively disadvantaged because of its limited size. Therefore, it is crucial for animation developers to target the global markets, in particular preschool children, as with *Teletubbies,* which does not contain distinct cultural characteristics, therefore enhancing its marketability around the world (Lemish and Tidhar 2001).

There are several key elements in *Pororo*'s hybridization strategies. First, the name Pororo comes from the Korean word *Joruru,* describing the way children take quick little steps. The *P* in *Pororo* came from the *P* in *penguin;* therefore, the title of this animation exemplifies hybridity between the West and the East. Second, Pororo and his friends also eat cake and cookies instead of Korean food in the program, and one particular anecdote in tandem with this activity certainly exemplifies *Pororo*'s hybridization strategy. As discussed, the character Pororo has become popular and powerful among preschool and children, and he has even earned the nickname "Pororo the President" (*Potongryong:* President Pororo), while for some teenagers "Pororo the God" (*Poneunim*). Considering Pororo's dominance in the lives of children, parents have become concerned and even demanding. Producers have received many requests, ranging from what the character should eat and how to play in episodes to what he can do for society. In July 2011, an anxious father posted an online petition raising the objection that Pororo and his friends eat too much cake and cookies. Claiming that it had a bad influence over his son, who had been asking for specific kinds of bread that Pororo eats, the father suggested the cartoon show the penguin eating healthy Korean food such as rice, kimchi, and stew. Within three months, nearly forty-five hundred other parents, possibly with similar worries, signed the plea. However, Jong-Il Choi, another *Pororo* developer (as CEO of Iconix), firmly stated, "As much as we would like to answer requests of Korean fans

by reflecting more familiar Korean culture, we also have to make sure foreign viewers don't feel alienated" (Y. Kang 2012). This clearly explains why *Pororo* probably will not be wolfing down kimchi anytime soon ("Of Penguins and Politics" 2011). Just as Pororo himself dreams of flying, his creators dream of global stardom through hybridity.

Third, the style also shows *Pororo*'s distinctive hybrid nature. As Richmond points out, "The big-eye style in Japanese animation has become a convention and it is typically used to give a character a cute, appealing quality, because characters with small or oriental-looking eyes tend to be less sympathetic" (2009, 235). In Japanese animation, Osamu Tezuka, impressed by Disney animation's success, borrowed many visual elements from Disney Studios and created numerous anime works, setting up the big-eye style of anime figures (Lu 2008). Unlike this common wisdom, Pororo's eyes are small black dots under a pair of goggles. Pucca was also created as a unique Korean character with slit eyes, which unusually still attracts global audiences.

It cannot be denied that the recent boom of Korean animation in the global markets depends on delicate hybrid strategies in both text and structure. Western influence on animation during its early development has certainly resulted in the initial inclusion of hybridization elements since its budding years in the 1960s (ibid.). As Japan's success in animation derives from its export of culturally neutral commodities whose country of origin has nothing to do with the way that they work and the satisfaction that a consumer obtains from usage (Hoskins and Mirus 1988, cited in Iwabuchi 2004, 56), Korean animation developers strategically appropriated the same model but applied it differently. Jong-Il Choi explained that he carefully chose a neutral area for the cartoon's background so that children around the world could use their own imagination. Every detailed characteristic and move of Pororo and his playmates was designed and choreographed with a determination to make him one of the world's most beloved animation characters (Y. Kang 2012). Choi stated that the production team had three criteria when creating Pororo and the other characters: they should have a global appeal and a simple design for merchandising purposes, and there should be no cultural reference in the stories. The creators cautiously picked the colors—blue, pink, and white—that are familiar to children and also ones that represent both genders.

Meanwhile, they consciously removed a pig from the character list when they created the series because it is a taboo in Islamic culture. When making episodes, producers paid attention to details that could be biased to certain cultural codes or give a historical reference that is sensitive to viewers in certain parts of the world.[5] For example, they made sure Pororo and friends wave hands

instead of bow or even nod to each other (ibid.). People cannot find brown eyes or blonde hair on *Pororo* characters; therefore, they do not recognize where these characters come from (Sung Jin Kim 2008). Although *Teletubbies* aims at the global market with no particular British identities, the clouds and the weather are very British, and the children, blond and redheads, are also clearly English (Lemish and Tidhar 2001), and these cultural indicators are apparent. However, Pororo's helmet hides his hair, and he lives in a snowy village; it is obviously not in Korea because penguins do not live in Korea.

The recent growth of Korean animation in the global markets has partially demonstrated the distinctive hybridization that has taken place in Korean culture. Although many animation developers have tried to erase any Koreanness from their characters, some of them have developed a unique cultural characteristic, which has been driven by local producers. Whereas they admit having gained Western skills learned as subcontractors, they eventually resist those dominant forces with hybrid culture, which partially, if not entirely, advances the third space.

Local Animation: Debates on Politicizing Popular Culture

Although cultural texts are essential matters in understanding hybridity, another significant concern in hybridity debates is cultural neutrality. As Nikos Papastergiadis points out, there are three levels of hybridity, and the second level "refers to the process by which cultural differences are either naturalized or neutralized within the body of the host culture" (2005, 40).[6] To take one documented case about a reconceptualization of bicultural politics in Aotearoa–New Zealand, Meredith also emphasizes that "they offer the possibility of a cultural politics that avoids a politics of polarity between Maori and Pakeha. Instead, they are centered on the adaptation and transformation of culture and identity predicated within a new inclusive postcolonial Aotearoa/New Zealand community that seeks to reconcile and overcome the embeddedness of past antagonisms" (1998, 3–4). Iwabuchi (2004) and Lu (2008) also argue that for a non-Western cultural product to become successful, it must lose much of its original "cultural odor" so as to be promoted in the international market as a neutralized product. In the case of Japanese anime, the inclusion of foreign elements is due to the fact that most anime pioneers, including Osamu Tezuka, were influenced by American artists. From the beginning, Japan would use depoliticized internationalization in the realm of anime. It is thus not a surprise for anime to be perceived as lacking national or Japanese identity (Kenji 1997, cited in Wahab, Anuar, and Farhani 2012).

Cultural neutrality is arguably applicable within Korean animation because the major target audiences are preschool children who have no serious consciousness of nationality in an era of globalization. Whereas Japanese animation products have primarily targeted older teens and are consequently culturally embedded, animation for younger children is relatively simple and less influential; therefore, it makes sense to develop culturally neutral animation characters. Korean animation developers who create characters for kids do not need to seek any significant Koreanness in them, and the recipient countries also do not need to worry about any serious cultural invasion in this category, which consequently makes for the global stardom of local animation. Korean animation is also peculiar because it does not represent Confucianism or a hierarchical Korean society. As can be seen with many previous animation characters, including Dooly, they portray family and school; therefore, being respectful to older family and friends is one of the major characteristics. In *Pororo,* however, they are all five-year-old friends, and there are no leaders or followers, which emphasizes friendship.

However, the term *cultural neutrality* is somewhat misleading, because the influence of culture cannot be culturally neutral. Some scholars, including Lu (2008), argue that hybridization, which is the imaginary "boundarylessness" of culture, is depoliticized internationalization, which acts as a commercial tactic; however, hybridization is strategically embedded in cultural politics because it not only aims for the mix of text, image, and sound to neutralize cultural products, but is also related to cultural policy, the division of cultural labor, and history.

Hybridity especially implies power relations between Western and non-Western states, resulting in the appropriation of global goods and services by local forces to create borderless cultural goods in order to attract global audiences. Although this notion of hybridity emphasizing depoliticizing culture is not entirely wrong, the key point is that political culture surrounds cultural production and consumption because the power relations do not show any evenness between the global and the local forces. Negotiation certainly happens between different cultures "as spaces for creating new cultural representations or for witnessing the coexistence of a number of cultures" (A. Yoon 2009, 105). In many cases, though, the negotiation process is not even between Western and non-Western countries. Western producers appropriate hybridization as one of their major strategies to attract local audiences and consumers, but their major cultural characteristics emphasizing Western values, such as capitalism, individualism, universalism, and heroism, are still embedded in their cultural products because their major cultural markets are in the West. In contrast, non-Western countries' hybridization is in general erasing their own uniqueness,

such as Asianness, in order to attract global consumers. They do not have a market comparable to the U.S. market, and they have to create culturally neutral culture, meaning they need to create cultural products with global markets in mind. It is clear that the hybridization process is strongly based on the politicization of culture, because producers strategically weigh political considerations. Hybridity cannot be neutral; the historical context in which hybridization takes place, the power structure between countries, the imbalance of cultural flows, and the hegemony of western capitalism are all important factors (Lin 2011).

In the case of Korea's animation, it is certain that *Pororo* is culturally political because *Pororo* represents some significant Korean mentalities, such as friendship, collectivism, and love, which are also partially universal values.[7] Unlike many American animation characters emphasizing heroism and individualism as well as commercialism, Pororo and his friends always help and love each other. It has considered local politics in a way to avoid any controversial characters, images, and scripts so as to attract global audiences. The international division of cultural labor, collaboration with North Korean subcontractors, and subsequent considerations of sanctioning *Pororo* for the U.S. market by the U.S. government are all political issues that *Pororo*'s producers and distributors have scrutinized. *Pororo*'s global appeal is undoubtedly the result of the strategic politicization of Korean popular culture.

Although the popular cultures of several countries, including Japanese popular culture in the realm of animation, have developed depoliticization strategies in order to appeal to global audiences through creating "odorless" cultural products, this tactic is not always powerful. Unlike some common assumptions emphasizing depoliticized internationalization for appealing to global audiences, politicized internationalization emphasizing local taste has become more appealing than odorless cultural products in many cases. Depoliticization itself has considered local politics as a way of avoiding any controversial characters, images, and scripts to attract global audiences. Although popular culture for global teens is relatively neutral, they cannot be free from local politics. In this sense, Korean popular culture's global appeal is the result of the strategic politicization of popular culture.

Korea has increased its export of cultural products to Western countries; however, this does not mean that transnational cultural power is significantly changing and that global asymmetry has not been cured yet. As Pieterse aptly puts it, "To address global inequalities, a different kind of conceptualization is needed; however, in the hybridity discourse, we lack a theory of global political action" (2009, 77). Hybridization is not only about text but also about political

culture and political action. To speak with Iwabuchi's term (2002, 24), creating an "odorless local culture" is about cultural politics, and some elements of Korean popular culture could have a local cultural odor, which is the creation of the real third culture, as politicizing cultural processes.

Conclusion

Korean animation has been penetrating the global markets, promoting its youth-focused culture to a global audience, and the animation industry as a result is rapidly emerging as a new edge of *Hallyu* 2.0. Unlike the period up to the late 1990s, animation has become a significant part of the New Korean Wave due in large part to its contribution in expanding major genres and fandom globally. The early stage of *Hallyu* was based on television dramas and films and relied mainly on several male actors and a fan base of women in their thirties and forties in Asia. However, the New Korean Wave emphasizing K-pop, online gaming, and animation has included female stars and expanded to encompass all age groups beyond Asia, including North America and Europe. Whereas K-pop and online gaming have attracted many teens and people in their twenties in Western countries, as will be discussed in later chapters, animation has appealed to preschool children and parents in their late twenties and early thirties. This implies that animation has contributed significantly to the expansion of the fan base in all age groups around the world. The spread of children's marketing—the selling to, and for, children—into the global economy, and the role played in this phenomenon by Korea's cuteness in this era of *Pororo* capitalism, is ever deeper, as Allison (2003) analyzed with the case of *Pokémon* in the early twenty-first century.

Korea's animated characters have clearly utilized hybridity, as it reveals many of the transnational processes of television program adaptation that reflects the current mantra: "Programming hybridity makes sense because it makes money" (Waisbord 2004, 378). Korea has rapidly increased its exports of animated television series and characters, though Korean animation's influence on the global cultural scene is quite trivial when compared to Western popular cultural products and Japanese animation. Animation for preschool kids is even marginal in the animation market. It is currently significant to develop hybrid animation characters for preschool kids, but the major consumers are still older teens and college students. The Korean animation industry has not made any significant progress with animated films or characters targeting older teens. Without creating animation characters for them, the growth cannot be

continued, and their hybridization strategies creating a third space based on local culture cannot be fully attained. Therefore, we need to scrutinize the recent growth of Korean animation characters in the Western market a little bit further in order to determine whether Korean animation will remain a major popular cultural force for children and youth in the global market, unlike *Pokémon* and *Sailormoon,* which have arguably faded away, contrary to expectations.

6

Critical Discourse of K-pop within Globalization

Korean popular music has witnessed tremendous change and growth since the late 1990s. Korean popular music has been one of the primary cultural forms at the forefront of the New Korean Wave phenomenon, particularly in the early 2010s. Following the fallout of the first Korean Wave around 2006 and 2007, Korean popular music took the vanguard as the new growth engine driving *Hallyu.* Several K-pop musicians (solo artists and groups) have penetrated Asian countries, including Japan, and began knocking on the door of Western music markets, including Europe and North America. As Psy's "Gangnam Style" exemplifies, social media, such as YouTube, are rapidly becoming the new outlet for popular music, and several K-pop musicians have penetrated both regional and Western markets as a result of this platform.

The flows of K-pop, which has become popularized to refer to Korean popular music, primarily youth music equipped with dynamic dance and consumed by the younger generation, around the world in the 2010s suggest that K-pop exists as a hybrid modernity mixing Western and Korean cultures. But it also seems to be increasingly becoming a unique local culture, distancing itself further from Western culture and representing more of the Korean culture. In this sense, K-pop could be a possible candidate for alternative globalization, referring to a flow from the peripheral or non-Western countries to the West (Yang 2007). Therefore, many media scholars and music critics are keen to learn whether

Korean popular music provides a significant site for exploring how local cultural forces are highly interrelated or interpenetrated in the complex process of cultural globalization.

This chapter investigates the transition of popular culture, in terms of its style, genre, and structure, as seen occurring in the realm of K-pop. It discusses a few major elements involved in the swift advancement of K-pop, both domestically and globally, as one of the major Korean popular cultures within *Hallyu* 2.0. It also maps out the hybridization process in a form of linguistic mixing of Korean and English in K-pop, because this form of hybridization has become one of the most significant factors for the growth of K-pop in the global markets.

Korean Popular Music in the Pre-*Hallyu* Era

In the 1980s, the majority of Koreans enjoyed sentimental love songs, known as ballads, and the Korean pop seen on television was limited mostly to mainstream genres, generally identified as ballads and dance (R. Sutton 2006). Korean popular music in tandem with ballads until the 1980s was largely monotonous in genre and style. The lyrics in Korea popular music "conformed to standard romantic themes and avoided sexual connotations, concentrating on sentiments similar to the songs of earlier generations—loss and desertion, waiting for a lover who never comes, and admiration for the voice of a lover" (Howard 2002, 83). The majority of Korean popular music did not pursue foreign export, and until the mid-1990s the very idea of exporting popular music would have struck most Koreans as bizarre. "Except for occasional trot singers[1] with warm receptions in Japan and Taiwan, and perhaps explicitly Americanized performers such as Patti Kim or classical musicians, the Korean music industry was resolutely domestic in orientation and consumption" (Lie 2012, 351).

However, the Korean music industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s went through a major transformation, as it grew rapidly with Korea's political, social, economic, and cultural changes. Most noticeably, the mainstream pop music scene, dominated by non-age-specific sentimental love songs, was diversified through the introduction by younger musicians of dance-oriented genres (including hip-hop), which were instantly favored by Korean youth (E. Jung 2015). When local singers' simple imitations of American pop and the dominant never-changing ballad style became wearisome, Korean youth started to seek new genres and found alternatives, including dance music (E. Jung 2006).

In particular, the Korean music industry appropriated international music genres and styles during the early 1990s. There are several key musicians. Kim

Gun Mo as well as Seo Taiji and the Boys played a key role in introducing foreign music genres and styles, which consequently hybridized with traditional Korean pop music. On the one hand, Kim Gun Mo introduced reggae to Korea to be one of the most famous K-pop singers with a hybrid music genre. His song "Wrongful Meeting" was in a hybrid Euro dance style (combining house, Hi-NRG, and reggae with dance). The song is traditional in style in that three verses make up the song, unlike the majority of recent K-pop music, which emphasizes choruses instead of verses. In the Korean music context, hybridization meant the mixing of local sentiments and global genres until the mid-1990s (Jin and Ryoo 2014).

On the other hand, for the purposes of making sense of K-pop,[2] "the quantum leap was the emergence of Seo Taiji and the Boys in 1992. They were one of the first groups to incorporate rap music and hip-hop sensibilities into Korean popular music" (Lie 2012, 349). In other words, this group "challenged and ultimately destroyed many conventions of Korean popular music by admitting American soundscape in the Korean music industries" (Lie 2015, 58–59). Seo Taiji burst forth onto Korean television screens in March 1992 as his rap song "Nan arayo" (I know [1992]) became one of the first rap tracks to use the Korean language (Howard 2006; Morelli 2001). There is an undeniable cultural hybridity in the music of Kim Gun Mo and Seo Taiji. With the arrival of American hip-hop culture and rap music, "Korean popular music became youth oriented, and a number of teenage boy and girl bands targeting audiences in their teens and early 20s have dominated K-pop ever since" (E. Jung 2009, 76–77).

While there were several factors characterizing the growth of local popular culture in the 1990s, the hybridization of K-pop became one of its major traits. Korean musicians developed hybrid pop music that was the mixing of various cultural elements (both local and global), causing particular cultural elements to lose local specificity. In other words, the "non-locality of K-pop in a form of hybridization allows such mixed pop cultural products to easily cross national borders" (S. Jung 2013, 109). Alongside Kim Gun Mo and Seo Taiji, several pop musicians advanced a distinctive formula of Korean pop music through a mix of Western genres and styles with local sentiments embedded in sociocultural history. Western music and musical elements have played a major role in the Korean music industry, "not only in the direct performance of Western popular music, but also in the varieties of hybrid mixes and interactions involving Korean and Western repertory, instruments, and stylistic features" (Sutton 2009, 27). In this sense, these several musicians certainly developed the contemporary form of Korean popular music, known as K-pop, although their prime time as musicians was the mid-1990s.

The change in Korean popular music in the early 1990s was coincident with the rise of a new generation (known as *shinsedae*), whose values, customs, lifestyles, and mind-set were different from the older generation's (the *kisungsedae*), partially because of growing economic prosperity. "*Shinsedae* in a narrow sense refers to those born during the early-and mid-1970s who grew up in the urban areas watching American TV shows, listening to American popular music, eating American fast food, and consuming American fashion" (E. Jung 2006, 111). Seo Taiji and the Boys became a timely icon of Korean youth, as their music touched on several sociocultural issues. Under the military regime until 1993, Seo Taiji's unprecedented music style was chanted by youth, not because of political protests but for a number of social reasons, including education (Shim 2006).

This trend was not unseen in Korean pop music. The increasing intertwinement of antigovernment sentiments and people's (*minjung*) movements generated their own popular musical genres, especially folk, not unlike that of Bob Dylan or Joan Baez, in the guise of Kim Min-gi and others. Even more than mainstream pop music, the leftist popular music was inscribed with moral seriousness and political engagement (Lie 2012). The Right and the Left converged in the message of seriousness, shackling popular music to the tether of the serious and the respectable, thereby pushing it toward the margins:

> In the 1970s, the most politically and culturally oppressive decade in post-Liberation Korea, the Park Chung-hee regime banned not only ostensibly conservative music, such as trot, for Japanese influences but also progressive music, such as rock, for its association with corruption and decadence. Musically-staid folk songs, in turn, often aired anti-government messages, and were often banned as well. The authoritarian regime relied not only on anti-communism but also nationalism and Confucianism to justify its culturally restrictive policy . . . Given the impoverished repertoire, it is not surprising that people sought refuge in banned Japanese and Korean music or sought American and Western alternatives. (ibid., 348)

Meanwhile, a paradigm shift in the cultural policy was also detected in the styles and contents of popular music in Korea. Until the early 1990s, Korean popular songs were heavily censored by the government in the name of upholding morals and preventing political agitation under the military regime (Yang 2007). However, the loosening censorship under the newly elected civilian government starting in 1993 influenced the change in styles and lyrics. Right after the 1997 financial crisis, K-pop again rapidly changed. K-pop musicians in the late 1990s showed a much different direction for the Korean music industry.

K-pop in the Early *Hallyu* Era

Korean pop music has gradually become one of the most important Korean popular products both domestically and globally since the late 1990s. K-pop gained fame in the domestic market as the market share of domestic popular music increased from about 71 percent in 1996 right before the beginning of the Korean Wave to 80 percent in 2004 and to 81 percent in 2010. According to one survey, the market share of K-pop soared to 95.5 percent in 2011. During the same period, the proportion of American pop music decreased from 24 percent in 1996 to 17 percent in 2004, and again to 10.4 percent in 2010 (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2011d; Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2006a, 251). Not stopping at the protection and promotion of local repertoires within the domestic market, K-pop has begun to be exported to foreign countries based on its strong base in the domestic market since the late 1990s. "As the danceable rhythm and catchy melody performed by good-looking singers and groups swept across East- and Southeast Asia, Korean pop music became one of the main components of the Korean Wave" (Hyunjoon Shin 2009, 507).

The process has not been easy for the Korean music industry, of course. Regardless of the fact that there were significant changes in Korean popular music in terms of genres and styles, K-pop hardly penetrated other countries until 2003. Unlike other audiovisual sectors, such as broadcasting and film that were successful in the Asian region between the late 1990s and the early years of the 2000s, the Korean music industry was the least successful among cultural forms. In 2002 the export of television programs was recorded at $28.8 million and $14.9 million for movies; by contrast, the music industry exported only $4.5 million worth of domestic music, including the sales of CDs. The export of K-pop started to increase in 2003 and temporarily peaked at $34.2 million in 2004. However, K-pop struggled as the export of pop music declined to $13.8 million in 2007 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2006a; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012b).

More specifically, during the first wave of *Hallyu,* K-pop was led by several teenage idol groups, including H.O.T., NRG, S.E.S., Baby V.O.X., and Shinhwa. All were systematically produced by the audition processes and in-house training systems of major entertainment companies. In fact, although there are several reasons for the growth of K-pop in the global market as well as the domestic market, there is no doubt that Korean entertainment houses are the primary driving forces for the process. The strategic marketization of K-pop stars primarily started in 1995 when Su Man Lee founded SM Entertainment. SM's production style of manufacturing boy bands and girl groups for both local and

foreign markets was soon adopted by other entertainment houses, such as YG Entertainment and JYP Entertainment. By implementing the typical Japanese idol production system, in which music production companies focused on fostering television-friendly young talents—talents not just with singing ability (or the lack of it), but dancing and general all-around television entertainment capabilities (Jung-yup Lee 2009, 491–92)—SM fully systematized the total procedure of young pop-star making, with breakthroughs by boy band H.O.T. and girl group S.E.S. Among these groups, H.O.T. was particularly popular in Taiwan and China through the traditional media (for example, television) and online spaces (for example, music-download sites and online broadcasters) as they formed active virtual fan communities in the early years of the twenty-first century. S.E.S., the most popular girl group in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Korea, was carefully formed to be marketable internationally—in Japan particularly—by including the Japanese Korean member Shoo (E. Jung 2015).[3]

However, K-pop was relatively unknown to the global music market until early 2001 when SM Entertainment began to promote a teenage girl singer named BoA. From the beginning, SM Entertainment strategically planned and manufactured BoA as a culturally hybridized pop icon, specifically targeted at the overseas market. Her music and image employed "a combination of elements from both American and Japanese pop (J-pop) music, evident in the singing and dancing styles strikingly influenced by American artists such as Michael Jackson and Janet Jackson, and a look drawn from Japanese-pop idol visual styling such as those of Amuro Namie and Hamasaki Ayumi" (S. Jung 2013, 111). BoA's performance style points clearly to the Americanization and Japanization of Korea's entertainment industry, which has become a pastiche of *Hallyu,* demonstrating the victory of a commercial capitalism that creates products to satisfy the taste of the masses: Korean popular cultural products are nothing but Korean versions of American popular culture, and the Korean Wave phenomenon is nothing but a result of how Korea's export-driven industrial system of the manufacturing sector has extended into the popular cultural sector (Cho Han Hye-Jeong, cited in ibid.). Due to the careful commodification of a popular icon, when BoA released her debut Japanese single, "ID: Peace B," in 2001, it reached the top twenty on the Japanese Oricon chart. BoA's debut Japanese album, *Listen to My Heart,* was released in March 2002, and it became a million-album seller and debuted atop the Oricon charts, the first album by a Korean artist to do so (Poole 2009).

As discussed in chapter 3, in East Asian countries, such as China and Taiwan, Korean television dramas were very popular, and they made inroads for the later K-pop boom. Korean popular culture fans are ardent supporters of K-pop in

many Asian countries. Without the boom of Korean dramas and films, K-pop alone would not have become an important aspect of Asian popular culture. In Japan, however, K-pop advanced the fame of Korean dramas primarily because of BoA and even several pre-K-pop musicians in the 1980s and 1990s. BoA's success in Japan has hugely helped not only K-pop but also several Korean dramas, including *Winter Sonata*. In 2003 Japanese network NHK aired *Winter Sonata*, centering on a music prodigy who emerges from a car crash with amnesia. Because there were several Korean dramas in Japan between the late 1990s and the early 2000s, Korean dramas also helped BoA's success; however, BoA's phenomenal debut certainly helped other Korean cultural products in Japan.

Through BoA's success in Japan, subsequent K-pop musicians have heavily targeted Japan, which has made Japan the most significant foreign country for the Korean music industry. Unlike most Western artists, BoA and other Korean musicians have managed to break the Japanese market because they learned Japanese before going there. They often release a Japanese version of their singles, with new videos too (Lindvall 2011a). In fact, Korean boy bands TVXQ and Big Bang achieved similar success. Since then, K-pop has come to rival J-pop in popularity. In August 2010, KARA and Girls' Generation (also known as SNSD) crashed the Japanese charts with their singles "Mister" and "Genie." Both of those songs were popular in Korea and, after undergoing some translation, proved just as popular in Japan (Michel 2011). Part of K-pop's success in Japan can be attributed to globe-hopping musical production. The *Japan Times* wrote that Korean acts take most of their cues from Western music, meaning many European electro houses (2NE1's Diplo-ish "I'm the Best") and American rhythm and blues (R&B) touches (Girls' Generation's "Mr. Taxi" and KARA's "Mister"), among other influences. In the case of Girls' Generation, it especially helped that most of the tracks on their Japanese debut album were sculpted by Western producers. These touches might not necessarily impress Western ears, but in Japan they ring revelatory (ibid.).

Almost identically, JYP Entertainment, managed by singer Jin-Young Park, has a lineup of idol groups, such as Wonder Girls, 2AM, 2PM, and miss A. YG Entertainment is also known for its hip-hop and electronic sounds that are well represented by its current acts Big Bang and 2NE1. Needless to say, these talent agencies, known as entertainment powerhouses, have actualized their training camp, and the training process is very hard for these musicians. K-pop's novelty to foreigners comes from the years of training that K-pop idol hopefuls endure to ensure their debuts are successful. In particular, these powerhouses have incorporated experienced Western talent for both music and choreography in order to make K-pop more appealing abroad.

Consequently, "Asian audiences tend to enjoy K-pop for several reasons. First, they find Korean icons to appear charming, as in the case of J-pop in Asia" (Na 2002, 8). Although many are not particularly good at singing, Korean idol singers are good-looking and fashionable. Many can also act and dance. Because dancing, stage performance, and visual effect are as important as music in K-pop, the demand for music videos is strong. Second, K-pop provides a viable alternative to American pop or J-pop. K-pop has many varieties, including Euro-beat, R&B, rap, soft rock, hip-hop, and so on. The sound quality is arguably superb, and the packaging is attractive. Titles are usually in English, which makes things easier for non-Korean listeners to remember. K-pop was an underdog in the realm of cultural flows until very recently; however, during the same period, hybrid K-pop developed its own ground to be a significant cultural form for the New Korean Wave.

K-pop Pioneers the New Korean Wave

The Korean music industry has regained its momentum since 2008, and the export of K-pop was recorded at $83.2 million in 2010 and $310 million in 2014. This means that the export of K-pop soared by as much as 18.9 times between 2008 and 2014, as fans in North America and Europe began to enjoy Korean popular music (figure 6.1). As seen in chapter 5, the Korean film industry exported only $40 million worth of domestic films during 2014. Therefore, it is relatively easy to say that K-pop has achieved remarkable growth over the past several years, unlike its early years in the global market. K-pop has now become one of the most significant cultural forms in the New Korean Wave era. Due to the phenomenal growth and popularity of K-pop, many media critics and *Hallyu* scholars have identified K-pop as *Hallyu* 2.0 itself, although K-pop is only a major cultural form.

As for the global flows of the different forms of music, the sales of music CDs through foreign distributors have accounted for the majority of the exports, followed by digital music and music events, over the past decade.[4] However, due to the growth of digital technologies, the proportion of recorded music has been decreasing, while online sales have increased. With the recent popularity of K-pop musicians, including Psy, music events in foreign countries also have become increasingly significant for the Korean music industry, although this still accounts for less than 5 percent of export revenues of Korean music (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012a, 195–97).

K-pop has become popular primarily in Asia, while other Korean cultural products have expanded to North America and Europe. When Korea exported

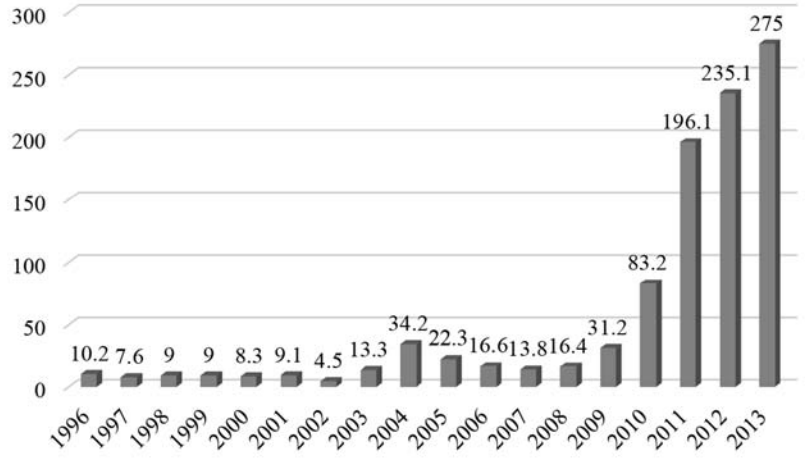

Figure 6.1: Foreign exports of Korean popular music (unit: million US dollars). *Sources:* Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 174; 2012e; Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2006b, 2001; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2014a, 4.

$80.9 million worth of local music in 2010, for example, Japan constituted as much as 75.8 percent of those sales, up from 69.1 percent in 2009. This trend continued and was at 80.7 percent in 2011 (figure 6.2; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 196). K-pop became popular among Japanese teens and those in their twenties during the latter part of the 2000s and the early 2010s (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2009b). The next largest region for K-pop was Southeast Asia, at 13.1 percent in 2011, followed by China (3.4 percent). During the same year, Europe consisted of 2.4 percent, while North America accounted for only 0.3 percent. Since Psy became a huge hit globally during the latter part of 2012, the 2012 figures may show a further shift; however, it is unlikely to change the overall trend. This means that the popularity of K-pop in Asia in the early twenty-first century is perhaps one of the most significant developments in Asian popular music, similar to what J-pop experienced between the early 1990s and the very early 2000s.

The significance of Japan for K-pop is apparent when compared with other cultural products. Whereas more than 80 percent of K-pop exported went to Japan in 2011, the levels for other cultural products were less (broadcasting [61.2 percent], movies [30.2 percent], games [28.1 percent], and animation [19.3 percent]) (see figure 6.2). "It is not surprising because the popularity of K-pop in Japan existed even before the Korean Wave era. For example, some of Cho Yong Phil's songs became very popular in Japan in the 1970s—something

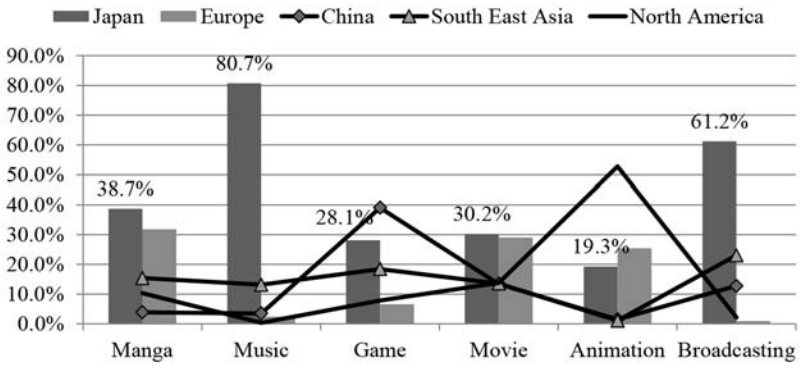

Figure 6.2: Exports of major Korean cultural products by region in 2011 (unit: %). *Source:* Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013a, 76.

of a harbinger of the Korean Wave" (Lie 2012, 344), suggesting the persistent proximity of Japanese and Korean cultures.

Based on its successful penetration into the Japanese market, the Korean pop music industry has been pouring human and monetary capital into the U.S. popular music industry since 2008 in order to gain access to the market. A few solo singers—BoA, Rain, and Se7en—who were successful in Japan attempted to enter the U.S. market. But their attempts in the United States, despite elaborate preparations, all fell short, confirming the complexity and unpredictability of contemporary transnational flows. In the mainstream U.S. pop music market, they encountered the challenges of entrenched notions of race, ethnicity, sexuality, as well as what is an acceptable musical sound (E. Jung 2015).[5] K-pop is still marginalized in the United States despite the Korean media's continual reports of its success stories. As music critic He (2011) argues, it mainly happens because American audiences are not interested in consuming a distilled version of their own pop. American listeners crave the authentic. The idea of dozens upon dozens of apprentice performers under each major label going through years of training, learning from the same set of vocal and dance instructors, would not sit well with many American audiences who long for gifted talent. But the situation is somewhat changing.

The turning point was generated not in the United States but in Paris, France, to everyone's surprise (Sang Joon Lee 2015; S. K. Hong 2013). In fact, after a decade of regional success, there is evidence that K-pop has gradually begun to flow into the European market. In the summer of 2011, a large K-pop extravaganza featuring the teen idols of the SM Entertainment label was held in Paris. Some twelve thousand fans attended SM Town Live, a live concert featuring SM

idol groups. State-managed television stations along with conservative news media outlets took the opportunity to celebrate Korean national competitiveness, especially in terms of popular culture, in an era of transnationalism and globalization (S.-A. Lee 2015).

Almost at the same time, a few K-pop musicians made their U.S. debuts. Girls' Generation—arguably Korea's most popular group between the late 2000s and early 2010s—performed on *The Late Show with David Letterman* in January 2012 and on *Live with Kelly*. Psy, the most successful so far in the U.S. market, appeared on NBC's *Today* and *The Ellen Show* (NBC) and several other programs during the latter part of 2012. Female singer Ailee was invited to attend the *55th Grammy Awards* ceremony at Los Angeles Staples Center in February 2013.

In particular, with the debut of Psy in the global music markets in 2012, K-pop penetrated not only the Asian markets but also the Western markets. In the early 2010s, national self-congratulation was especially manifest for the popularity of K-pop, which spread from neighboring Asian countries, such as Japan and Taiwan, to farther ashore in Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. Many younger Koreans were eager to embrace the global success of K-pop, "which somehow proves the creativity and coolness of Koreans, hitherto known for producing cars and cell phones rather than engrossing dramas and popular songs: diligence and intelligence rather than beauty and style. K-pop in particular and the Korean Wave in general raise a wide range of questions" (Lie 2012, 339–40).

YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter make it easier for K-pop bands to reach a wider audience in the West, and those fans are turning to the same social networking tools to proclaim their devotion (Choe and Russell 2012, cited in E. Y. Jung 2015). One of the most significant changes in the New Korean Wave era starting in 2008 is the utilization of social media. The growth of social media, including YouTube and Facebook, has expedited the growth of K-pop's presence in the world. It is no surprise the K-pop syndrome in the *Hallyu* 2.0 era is because social media has made the music more accessible (Ghelani 2012).

K-pop has indeed experienced a boost thanks to social media. Because people from all over the world can watch music videos and listen to songs online and through social media, more and more fans have been able to find and appreciate Korean music. Internet users from around the globe harness social networking services to spread their love of K-pop, helping to break down traditional barriers. Social networking sites are becoming a major tool for spreading K-pop and promoting Korean culture (J. K. Oh 2011). The introduction by YouTube of subtitles on the screen, along with the introduction of automatic captions through speech-recognition technology, lowered the language barrier and enabled the

growth of the YouTube K-pop audience. K-pop videos have suddenly become popular on YouTube, from about 800 million worldwide in 2010 to 2.28 billion in 2011.[6] As a reflection of the sudden popularity of K-pop, YouTube categorized K-pop as a distinctive music genre alongside pop, rock, R&B, and Latin (K. Jung and Song 2012). During my correspondence with one female interviewee (a twenty-two-year-old college student)—originally from China—in Vancouver, she said, "Many years ago, I used CDs to listen to music. However, nowadays, I buy music on music websites like iTunes and use smartphones. As K-pop becomes popular among college students in Canada, YouTube is the most favorite outlet for me. My favorite K-pop musicians are Infinite, VIXX, B.A.P., and Big Bang. Since college students not only listen to music but also watch their performance, social media are the best platforms." Another male student (age twenty-four) also explained, "I enjoy listening to K-pop because it is technical and catchy. Social media did change the way of enjoying it because they help to promote K-pop culture shared by friends. In particular, YouTube has greatly impacted me because the comments posted by many users from around the world allow me to engage with other K-pop lovers."

Indeed, it is hard to imagine that the genre's universal domination would have fully come to fruition without the parallel rise of social media. The K-pop culture seems to have recognized the massive role that social networking platforms play in its ability to sell. Artists and corporations have fully embraced the benefits of social media (S. Y. Kim 2013). Although social media as a whole is not for only Korean pop stars, they have functionally utilized them. Hybridization and social media are certainly some of the major factors for the growth of K-pop in the global music markets.

Hybridization in K-pop

There are several hybridization strategies that make K-pop a global phenomenon, including glocalization of production, coproduction of K-pop with foreign producers and composers, and English mixed into the lyrics. Korean entertainment powerhouses use foreign languages, including English and Japanese. They also target global youth, using cable networks and social media, which has resulted in the extension of audience demographics to midteens in many countries.

Most of all, the popularization of K-pop in Asia and elsewhere is only one aspect of cultural globalization in the context of Asian music. Korean entertainment powerhouses have set up regional offices and branches in Asia and Western countries to make local editions of their albums. SM Entertainment

has offices in Japan and the United States (SM Entertainment USA, Inc.). YG Entertainment (YG Entertainment America) and JYP Entertainment (JYP Entertainment USA) have also established their own local branches since 2008. In a similar way to how Sony in Japan and Walt Disney in the United States pursued internationalization, these domestic powerhouses appropriated the famous "think globally, act locally" logic, which has been one of the most significant glocalization mottoes in the realm of culture. They plan not only to sell their Korean-made music overseas, but also to create and distribute local editions of their Korean albums for these foreign markets. The production circuits of K-pop, from idol auditions to album debuts, are highly fragmented and translocally organized (Fuhr 2015). As Japanese record companies (such as Sony and Avex Trax) and talent agencies (for example, Hori and Inoks) adopted the practice of global localization to make their products sensitive to local preference up until the early 2000s, Korean powerhouses have pursed similar glocalization or hybridization strategies as well (Na 2002).

The transnationalization of K-pop is also noticeable as one of the major trends in the Korean music industry. Since Korea opened its music production industry to foreigners in 1999, several Western music production corporations, including EMI, Warner Music, Sony Music, Universal, and BMG, have established their own music production companies and produced both foreign pop music and domestic pop music (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2001, 408). SM artists led this trend by working closely with North European composers largely led by Pelle Lidell, Universal Music Publishing's European A&R executive. Such hit songs as Girls' Generation's "Hoot," "Run Devil Run," and "I Got a Boy" as well as BoA's "I'll Eat You Up" were created by Lidell's team of writers (Ji-soo Kim 2013). Several K-pop songs have also been created through working with Western composers, as in the cases of S.E.S. ("Dreams Come True"), Dong Bang Shin Ki ("Mirotic"), f (x) ("Chu"), and SS501 ("Love Like This").[7]

The latest to join in this trend is Cho Yong Phil. His record-breaking nineteenth album, *Hello,* contains ten songs, six of which were composed by foreign music writers, including the title track. When Cho Yong Phil (a sixty-three-year-old male singer), who has been known as the king of Korean pop musicians, came back to the music world in April 2013, six of his ten new songs were composed by twenty-three foreign musicians. Because Cho is one of the greatest singer-songwriters for many K-pop fans, it is rather shocking to learn that Cho worked with foreign musicians to create new songs. Nevertheless, "Bounce" reached number one on the day after its release on local music charts despite the worldwide attention garnered by Psy's "Gentleman" as of April 18 (S. Y. Kim 2013).[8]

As such, foreign composers are rampaging through the Korean music industry. In the late 1990s, a few entertainment powerhouses recruited foreign composers. However, with the recent boom of K-pop around the world, many more foreign composers arrived in the Korean market, hoping to work with K-pop musicians. They were not only from the United States, but also from the Netherlands, England, and other European countries. For the entertainment agencies, the financial benefit is a big factor. In Korea famous composers used to sign a contract per album, and the entertainment agency paid about $35,000–$40,000 per mini album. However, for foreign composers, it costs $3,000–$7,000 because foreign composers expect to get royalties once their songs become popular (Kpopstarz 2012). Of course, an increase in the number of prominent international producers and composers working with Korean entertainment companies, in turn, seems to be fostering even more interest in Korean pop music abroad (Jean Oh 2011).

Finally, the Korean music industry has appropriated English mixed into the lyrics in order to attract Western audiences as well as Korean youth whose foreign-language abilities are getting stronger compared to a decade ago. This hybridization strategy has been adopted by the entertainment powerhouses because it is not easy to use Korean to add easy chorus and melody lines (S. H. Lee 2009). The entertainment powerhouses have found it necessary to mix English into the lyrics of Korean popular music, because they have expanded their target markets from domestic to global. The use of English mixed in has emphasized the convergence of Western and non-Western linguistic cultures. Thus, a K-pop band's style is a fusion of synthesized music, video art, fashionable outfits, and teasing sexuality mixed with doe-eyed innocence. K-pop performances have repetitive choruses, often interspersed with English, and synchronized dance routines that have become a major fad in Asia (Choe and Russell 2012).

Linguistic Hybridization in K-pop

In contemporary K-pop, West-East hybridity is evident on many levels, ranging from the mixing of English in lyrics to collaboration with Western composers rather than domestic composers, in addition to the adaptation of Western music genres, styles, and dances. K-pop in the early twenty-first century has in particular diversified its style in terms of mixing English into the lyrics alongside the danceable rhythms and catchy melodies. While appropriating some Western styles, including rap, reggae, R&B, and hip-hop, many K-pop musicians have developed new styles and genres, as Psy's "Gangnam Style" indicated. English

usage in K-pop can be identified in two major categories: song titles and lyrics. On the one hand, the incidence of English song titles in K-pop has rapidly increased since the early *Hallyu* era. Out of the top fifty charts, there were only three song titles that used English in 1991, and five in 1997, including "Remember" (Position), "Here I Stand for You" (Next), and "Forever" (Jae Wook Ahn).[9] It has continued to grow with a few exceptions. In 2011 English song titles were in the majority, with twenty-six songs and twenty-five the following year.

While the number of English song titles has soared, in many cases a few English words are added to create meaningless song titles, such as "Chocolate Love" or "Hurricane Venue." Sometimes they even make up their own words, like "Mirotic" (Lindvall 2011b). English is often butchered and misused grammatically, leading to some interesting phrases, such as Super Junior's "I Naughty, Naughty" and B1A4's "Zoom My Heart Like a Rocket." And what makes it worse is that most idols are not fluent in English, so their pronunciation is often off, leading to some awkward moments, such as Jaejoong's rhyming of *fish* with *cash.* Adding made-up words resembles baby talk, and, needless to say, the end product of the song often ends up muddled and confused when not handled right ("Lost in Translation" 2013).

On the other hand, K-pop musicians massively utilize English mixed into lyrics, as many young singers and groups wish to appeal to global audiences, including the largest music market—America. Because many K-pop singers and groups are increasingly using English in their lyrics, the number of K-pop songs including English lyrics has soared. Among the top fifty K-pop songs in 2012, thirty-five (70 percent) used English in their lyrics, up from twenty-eight (56 percent) in December 2010, although some of them are just meaningless exclamations. K-pop is also catchy due to addictive and repetitive choruses (referred to as hook songs) with synchronized dance moves that are easy to follow and sing along with. Some popular music critics say that "these are effective in getting songs stuck in your head, making you follow along subconsciously" (Korean Culture and Information Service 2011, 58).

Several top-ranked K-pop songs in recent years, such as Girls' Generation's "Gee" (2009) and KARA's "Jumping" (2010), as well as Psy's "Gangnam Style" (2012), certainly represented trends observed during their years of release as the most successful in the charts, showing the differences in their genres, dance styles, and English usage. These songs were the most popular songs of the time, but also reflected the changing nature of K-pop in terms of genre and style, which are exemplary cases of hybrid popular music.

Girls' Generation's "Gee," which was released in January 2009, is an exemplary K-pop song. "Gee" is about a young girl's first fall into love, and it is

a fast hook song, with the music video for "Gee" becoming the most-viewed K-pop video on YouTube between September 2011 and September 2012 until in turn surpassed by Psy's "Gangnam Style." "Gee" is light dance music with a catchy hook, and it has received more than 104 million visitors on YouTube as of June 10, 2013. *Gee* is an exclamation of surprise, similar to *Eomeona,* similar in meaning to "Oh, my goodness!" or, more similarly, "Gee!" in English. "As most K-pop artists who have been attempting to enter the global, mainly the English-speaking US market have confessed that the language barrier is the most difficult part of crossing cultural borders" (S. Jung 2013, 122).

"Gee" begins with three lines in English followed by two lines in Korean and another two lines in English, and the chorus part uses very short English words, such as *gee, baby,* and *oh, yeah.* After linguistically analyzing one hundred popular Korean songs released by thirty-six musicians between 2006 and 2012, Joowon Suh (2012) claims that English exclamations or interjections, such as *yes; yeah; no; hey; yo; oh; uh; huh; bang; shoot; like; okay; hello; one, two, three; listen; why; and stop,* are some of the most frequently used English words in recent K-pop songs.

Meanwhile, again, in late 2012, global audiences witnessed the most phenomenal penetration of one particular K-pop song—Psy's "Gangnam Style"—which had racked up more than 836.5 million visits as of November 24, 2012, to become the number-one song on YouTube, up from 300 million views on YouTube as of September 30, 2012, turning it into Korea's most successful export ever. Psy's "Gangnam Style" achieved this record within only four months of its debut, whereas the previous top music video—Justin Bieber's "Baby"—achieved 836 million views thirty-three months after its debut ("Psy's 'Gangnam Style'" 2012).

On July 15, 2012, the "Gangnam Style" video was released on the official Psy YouTube channel. The video helped make the song a sensation in Korea, where it peaked on the M.net and Gaon charts by the end of July for record label YG Entertainment.[10] After gaining traction among K-pop fans around the world, the video was shared on several notable international websites between July 28 and August 3: *Reddit, Gawker, Daily Beast,* and finally, the sites for CNN and the *Wall Street Journal.* What has gone relatively unremarked is the extent to which "Gangnam Style" stopped being just a social media phenomenon, and not even just a traditional media phenomenon, but a real-life one. In these later months, the impetus to hop online and search "Gangnam Style" on YouTube was often in response to a real-world incident (Hu 2014).

As *Time* correctly observes, "The song is catchy enough, and the video ridiculous enough, that people may not have realized that 'Gangnam Style' mixes its silliness with social satire. Gangnam is Seoul's richest and flashiest neighborhood. The video depicts Psy's comically inept attempts to live large in Gangnam style, offering a satirical take on Korea's burgeoning culture of consumer excess"

(Futrelle 2012). The dance moves, which he learned from a horse's movements, are simple enough to mimic, which is one of the major elements for the global success. As the most recent popular K-pop song, the song uses relatively less English other than a few words, such as *style* and *sexy lady.* However, it also consists of several verses and choruses and repeats them. "Gangnam Style" is therefore a sort of a hook song, as in contemporary K-pop music. Psy repeatedly shouts, "Oppa is Gangnam style, eh, sexy lady," and Americanized tropes such as "Oh, Oh. Oh, Oh." Again, the hook song has become one of the most popular types in K-pop since the early twenty-first century, and Psy's "Gangnam Style" especially became popular due to his unique, dynamic, but comical horse dance.

As exemplified by the analysis of K-pop lyrics in conjunction with the mixed English, the transnationalization of Korean popular music has not simply regenerated a notion of Korea's supremacy in the global markets. Although it is not necessary to confirm American influences in Korean popular music, the local music industry has developed its popular music as a form of hybrid culture, which is mixed with American genres, styles, and language. Based on its hybridity, K-pop has become one of the most significant cultural genres within the New Korean Wave; however, it is crucial to understand whether hybrid K-pop is really reflecting Koreanness, which is a key factor for the long-term success of Korean popular culture in the global markets.

Understanding Hybrid K-pop in the Globalization Era

Hybridization in K-pop has been unique both structurally and textually. By utilizing glocalization strategies, K-pop musicians have successfully penetrated many parts of the world, although this is still limited in the North American market. However, hybridity embedded in contemporary K-pop has created several controversies. K-pop has explicitly mixed Western genres with Korean popular music in terms of impulsive rhythms, strong visual images, and group dances. While music genres that originated in Western countries have brought stylistic changes and have represented hybridization between Western genres and national content in K-pop, "The fusion of local and global dialogues in contemporary Korea is presented in the form of English mixing in K-pop" (J. S. Lee 2004, 430). After conducting her field research in Singapore, Sun Jung argued that "Rain, one of the most successful K-pop musicians in Asia, is unique and so different from American pop music, regardless of the fact that Rain's style virtually clones American pop" (2011, 107). Likewise, some may claim that K-pop is an archetypal example of a new cultural genre that has occurred through the hybridization process, recasting national identities. The issue is that they cannot explain the major differences between K-pop influenced by American genres

and styles and American pop music other than saying that "K-pop is unique and different." The shrewdly articulated Western styles and genres cannot guarantee the development of a new form of culture. The current form of structural hybridization in music mainly fails to reflect Korean mentalities.

Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that K-pop is arguably another version of American pop music, though not entirely, because many K-pop musicians do not emphasize the locality and instead superficially mix in U.S. styles and genres. As Ian Clothier (2005) points out, the focal point is that hybrid cultures are antagonistic to standing authority and cultural hegemony—hybridization engenders diversity and heterogeneity. Heterogeneity (diversity in constitution) and multiplicity (mixtures of elements) are underlined here as important aspects of hybrid cultures. This can be done through the creation of the third space of its own authority. However, contemporary K-pop is struggling in making an authentic local culture through the hybridization process, regardless of burgeoning attempts to make a hybrid popular culture. Domestic entertainment powerhouses have developed contemporary K-pop, which is not just a simple mix or fusion of two different stylistic characteristics. However, cultural hybridity in popular music has followed global forms and styles in many cases rather than establishing a new creative culture or a third space, one that is free from American influence. American cultural power cannot operate in an absolute dominant position but is instead significantly intermingled with local hybridizing processes (Jin and Ryoo 2014).

When I ask whether hybrid Korean popular culture is authentic local culture during my interviews, the majority of interviewees answered that it is mostly Western-driven culture, although their reactions are diverse. A female student (twenty-two) from New York I mentioned in chapter 1 said, "I think that hybrid Korean pop culture scene in general is the forefront of a globalized entertainment culture because it takes traditional Korean values and applies it to K-pop, movies, and television program." Another female student (twenty-four) who originally came from Latin America to Canada explained:

> K-pop has undeniably hybrid element, as both the content in terms of genre and the musical style is mixed between Western and non-Western styles. Furthermore, English mixing in lyrics and the influence of Western composers have greatly influenced the style of K-pop music. However, as my multi-cultural background explains, I have always felt that it is difficult to locate a pure authenticity in any culture. Therefore, I enjoy the catch, fun and refreshing melodies and lyrics incorporating many different genres of music. This diversity in combining many forms of music I find to be extremely refreshing as opposed to much of Western pop music.

A few more interviewees said, "Korean pop culture, like any form of culture, is always evolving, and Western influence is inevitable," and "highly Western-driven." However, one male student (age twenty-three) explained, "I feel that they are less authentic in terms of being Korean, and that they are manufactured with Western audience in mind." A female student (twenty-four) in Vancouver especially said, "I don't feel that it is very authentic Korean culture because the content is so similar to Western styles. I feel that while it is really hard to keep authentic content while getting more Western audiences, it is necessary to make a good balance."

Music is used to express emotions or tell stories, and oftentimes these emotions or stories are told most easily through the lyrics of a song ("Lost in Translation" 2013). However, in K-pop, lyrics have a relatively reduced role, and, particularly with the most recent forms, the importance of lyrics in K-pop has been dwindling. Although this argument can be applied to most genres of dance music as there is more of a focus on sound and entertainment rather than meaning or informing, it seems to be especially evident in K-pop. This could be blamed on the artificiality of the genre, as the idols that rule it are carefully maintained by large companies whose main aim is to make money. With companies managing idols and creating future hits for them, the idols themselves usually have little chance to apply themselves in the lyrics of their songs (ibid.). K-pop is surely a blend of the global and the local. However, it does not reflect very Korean themes. It is also evident that the unequal relationship between the global and the local forces is explicit in the hybridization process.

Conclusion

Popular music over the past several decades has represented the complexity involved in cultural hybridization. Both Western pop culture and non-Western pop culture commonly express the hybridization of two or three different cultures. In this rapidly globalizing world, hybridization between two different cultures is not avoidable and is no longer a novel sensation. K-pop in the twenty-first century has also demonstrated the trend of a mixed culture that illustrates the playfulness accompanying the convergence of different ingredients. The Korean music industry has been transformed due to the major role of music industry powerhouses, favorable government policies, the rapid growth of social and digital media, and English usage in lyrics, as well as well-planned hybridization strategies.

What we have to emphasize is what is characteristic about hybridity, because various opinions have a somewhat negative sentiment on the resilience of the

Korean Wave, including K-pop. The main issues are content and variety. The concepts and styles of singing groups and individuals are becoming uniform. And with pop culture oriented toward stars, the Korean Wave's personality lacks variety. Mimicking Western culture cannot guarantee the success of the Korean Wave. Korean cultural DNA should combine with foreign content in a creative way to create irreplaceable value. "More Korean unique stories and culture archetypes should be discovered and recreated by integrating global sense and perspective" (M. Seo et al. 2013, 12).

The Korean music industry is arguably losing its Koreanness through K-pop so it can sell to the American market. Indeed, the *New Yorker* says: "K-pop is an East-West mash-up. The performers are mostly Korean, and their mesmerizing synchronized dance moves, accompanied by a complex telegraphy of winks and hand gestures, have an Asian flavor, but the music sounds Western: hip-hop verses, Euro-pop choruses, rapping, and dubstep breaks" (Seabrook 2012, 88).

Eun Young Jung also claims, "BoA's successful music career in Japan has little relation to her Koreanness. She learned to sing in Japanese, to speak it fluently for public appearances, and to present herself publicly as a Japanese pop star. This process of repackaging and de-Koreanizing (or Japanizing) was the key to her success in Japan and became the rule for becoming successful in Japan" (2009, 76). Likewise, although "Gangnam Style" has reached global status, K-pop is no longer a cultural product of Korea that truly represents or contributes Koreanness when their pop stars are making English albums, signing with Western music companies, and creating Western style music. As Iwabuchi argues, "Many Asian pop stars did not represent a local traditional culture per se, but relied on intensely hybridized foreign, most importantly American influences" (2008a, 146). These processes have paradoxically resulted in the growth of Japanese and Korean popular music in Asia and elsewhere.

Hybridization is generated once the globalization of media operations adopts local cultures and circumstances, which in turn stimulates local forces to rediscover the value of the local (Seung Ho Cho and Chung 2009, 324). K-pop has substantially changed in the early years of the 2010s, and hybrid K-pop in both lyrics and genres has been relatively successful. However, it is worth remembering that it is essential to place local cultural formulation within the global structures, and we need to carefully look into the historical faces of the interacting sociocultural, technological, capital, and political forces, each of which individually and together change over time. In this way, one might be able to fully understand local cultures in the process of hybridization.

PART III

Digital Korean Wave

7

Digital *Hallyu* 2.0: Transnationalization of Local Digital Games

Since the early twenty-first century, the development and export of Korean online games have rapidly increased. During that time, a few Western countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, have continued their influence in the global game markets. Western-based game corporations, including Electronic Arts (EA), Riot Games, and Blizzard Entertainment, have developed several famous games, including *World of Warcraft, StarCraft, Diablo,* and *League of Legends,* and increased their global saturation. Some Western game firms have also penetrated developing countries, including China, Taiwan, and Korea, in joint ventures and branches. However, Korea has a formidable presence—and even a global lead—in online games, among the fastest-growing segments of the digital-content sector (Holroyd and Coates 2012). Korean game developers and publishers have successfully infiltrated other countries, not only neighboring countries but also Western game markets, with (g)localization strategies, meaning Korean game corporations, such as Nexon, NCsoft, CJ E&M, and Wemade, have established branches or joint ventures in foreign countries, including those within North America and Europe.

The swift growth of the Korean game industries, in particular online gaming, and their export into the global markets have raised two pivotal questions. One is whether video games have changed the nature of global cultural flows, from a Western dominant one-way flow, characterizing cultural imperialism, to a contraflow, emphasizing a new direction of cultural flow, from non-Western

countries to Western countries, as well as the nature of transnationalization. The other is whether local game producers have in developing a hybrid game culture through the mixing of the local and the global created a third culture. "Hybrid means, of course, not only the melding of culture but also business practices as a form of glocalization strategy" (Consalvo 2006, 120). How to understand the nexus of these two seemingly unrelated issues is crucial in the analysis of the growth of local popular culture because "this approach to the processes of cultural globalization would urge us to consider the extent to which the rise of Asian media cultures challenges Western-centered configurations of power" (Iwabuchi 2010a, 404).

Because the digital game industry has become the single largest sector in the Korean Wave tradition, this chapter carefully discusses the major characteristics featuring the digital game industry in the digital *Hallyu* 2.0 era. It endeavors to contextualize a transnational flow of local popular culture using the case of Korea's online games. Unlike films, television programs, and popular music, the global flow of digital games remains underexplored. Therefore, this chapter attempts to analyze the cultural flows of digital games, which sheds light on the current debates regarding cultural flows. It also examines the nature of the hybridization and globalization of local online and mobile games by investigating the ways in which Korean game corporations develop hybrid digital games. It ultimately maps out whether this new trend of contraflow can be expanded in the global cultural markets in tandem with digital technologies.

Contracultural Flows in the Global Game Markets

In the 1960 and 1970s, the debate over unequal international communication flows and structural inequalities was rampant in the name of dependency. For critical media scholars, global cultural flow was understood as an asymmetrical relation in favor of Western forces, mainly the United States, because the United States was the core of a process of media-centric, capitalist cultural influence, with concerns about inequity in international cultural and news flow dating back more than one hundred years (Boyd-Barrett and Thussu 1992; McChesney 2008; Huntemann and Aslinger 2013). The U.S.-led Western media, both online and offline, and in various forms—information, infotainment, and entertainment—were global in their reach and influence (Thussu 2006).

Over the past two decades, however, it has become clear that these critical concepts in the powerful center of the world communication system were often turned into too deterministic models of unilateral cultural flow. In several cultural industries, including broadcasting, we see a prolific development of local

production industries, "an ever more complex pattern of international program flows, with strong examples of contra-flow from the South to the North; and the arrival of some Third World program providers who became huge players in the global market" (Biltereyst and Meers 2000, 393). In the early 2000s, digital games and the Internet were added as some of the major subjects in the continuous return to the flow debate (Ritzer and Ryan 2004).

Since the mid-1990s, several media theoreticians have disputed whether cultural flows necessarily travel in a one-way direction (Sinclair and Harrison 2004; Thussu 2007; Wu and Chan 2007). As Daya Thussu points out, "A more nuanced understanding of the complex process of international cultural flows show that the traffic is not just one-way, from North to South-even though it is overly weighted in favor of the former" (2007, 185). Evidence shows that "new trans-border television networks, as well as online communication communities, are appearing, some from the periphery to the centers of global media and communication industries" (Thussu 2006, 2007). A few Latin American and Asian countries, such as Mexico, Brazil, and India, advanced the production of their cultural products, and Korean cultural products have recently proliferated in several Asian countries and in some Western countries, including North American and European nations.[1]

In the realm of the digital game industries, a handful of researchers previously identified this contraflow with console, handheld, and online games, because digital games are an intrinsic part of contemporary global flows of cultural goods, services, and images (Kerr 2006; Consalvo 2006). As a reflection of modern economic, social, technological, and cultural superpowers, previous papers focused on three supraregional game production centers, including North America, Europe, and Japan, and cultural flows from these regions to other regions (Johns 2006). However, there were certainly emerging markets in the realm of digital games as well. With Japanese console games, Consalvo argued that "the video game industry is a hybrid encompassing a mixture of Eastern and Western businesses and cultures to a degree unseen in other media industries" (2006, 120). In the online gaming field, "The Chinese online gaming companies reached a stage where locally developed games could compete with quality foreign games from the United States. Some Chinese game companies export their products to nearby Asian countries, competing in regional markets traditionally dominated by Korean game companies" (P. Chung and Fung 2013, 248).[2] In the *Hallyu* 1.0 era until 2007, Korea was an indisputable powerhouse in the global online game markets; in the early 2010s, however, China and Korea have been competing neck and neck, which characterizes one of the major traits of the digital *Hallyu* phenomenon.

Korean Digital Games in the Global Market

The Korean game industry was a cottage industry until the mid-1990s because video games were not considered a major part of culture or business (Jin 2010b). The government also severely regulated video games, because it believed that video games had a negative impact on Korean society, especially children. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, in fact, a small industry of about two dozen computer game companies developed video games to serve the Korean market. Most of Korea's small industry of computer game developers failed during the 1996–97 financial crisis, and no firm active in the 1990s became successful entrants into the online gaming business as it developed in the post-1998 period (Casper and Storz 2013).

However, since the late 1990s, the Korean game industry has suddenly developed video games, particularly online gaming, which has become the single largest component in terms of foreign exports in the New Korean Wave era. As Peichi Chung aptly puts it, "The Korean game industry transformed itself from an industry of limitation to one of innovation" (2015, 513). Although there are several factors driving the growth of the game sector, two major developments can be identified: the rapid growth of personal computer (PC) bang (cafés) based on the phenomenal growth of broadband services and the popularity of *StarCraft* in the early stage of the development of the game industry. The contribution of Blizzard Entertainment's *StarCraft* to the growth of Korean online gaming through PC bangs is irrefutable.[3] *StarCraft* is a real-time strategy computer game with networked multiplayer capabilities, which proved to be an early success and was a contributing factor in the mass popularization of network computer games (Chan 2008). With the advent of *StarCraft,* young people en masse were quick to abandon other popular leisure activities, including arcade games.[4] In the Korean gaming context, *StarCraft* is especially significant, although it is an American online game. In my interview with one male student (age twenty) who also works as a part-time computer engineer, he said, "I enjoy playing online games while watching games. When I play games, I like Korean players because they are the strongest contenders for any competitive gaming tournament, such as *StarCraft* and *League of Legends* [which is the most popular MMORPG in PC bangs as of June 2015]. I believe that this nature provides a huge game community with a full of strategists, entertainers, and general practitioners in the Korean game sector." Another male student (age twenty-four) also expressed, "Although *StarCraft* was made by the Western company, it became a huge hit in Korea, so I considered it as a Korean online gaming."

Against this backdrop, the game industry has suddenly become one of the fastest-growing sectors in the early twenty-first century and has enjoyed its status as the most significant cultural form representing Korean popular culture. In 2000, when the Korean game industry started to grow, sales in the domestic game industries were valued at US$1.85 billion (excluding Internet cafés), and online gaming accounted for only 10.3 percent (US$191.5 million) of the entire game market. During the same year, arcade games were the largest game genre (US$1.52 billion, 82 percent), and PC games were the third at 6 percent, while mobile and console games were marginal. Back then the market share of Korea's video gaming globally was only 1.7 percent (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2002, 461–62).

However, the Korean game market has increased over the past several years. In 2012 the gross market value of gaming, including console or handheld, online, mobile, arcade, and PC games, had grown to US$7.89 billion (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2013c, 151). Unlike the early years of the 2000s, the online game industry accounted for as much as 86 percent (US$6.78 billion), followed by mobile (US$800 million, 10 percent) and console and handheld games. In Korea young people are especially likely to be online. More than half of the online population in the country is between the ages of eleven and thirty-four, and with such a youthful group of Internet mavens, it is no surprise that the gaming culture in Korea is potent and growing ("The Korean Wave" 2012).

In Korea online gaming is a mainstream youth culture. Professional online game players become national idols, commanding the same popularity as K-pop stars. The majority of Koreans play online games, much as many Americans go to the movies. As online games allow young players to interact with other players wherever they can connect, gaming in the home on a static player will become more and more outdated (ibid.). Korea was the largest online game market in the world until 2008. Due to the soaring Chinese online game market, though, the Korean online game market in 2010 made up 25.9 percent of the world's online game market, behind China at 30.4 percent, which shows a changing pattern in the global digital game markets (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012b, 363). In addition, as a reflection of the rapid growth of the smartphone and its apps, mobile gaming has substantially increased, from 5.6 percent in 2010 to 10 percent in 2012.

More important, the Korean game industry generates more export revenue than all other Korean cultural industries combined. In 2003 Korean game companies exported a total of US$182 million, which accounted for 39 percent of cultural exports. However, in 2013 they exported as much as US$2.7 billion

worth of games (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2014a). The game industry has continued to grow, and it consists of two-thirds of the entire export in popular culture, which makes it one of the major characteristics of the New Korean Wave. Korea has developed online games based on improved broadband services, and local online games are currently well received in many parts of the world. During the period 2002–13, the export figures increased by about 19.3 times (figure 7.1). The online game sector as the largest category in the digital game industries consisted of 91.4 percent in 2012, down from 97.2 percent in 2009, as a reflection of the growth of the export of mobile gaming in the smartphone era (Korea Creative Content Agency 2013; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012b; Korea Game Development and Promotion Institute 2008).

Unlike other cultural sectors in which East Asia has become a major target region, the Korean game industry has penetrated the Western markets relatively well, although it is seasonally fluctuating based on the development of globally successful MMORPGs. As Peichi Chung points out, "Within the constraints of current Internet technology and the geopolitical obstacles that different Asian nations present, Korean Wave standardizes a type of popular culture that travels across national boundaries to reach various communities throughout Asia" (2013, 204). However, in the case of video games, whereas Asia, including China, Japan, and Taiwan, has continued its dependence on Korean online games, Western countries have increased their imports of Korean games.

More specifically, in 2003—during the initial stage of the export of Korean digital games—China accounted for as much as 62.1 percent of Korea's gaming exports, and other regions were relatively small, with North America at 5.7 percent, Japan at 5.6 percent, and Europe at 2 percent. North America and

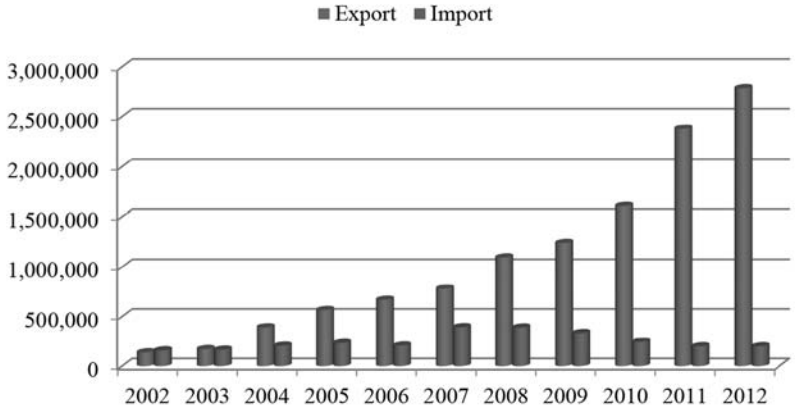

Figure 7.1: Foreign trade of Korean video games (unit: $1,000). *Sources:* Korea Creative Content Agency 2013, 71–72; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012c; 2014a, 4.

Europe together consisted of only 7.7 percent of the total. As with many other cultural forms, such as television programs and films, the Korean game industry had very little penetration of Western countries. This situation continued to 2004 when North America (6.1 percent) and Europe (3.5 percent) together accounted for 9.6 percent, although Korea ranked as the second-largest online game import country for the United States during the same year. The environment surrounding the export of the Korean game industries has fundamentally changed since 2005, when the United States suddenly increased its imports of Korean games to 15.7 percent of the total. Including Europe, these two Western regions accounted for 20.7 percent of the export of domestic games that year, and the trend has continued in recent years (Korea Game Development and Promotion Institute 2008, 53; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2010b). In 2010 North America and Europe accounted for 17.8 percent, and this figure was much higher than that of popular music (1 percent) and television programs (3.16 percent) (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012d) (table 7.1).

For Korean online game publishers and developers, the U.S. market is crucial because online gaming is getting bigger and bigger, as people increasingly have access to high-speed Internet. During 2011 the majority of game users in North America enjoyed console games at 46.7 percent, while 28.6 percent of users played online games; however, it is expected that by 2016, the number of online game players (37.8 percent) will surpass the number of console gamers (36.7 percent). The online game market in North America grew by 10.6 percent in 2011, while its counterpart in console games decreased 5.6 percent. Growth in the online game market has been driven by an increase in broadband subscribers, by transition to the current generation of consoles, and by the growth of social games (PriceWaterhouseCoopers 2012, 358). This suggests that Korea is likely to increase its penetration in the North American market, which is rapidly growing.

Another major characteristic of the digital game industries in the New Korean Wave is the growth of mobile gaming, both nationally and globally, with

Table 7.1: Game exports by country (unit: %)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
China	62.1	39.5	20.8	23.6	30.9	26.7	34.9	37.1	38.2	38.6	33.4
Japan	5.6	24.9	42.6	32.4	31.1	20.0	26.5	27.1	27.4	26.7	20.8
North America	5.7	6.1	15.7	19.9	17.7	16.8	12.3	9.2	7.6	7.7	14.3
Europe	2.0	3.5	5.0	6.3	5.3	8.5	8.2	8.6	6.4	6.0	8.9
Others	24.6	26.0	15.9	17.8	15.0	28.0	18.1	18.0	20.4	21.0	22.6

Sources: Korea Game Development and Promotion Institute 2008; Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2010b; Korea Creative Content Agency 2013, 2014.

the phenomenal advancement of the smartphone. Until 2007 when Apple introduced its first iPhone, mobile gaming was not substantial; however, with the increasing number of smartphone users, mobile gaming on this new platform has become much more popular. As mobile gaming has surpassed console and handheld games to be the second-largest segment in the Korean game market since the early 2010s, mobile gaming has gradually increased its proportion in its export. Several mobile games, such as *Anipang* and *Candypang,* garnered numbers of downloads for mobile game players during the latter part of 2012. Mobile gaming has experienced a dramatic growth rate, rapidly gaining increased numbers of players and blazing trails in the development of business models in the 2010s (Jin, Chee, and Kim 2015).

Globally, in 2011 the United States became the largest importer of domestic mobile games, at 57.6 percent, followed by Japan (26.2 percent) and Europe (9.9 percent) (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012c). The mobile game industry is expected to grow much faster, and for the Korean mobile game industry Western countries are becoming more significant than Asian markets. This means that Korean game firms have successfully penetrated the Western markets, sometimes with online games and lately with mobile games, although it is yet fully blossomed. Due to the rapid growth of the Western markets as major consumers of local online/mobile games, some game corporations and governments cautiously argue that the contraflow of local popular culture has been made possible with digital games.

Shifting Glocalization Strategies in Digital *Hallyu*

Several Korean online games have appeared in the Western game markets, and MMORPGs and casual games (for example, quiz games and board games) are the two most successful genres. However, there are several interesting trends characterizing the current digital *Hallyu* in tandem with video games, such as the diversification of game genres toward mobile gaming, changing glocalization strategies among Korean game corporations.

To begin with, as the industry grew, Korean games ventured abroad—initially to China, with MMORPGs. In 2001 Actoz Soft released *Legend of Mir 2* in China. The MMORPG, developed by Wemade, was an early star in an age where Korean MMORPGs would dominate Chinese gaming (Wallis 2012). Stimulated by its success, several domestic MMORPGs, including *Maple Story, Lineage, Lineage II, AION,* and *Dungeon and Fighter* began to appear in overseas markets, including Western markets. Although there are several reasons for the growth in the Western markets for the Korean game industries, the most significant factor has

been the development of a handful of MMORPGs, including *Lineage II,* released in 2003. Ever since *Lineage II* began to penetrate the American market, Korea has been able to enter into the North American market. A female student (age twenty-six) from China who moved to Canada indeed explained the importance of MMORPGs in the digital *Hallyu* tradition: "I started enjoying Korean pop culture in 2006 when I was in China, and I especially began playing *Maple Story.* I played this MMORPG game because it was fun to spend time with several friends of mine. In late 2009, I started listening to K-pop because some of my friends introduced it to me. Therefore, unlike old generations who started enjoying the Korean Wave through audio-visual products, digital technologies and social media are major platforms for me to follow the Korean Wave phenomenon."

NCsoft, the developer of the *Lineage* games, recorded $338 million in revenues in 2006, for example, 32 percent of which came from the United States and Europe (NCsoft 2009a). In 2009 NCsoft exported *AION,* another successful MMORPG, to China, Japan, Taiwan, Europe, and the United States, and the company sold more than one million packages, which became the first Korean cultural product, including films and television programs, to sell more than one million copies for the first time (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2010b, 51). As of January 31, 2013, Neople's *Dungeon and Fighter,* which debuted in August 2008, recorded four hundred million global subscribers, including those in China, Japan, and the United States, which were the largest countries in terms of the number of subscribers. In particular, *Dungeon and Fighter* has become popular in China, and it has been listed at the top of Chinese search engine Baidu's game list (Huh 2013). "Technological innovations, particularly the development of new platforms and the availability of tools, middleware and source code, have enabled independent game companies in peripheral locations to develop projects and attempt to compete for attention and money with established players" (Kerr and Cawley 2011, 404).

As one of the most recent cases of the country's global visibility, Korea's XL Games signed a deal with American Trion Worlds in January 2013 to distribute its big-budget fantasy role-playing game *ArcheAge* to Western markets, including both North America and Europe. *ArcheAge* spent six years in development, and its creator was Jake Song, who made the online game *Lineage*. Trion launched the game in North America and Europe in September 2014. In fact, large Korean developers and publishers such as Nexon, NCsoft, and NHN have directly launched business with overseas local corporations, particularly in Western markets (Seok 2010).

The Korean game industries, however, have relied on a few successful MMORPGs, and their global penetration has experienced ups and downs.

Domestic video game makers tend to rely on one or two megahit MMORPGs, and this type of production jeopardizes domestic game firms. Over the past several years, the market share of the United States has decreased, due to the lack of MMORPGs comparable to the *Lineage* games. NCsoft, which developed three major MMORPGs, including *Lineage, Lineage II,* and *AION,* had not released a new successful game until it released *Guild Wars 2* and *Blade & Soul* in 2012. Consequently, the revenue from Western markets for NCsoft dropped for a while, which partially created a financial setback of this game giant (NCsoft 2012). Nexon, a Tokyo-based maker of online games, bought a US$685 million stake in NCsoft to become the Korean company's biggest shareholder in June 2012 (Mark Lee 2012). Nexon explained that they saw a lot of opportunities for acquisitions in Asia, North America, and Europe, and they are interested in investing in companies that develop games for Facebook and mobile phone users (ibid.).

NCsoft has also lost several of its best game developers in recent years. When NCsoft tried to penetrate the American market, the company opened its own subsidiaries because it needed to rely on Western developers who knew their own culture for the success of their marketing in that area. When NCsoft opened NC Interactive in Austin, Texas, in 2000, it signed Richard Garriott, the U.S. game programmer best known for *ULTIMA Online,* and nineteen others from Destination Games, Inc., which was located in Austin (NCsoft 2007). However, his new project was not successful, and he was forced to leave NCsoft in 2008, which resulted in a lawsuit against NCsoft.[5] Finally, but not least, as noted previously, Jake Song, who made the online game *Lineage* at NCsoft, left the company and created his own company to develop a new MMORPG, *ArcheAge.*

Again, it took several years (until 2012) for NCsoft to finally return to North America and Europe with *Guild Wars 2,* a new MMORPG. This new game was developed by Arenanet, a subsidiary company of NCsoft in the United States, located in the state of Washington. Due to the successful launch of *Guild Wars 2,* NCsoft expanded its Western penetration, including North America and Europe, growing to 25 percent in 2012 and another 21 percent in 2014 (NCsoft 2013, 2015) (figure 7.2). Although the proportion of these Western regions was not comparable to its highest rate of 35 percent in 2006 when NCsoft penetrated North America (27 percent) and Europe (8 percent), it shows the possibility of contraflow as long as domestic video game developers and publishers create blockbuster MMORPGs. In fact, when NCsoft made its return to the Western market, *Guild Wars 2* was one of the most successful MMORPGs, only behind the first *Lineage* (30 percent) (NCsoft 2013). Of course, this does not mean that the flow of digital games from periphery to core is phenomenal. Rather, it shows

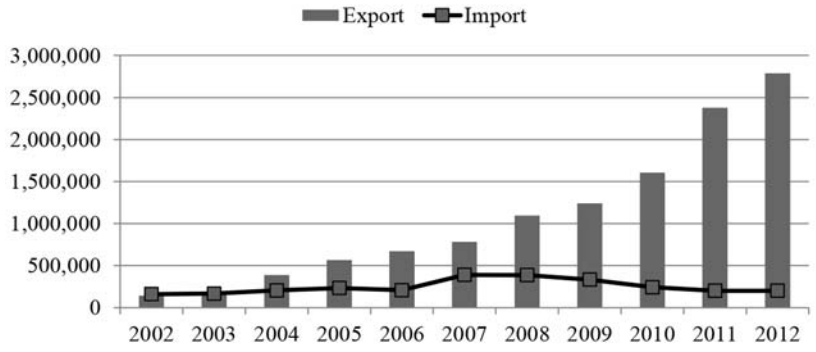

Figure 7.2: NCsoft's export to the West: North America and Europe (unit: %). *Sources:* NCsoft 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015.

the possibility of contraflow in the realm of digital games, which we do not see with other cultural forms such as television programs, music, and film, where Western countries are still major players in the global markets.

Korean game corporations have continued in their effort to penetrate the Western markets, and several Korean online game developers create games targeting these markets through hybridization strategies. However, in recent years, domestic game corporations have changed their glocalization strategies. As explained, Robertson (1995) introduced the concept of glocalization in explaining the notion of hybridity, and it emphasizes the interaction between the global and local.[6]

However, their strategies have much changed compared to the *Hallyu* 1.0 era, when they primarily developed their structural hybridization process in establishing subsidiaries in both Asian and Western countries. Instead of establishing foreign subsidiaries, several online game developers and publishers, including Mgame, Webzen, and Joymax, have begun to use global platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. They locate the global service platforms in Korea and provide game services to different countries after changing languages. Through this new strategy, they can save on costs because they do not need to establish local branches (Ham 2013). As in the case of NCsoft, the foreign branches of several other game corporations have not been profitable; therefore, game developers have sought new strategies in the global markets. In addition, domestic Korean developers and publishers are also making strategic investments instead of creating foreign branches in the West. In February 2013, as an example of a recent case, Nexon invested in Robotoki, the Los Angeles–based development studio in order to create cross-platform games (B. Sinclair 2013).

Meanwhile, in the digital *Hallyu* context, several game developers and publishers have shifted their focus from online to mobile and social games; therefore, they need to change their strategies in the market as well. As noted, mobile gaming is gradually booming in Korea with the rapid growth of smartphones, and several game firms, including Nexon and Wemade, previously online game leaders, are targeting mobile games alongside mobile game firms, including Com2uS. For example, Nexon acquired all the outstanding common shares of Gloops, Inc., a developer of mobile games in Japan, for JPY36.5 billion in cash in October 2012 to enable Nexon to accelerate its mobile strategy. As Seungwoo Choi, president and CEO of Nexon, said, "Gloops has established itself as one of the premier mobile game developers in the world and a key player in one of our most important growth areas, with a robust portfolio of hit titles and a strong track record of driving market innovation. We look forward to leveraging gloops' outstanding capabilities and scale to expand the Nexon game experience to users on mobile platforms worldwide" ("Nexon to Acquire" 2012). Wemade as an online game developer and service provider used to heavily develop MMORPGs, including *Legend of Mir 2* and *Legend of Mir 3;* however, this company acquired a game company, Joymax, which has a strong presence in mobile gaming, in 2011. In particular, Wemade bought Joymax partially because Joymax had successfully established and operated Global Service Platform. Instead of establishing international subsidiaries, Wemade wanted to use Joymax's GSP, which had twenty million members in two hundred countries, in order to directly appeal to global game users (Koh 2012).

As such, domestic mobile game corporations are directly targeting the Western mobile game markets, as the United States became the largest importer of domestic mobile games at 57.6 percent, followed by Japan and Europe, in 2011. Due to the compact screen and ease of mobility of smartphones, "the aforementioned major mobile game developers produced casual games, which are characterized as a mode of engagement that requires only sporadic attention up to a threshold of around five minutes" (Richardson 2012, 143) and are distinguished from PC-based online games by their simple rules and a substantially lower barrier to entry in terms of time and skill. The mobile game industry is expected to grow much faster, and for the Korean mobile game industry Western countries are becoming more significant than Asian markets.

Some domestic mobile games have also been hybridized with American digital technology, primarily Facebook, since July 2013. Facebook took new steps to boost its engagement on mobile and tap into the growing gaming market, launching a new mobile games publishing platform for developers. The program says that the pilot program is aimed at helping "small and medium-sized devel-

opers take their games global." Facebook started to partner with ten developers from around the world to build games, including Korean mobile game developers Gamevil and Wemade (Tsukayama 2013). Launching a game on Facebook's mobile platform, the social network noted, gives developers a chance to reach around eight hundred million monthly mobile users; however, this is potentially a serious blow to KaKaoTalk, which is a locally made platform running mobile games (see chapter 8). NHN Entertainment also started to enter into the global mobile game market with its role-playing game *Guardian Stone* in April 2014. Under the slogan "World Class Cinematic RPG," *Guardian Stone* kept in mind European and North American mobile gamers, and the company also created the same game for the global platform Facebook. Instead of utilizing its own subsidiary company, NHN Entertainment planned to use the SNS platform used the most in each country (Yu Hyun Jung 2014). This implies that domestic Korean game houses, both online and mobile game corporations, are changing their glocalization strategies in the social media era. While they continue their existing glocalization strategies, including their partnership with global publishers, they also develop new glocalization strategies in order to effectively appeal to Western game users who are also changing their platforms to mobile and SNS.

Power Relations between the Global and the Local

There are several sociocultural contexts that contribute to the growth of the contraflow of local Korean online games, including supportive government policies, competition among a few of the best games corporations, new cutting-edge technologies based on broadband, and a cultural milieu that is accepting of online games as a major form of entertainment. Hybridization has also become one of the most significant elements in the growth of Korean online gaming and contraflow, because Korean game corporations have increased their exports of hybridized local online games. Korean popular cultures have been hybridizing local elements and American cultural features in highly dexterous ways, and in the Korean context, the West and the East tend to be equated with the global and the local, respectively. Even in discussions of cultural hybridization, the East is supposed to only receive, imitate, appropriate, or hybridize the West, regardless of the vibrant local media cultures that are generated in the process (Iwabuchi 2010a).

What we have to comprehend, though, is that hybridization is a well-known strategy for both Western game developers and non-Western game publishers. Several transnational game corporations located in Western countries, such

as EA and Blizzard Entertainment, have always utilized hybridity in order to penetrate local game markets, while local game developers have appropriated hybridity in order to develop their own games to be enjoyed by Western gamers as well as local gamers. The Korean online game industries have penetrated the Western game markets based on their hybrid games, in particular MMORPGs, in two different ways: cultural hybridization in text and glocalization strategies.

Major Korean game developers and publishers have textually hybridized their online games and exported them to both neighboring countries and Western countries. However, the first stage of the development of Korean online games was not focusing on hybridization, because they emphasized local characters and mentalities. For example, *Kingdom of the Winds,* which was the first major Korean online game offering in 1996, was loosely based on Korean mythology and on a series of graphic novels by a Korean artist, Kim Jin. The game uses many of the same characters and locations from the comic, such as King Yuri, Prince Muhyul, and Sagu of Goguryeo, a historical Kingdom of Korea (37–668 B.C.), though the names have been translated differently (Seok 2010; Nexon 2013). The success of this game breathed new life into the Korean game development market, which had been constantly stagnant. Although *Kingdom of the Winds* played a major role for Korea's online game developers in envisioning the Western markets, it did not target the Western markets during its initial stage. Like other cultural forms, such as films, television programs, and music, most online game corporations primarily focused on the domestic market. However, only one year after its launch in Korea, *Kingdom of the Winds* entered beta testing in the United States in 1997, going commercial in 1998. Since 2005 the U.S. subsidiary of Nexon, named Kru Interactive, has taken over running *Kingdom of the Winds* (*Nexus: The Kingdom of the Winds* in the United States) and still does today (Kru Interactive 2013). In that sense, *Nexus: The Kingdom of the Winds* is the American localization of the Korean game.

While *Kingdom of the Winds*—which was not much hybridized—acted as a role model for subsequent online games, *Lineage* has become one of the most significant MMORPGs utilizing hybridization strategies. Unlike *Kingdom of the Winds, Lineage* from the beginning drew from medieval Europe for its content, and it integrated this with Korean nature. *Lineage* takes place in a backdrop of medieval fantasy, set in the Kingdom of Aden in medieval Europe; therefore, the basic story line is naturally Western. NCsoft combines Western game story lines with Korean cultural settings that emphasize solidarity, affiliation, and family matters, based on Confucian values (J. I. Kim 2005; Jin 2010b). A few local game corporations, including NCsoft, have utilized Western games together with local

culture in the process of modifying and developing hybrid games. *AION* is also the fantasy world that AION, the god of Atreia, created. Unlike the early online games that were developed in the late 1990s, Korean online game corporations have developed several unknown fantasy worlds in order to appeal to global game users as well as domestic Korean game players. While clothes, armors, and story lines are based on Western themes, these games have appropriated local Korean mentalities; therefore, many of these games arguably advance the game space by mingling two dissimilar cultures between the Western and the non-Western components.

However, it is vital to understand that the development of local online games and the scale of the contraflow is not yet a fully confirmed case of bottom-up hybridization. Technological innovations, particularly the development of new platforms and the availability of tools, middleware, and source code, have enabled independent game companies in peripheral locations to develop projects and attempt to compete for attention and money with established players (Kerr and Cawley 2011). This means that Korean game developers are not powerful enough yet to become the subject in the dynamic processes of hybridization. In many cases, local consumers do not influence online game production, but Western game users and capitals do have influence. Local game corporations have been influenced by Western game firms and users, and this hybridization process hurts local identities, although it provides both commercial successes and contraflows (Demont-Heinrich 2008, 382; Jin 2010b). As discussed in previous chapters, hybridity must consider what the power relations in the process of hybridization are and who has the power to decide which cultural elements to keep. It also needs to discuss whether cultural hybridization entails resistance and subversion to colonial or global power. One of the major matters during the hybridization process is whether local forces, in this case Korean game developers and publishers, have initiated the process, meaning whether domestic online games have been "sites of resistance against imperialist powers." These two fundamental questions are crucial because hybridity is not neutral: the historical context in which hybridization takes place, the power structure between countries, the imbalance of cultural flows, and the hegemony of Western capitalism are all important factors (Lin 2011).

In this regard, it is premature to conclude that Korean online games have resolved the asymmetrical flow of digital games favoring the United States. In particular, the transnationalization of the Korean online game industry has been increasing, since Western-based transnational game firms have invested in the Korean market to make profits. As noted, the localization strategy is not

only for non-Western companies but also for Western companies. In order to increase their influence, several transnational corporations have strategically utilized localization in non-Western countries, including China and Korea.

By the end of August 2008, in fact, fourteen major game publishers and developers from North America, Europe, and Asia, such as EA, THQ, Microsoft, SEGA, and Vivendi Universal, had their own branches in Korea (Korea Game Development and Promotion Institute 2008). Intel Capital, the global investment arm of world's largest chip maker, Intel Corporation, also announced investments worth $40 million in ten technology startups and companies, including LIFO Interactive in Korea in 2012 (Abrar 2012). Several Chinese game developers, such as Tencent, The9, Kunlun, and Shanda Games, have also invested in the Korean domestic market since 2011 (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012c). In 2011 Riot Games, which is known for developing the online game *League of Legends* in the United States, established a Korean branch and invested in the Korean game market. In September of the same year, CEO Michael Morhaime of Blizzard Entertainment visited Korea to find investment opportunities, while promoting his company's new game *Diablo 3* (Jessica Choi 2011).

Consequently, the Korean domestic market has been strongly influenced by foreign online games in very recent years. Although Korean game developers have not created new MMORPGs comparable to *Lineage* and *AION,* foreign companies have rapidly expanded their market share in the Korean market. For example, *League of Legends* has become the most popular game in PC cafés in Korea. According to Gametrics (2013), which analyzes the games in PC cafés, the market share of *League of Legends* in PC cafés in January 2012 was 5.3 percent; however, it soared to 31.7 percent at the end of March 2013, while NCsoft's new MMORPG *Blade & Soul* accounted for 5.6 percent at the same time. As of July 2014, foreign games including Riot Game's *League of Legends* and Blizzard's *Diablo 3* account for around 50 percent market share in the Korean online game market. In the domestic online game market, local companies are fiercely vying for the remaining half of the market share, which is a source of major concern to the local game industry ("Foreign Companies Eye" 2014).

As with several other cultural forms, the power relation between the global and the local forces has been a major concern in the local online game industry amid the hybridization process. In the realm of culture, Western forces have overpowered the hybridization process, resulting in the strong influence of foreign-based forces, regardless of the increasing role of the local cultural industries. Because hybridization has combined with transnationalization, which has brought about Western culture, technologies, and capital, game transnational

corporations headquartered in the Western region have been formidable forces that the Korean game market cannot deal with. Korean online game developers have certainly increased their global market share based on hybridization strategies; therefore, it is arguably true to say that Western game developers and publishers do not entirely control the Korean market. However, these foreign game corporations have also increased their influence in the domestic market through their capital and advanced marketing skills as well as well-developed story lines.

Conclusion

The Korean online game industry has rapidly grown and expanded the export of its online games in the global markets since the early 2000s. Korean online games have proven the possibility of contraflows in popular culture, although the degree of penetration in Western markets is not extraordinary. As Consalvo points out, "Controlling flow is about power, and the direction of the flow in game release dates speaks to where power lies in the digital games industry. The flow of games then, if taken as a measure of cultural dominance, has shifted in the last 50 years, with Japan leading production, the United States and Europe following, and other regions such as Southeast Asia trailing along at the end" (2006, 132). Certainly, there are games released in Europe or the United States that never make it to Japan, but the flow does have a well-marked path for consoles and many major games, and its major direction is east–west. However, as Consalvo herself admits, this may change in the future, "as game publishers such as EA become even larger and control more of the market. While the Japanese game market remains somewhat insular, the creation of more license-friendly, mass-market titles in North America and Europe may lead to a more segmented industry than we have witnessed in the past" (2006, 135). The rise of Korean game cultures and transnational connections thus demonstrates that it is no longer practical to interpret media and cultural globalization in terms of bipartite domination, with one-way transfers of media culture from the center (West) to the periphery (rest). However, "this does not mean that uneven power relations are no longer relevant" (Iwabuchi 2010a, 407).

The continuing role of the Korean online game industry will rely on whether domestic game firms can produce local games, which are hybrids driven by local creators, to reflect local culture and mentalities and whether domestic game firms firmly penetrate Western markets. Due to the increasing competition between Chinese online game corporations and Korean online game corporations, the Chinese market will not be stable and the Asian market will be not

only for Korean online games. In order to secure its market, it is imperative for Korean game firms to further expand their foothold in Western markets. These Western markets are potentially the biggest markets for local online gaming due to their advanced economies and population size. This implies that local game companies have to find new strategies to penetrate the U.S. and European markets to attract American and European users.

An unequal power balance between two forces remains in terms of capital and marketing as well as media texts. The hybridization of media texts is crucial because it is the focal point that game players eventually identify as their preference. Although commercial imperatives are necessary to be taken care of, local online game corporations have to create games appealing to global users through the hybridization process, driven by local forces with local materials. This form of new games will be increasing the potential penetration of local games in the global markets.

8

Global Penetration of Korea's Smartphones in the Social Media Era

Since the early 2000s, Korea has become one of the emerging forces for digital technologies, including online games and smartphones. Although the country lagged behind in the penetration of smartphones and the popularity of smartphone applications, Korea has rapidly advanced in developing cutting-edge smartphones and become a curious test bed for the future of smartphone technology and culture from which other countries are keenly learning. Digitization, which refers to the combination of digital technologies, their techniques and practices, their uses, and the affordances they provide, has been a key feature of the latter stages of Korea's compressed modernity (Chang 1999). In other words, in the Korean context, digitization is "a phase encapsulating the way in which the country has leapfrogged conventional development states to move from a traditional agrarian society to a paradigmatic information society in just a few decades" (Goldsmith, Lee, and Yecies 2011, 70).

The experience of Korea in developing smartphones illustrates how the once peripheral country now has the foresight to recognize and join the smartphone revolution in a big way, realizing advanced smartphone technologies for both Koreans and foreigners at the same time. Many countries, both Western and non-Western, have developed their own smartphones, including Apple in the United States, Nokia in Finland, Xiaomi in China, and HTC in Taiwan; however, Korean-made smartphones, including Samsung's Galaxy V and VI as of March 2015 and LG's Optimus and G4, have competed with these smartphones and

increased their global market share. Korean smartphones have also changed people's smartphone activities worldwide, which is a symbol of the digital Korean Wave alongside video games. This momentum generated by "the digital Korean Wave has been harnessed to support and enhance a parallel phenomenon—*Hallyu*—aiding the dissemination of indigenous popular culture at home and across the globe" (Goldsmith, Lee, and Yecies 2011, 70). The Korean Wave is not only about cultural flows but also about the popularity of Korean fashion, food, tourism, digital technologies, even cosmetic surgery (ibid.; Davies and Han 2011), and smartphones have advanced their links to *Hallyu* 2.0.

This chapter analyzes several distinctive elements of the digital Korean Wave with the case of smartphones, compared to the mobile era until 2008. In this chapter, the digital Korean Wave refers to the rapid growth of digital technologies, in particular smartphones, and the export of domestic-made smartphones to the global markets as part of the growth of the New Korean Wave. However, the digital wave also means the convergence of technology and culture in order to boost the rapid penetration of cultural genres, such as animation and K-pop in the global markets. It is connected to the significance of several services, in particular intellectual property rights, which are crucial for capital accumulation. This chapter starts with an examination of the Korean information technology (IT) policy, which drives the growth of smartphones, in tandem with corporate policies. Through the lens of technological hybridization, it finally discusses whether the global penetration of Korean smartphones resolves the uneven power logic between Western, in this case the United States, and non-Western, meaning Korea, in the social media era.

How to Understand Hybridity in Technology

In media and cultural studies, as several previous chapters discussed, hybridity is situated within the debates about cultural identity and media specificity. However, in technology studies, hybridity has been identified in two different ways. On the one hand, it has developed and been applied in terms of the globalized flow of information, migration, growing cultural exchanges, and new forms of media(tization) through digital technologies.[1] This means that the global flow of cultural products has been expedited with the rapid growth of social media, such as YouTube and Facebook; therefore, the nexus of culture and technology has become one of the most significant components in understanding hybridity in the digital technology era. In the previous chapters, we discussed this form of technological hybridization between technology and content as one of the most important in the New Korean Wave era as shown in the case of K-

pop. In fact, an indispensable factor is the national preoccupation with digital technologies, which have become part and parcel of the unruly expansion of *Hallyu.* For younger generations, digital technologies and media are akin to what Erving Goffman (1961, cited in J. B. Choi 2015) calls a "total institution": they embody virtually anything and everything, ranging from identity, fashion statements, and socialization to learning tools, friendship, and a wide window to the world of popular cultures. By merging digital media, *Hallyu* is fast becoming an all-encompassing technological regime that affords the user synesthetic experiences along a myriad of functions the media can perform: work/play, read/watch, make/spend, create/copy, study/space out, talk/listen, buy/sell, socialize/hunker down, and so on. The boundary of *Hallyu* could have been far narrower and simpler than what it is now; by the versatility of social media and digital technologies, Korea manages to retain its competitive edge (ibid.).

On the other hand, "Technological hybridity means that digital technologies provide new applications for the endless transformation and fusion of data and identities that emerge in conjunction with increasingly interactive and net-based media" (Mey and Spielmann 2005, 6). This part of the interpretation implies that digital technologies are themselves hybrid because two different technological identities are mixed into one particular technology or gadget so that this new form of technology creates in-between identities. While media convergence in the realm of technology primarily implicates the mix of the old technology (for example, television) and the new technology (the Internet) (H. Jenkins 2006), technological hybridization in this book is about the mix of digital technologies and applications for achieving endless transformation to maximize the benefits to both users (in a new way of convenience) and developers (in a new way of capital accumulation) in the digital and social media era.

The major focus of analysis in this chapter is the latter form of technological hybridization between the gadget and applications with the case of smartphones, because technological hybridization involves applying the knowledge and skills learned from one form of production and technological development to other areas. As Drengson (1995) points out, such hybridization applies, for example, in the techniques of biotechnology applied to a nonbiological process, and technological hybridization might marry two technologies to produce a new form of technology practice, such as applying the steam engine pump to a wheeled vehicle on rails to produce a locomotive:

> The ongoing process of technological development involves a great deal of cross-fertilization, synergistic interaction, and experimentation with how technologies can be applied to areas outside those for which they were originally designed.

> This process attempts to combine the usefulness and power of different technologies to yield new combinations. It is not just pouring old wine into new bottles . . . hybrid technologies have been very successful in spurring development of new technology practices. By applying lessons learned from two or more fields, designers have stimulated technological innovation, change, and development in others. (ibid., 112)

The birth of the Web, accompanied by the development of modern communication technologies and the resulting process of technological hybridization (Marinelli 2002, cited in Capogna 2010), has brought about a radical change in social processes and relational systems. Since technological hybridization refers to the process in which technology adopts one or more features of the other technology, the mix of smartphone gadgets and operating systems is an exemplary case. Of course, technological hybridization is meant not only to increase efficiency through the mix, but also to develop a new type of technology to solve existing problems. Drengson particularly emphasizes that "technological hybridization is one of the most significant forms of technological innovation, because we can merge two or more technologies to form a new technology or a new technological solution to an existing problem" (2010, 33).

However, although hybridity involves the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles, or identities, cross-cultural contact, which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries (Kraidy 2005), must be understood as a requisite for hybridity. In addition, technological hybridization cannot be considered as a simple technological solution to an existing problem, because the major reason for hybridization is to create a new form of technology that cannot be achieved with individual technologies. In other words, technological hybridization creates synergistic effects through the mixing of two or more technologies.

Hybridization is a term in itself that "encompass the merging, clashing, and transformation of differently developed cultural practices and their related knowledge productions" (Mey and Spielmann 2005, 8). The field of digital hybridization is defined by the technology of simulation and, essentially, differs from the technologies of transformation and dialogical exchange that are attributed to intermedial and also intertextual interrelationships of analogue media. Digital media introduce new dimensions of directional multiplicity and, with real-time algorithms, a new form of simultaneity. Both make it difficult to continue to think in evolutionary categories. The logic of hybridization therefore should be regarded as "instruction to rethink the historically developed relationship of old and new media and to favor the modus operandi of

as-well-as instead of either-or" (ibid.). As Manovich points out, "The result of the hybridization process is not simply a mechanical sum of the previously existing parts but a new species—a new kind of visual aesthetics that did not exist previously." Hybrid media as a "previously separate media—such as live action cinematography, graphics, still photography, animation, 3D computer animation and typography—combined in numerous ways" (2007). "Hybrid encounters of cultural forms create zones that are regarded as dynamic 'in-between spaces,' where cultures meet or collide, interact and exchange" (Mey and Spielmann 2005, 6). Like the cultural sector symbolizing hybridization in the form of the mix of two different cultures, technological hybridization sometimes also mixes but uses technologies developed in two different countries. Thus, the discussion of technological hybridization in conjunction with the smartphone will shed light on the extension of our debates on not only cultural hybridization but also the realm of digital technologies.

Smartphone Revolution as the Digital Korean Wave

Korea has rapidly developed information and communication technologies as some of the most significant areas of the national economy. From broadband to online gaming, Korea has advanced its own ICTs since the mid-1990s, and some of these technologies have become new growth engines for the country. Among these, smartphones have become among the most innovative and cutting-edge technologies in the early twenty-first century, adding to Korea's already impressive arsenal of digitally mediated modes of communication. Since Korea made dramatic advances in the telecommunication sector, both wired and wireless, in the late 1990s, it is vital to historicize the early development of the telecommunications industries.

As the Korean Wave benefited from Kim Young Sam's globalization initiative, the digital wave can be traced back to the Kim era. In 1995 the Kim government launched an information highway project designed to transform Korea's industrial system, which depended on heavy and chemical industries, toward a more IT-driven industrial system. They green-lighted a $45 billion project that would provide a variety of advanced telecommunications and multimedia services, including wireless PC communications, video on demand, and home shopping by 2015 (Chae 1997).

To accomplish this, the government set up the Korea Information Infrastructure (KII) in March 1995 whose goal was to construct an advanced nationwide information infrastructure consisting of communications networks, Internet services, application software, computers, and information products and services.

All information and communications services in voice, data, and video were to be provided reliably, securely, and cost-effectively in a timely manner (Jeong and King 1997). The KII project was aimed at building high-speed and high-capacity networks through market competition and private-sector investment, as well as government policies (Jin 2010b). The KII was also a result of direct and indirect global pressures; it was a strategy to enable a nation-state to survive in the digital mode of global capitalism. In other words, at the beginning of the 1990s, "the Korean government was forced to decide whether to remain a member of the second-tier countries under the digital mode of capitalism, or to find a way to make a leap forward" (K. S. Lee 2011, 54). The government chose transforming the nation from a labor-intensive economy to a knowledge-based economy as the foremost goal of state affairs, as Kim Young Sam addressed in his new year's speech in 1995 (D. H. Lee 2012).

Under these circumstances, the nation rose as the world's ninth-largest state in local call service and facilities, with the number of local call subscribers surpassing the 20 million mark as of June 1997. At the end of 1996, the number of cellular phone subscribers was 3.18 million (National Computerization Agency 1997). Thanks to the launch of new wireless telecom services, the wireless telecom equipment market surged as the biggest sector in the overall telecom equipment market. The most remarkable growth was achieved by the equipment related to the CDMA (code division multiple access) and handset market whose combined sales reached 5 trillion won. But the flip side is more than US$100 million of royalty payments that have been paid to a foreign license holder for the basic CDMA technology, leaving the task of enhancing the local content of core components like MSM (mobile station modem) that are imported. The successful launch of a digital CDMA mobile phone service in 1996 spurred cellular growth (National Computerization Agency 1998).[2] Since the mid-1990s, the country has increased its export of mobile phones and related equipment, and the timing is coincident with the early stages of the Korean Wave.

While the history of mobile phones goes back to the early 1990s, the visibility of smartphones started only when the iPhone was introduced in Korea in November 2009, nearly three years after its U.S. debut. Until then, domestic mobile makers focused on mobile phones as feature phones, not smartphones; therefore, they were not ready to compete with iPhones. The phenomenal success of iPhones both globally and domestically consequently awakened the Korean handset makers, including Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics, to the realization of what they had missed in the past and what they should do for the future (Korea Telecom 2010). The impact of the iPhone on Korean society was

called the iPhone shock because "it influenced not only the industrial practices of both Korean telecommunication companies and local handset makers, but also mobile phone use" (D. H. Lee 2012, 63).

Korea was the eighty-fifth country in the world to introduce the iPhone; however, once released, the sale of iPhones were dramatic.[3] The iPhone effect created a chain reaction. Though its debut was belated, the pace of the iPhone's penetration into Korea's tech-savvy market was about twice as fast as that of other overseas markets that adopted the phone earlier. KT (Korea Telecom) sold 1.62 million iPhones in the first year as Apple steamrolled into the market, shaking up the domestic wireless market and spawning local fans who lined up before dawn for new product launches ("Mobile Big Bang" 2010).

Before the iPhone's introduction, Samsung and LG together claimed more than 80 percent of the domestic mobile market with their home-field advantage. Their combined domestic market share dropped to 61 percent at the end of November 2010. Samsung Electronics, seeing Apple's forecast-beating popularity on its own home turf, tightened its ties with Apple's rising rival, Google, Inc., making a push into the smartphone segment with its Android-based Galaxy S smartphone. LG Electronics, the world's number-three mobile phone maker after Nokia and Samsung, replaced its chief executive and head of its mobile business team as it reeled from a record loss from phone business (ibid.).

There were several sociocultural factors contributing to the rapid growth of smartphones, in addition to competition among smartphone makers, such as community-based sociality, urban setting, and fast adaptability of new media. Whereas mobile phones allow users to have fluid interaction with remote people regardless of time, space, and context (Kakihara et al. 2002, cited in D. H. Lee 2012), smartphones allow them to move across diverse communication channels seamlessly.

The shift from feature phones to smartphones in the New Korean Wave era is indeed distinctive. Korea had 57.2 million mobile subscriptions at the end of December 2014, more than one subscription per person in the country (Ministry of Science, ICT, and Future Planning 2015). The number of smartphone users spiked to exceed 40.6 million by the end of December 2014, consisting of 70.9 percent of total mobile phone users, up from around 470,000 (1.0 percent of total mobile phone users) in November 2009. The growth rate is one of the fastest—if not the fastest—take-up rates of smartphones in the world, as the *Wall Street Journal* reported a few years ago ("Smartphone Users in Korea" 2011).

Furthermore, Korea's mobile operators have advanced faster data service by setting up much faster network technology (LTE) than the existing CDMA network. SK Telecom, the country's largest mobile carrier by subscriber base,

and LG UPlus launched LTE networks in July 2011, followed by a network from KT, the second-largest mobile provider ("Smartphone Users in Korea" 2011). During the month of December 2013, about 52 percent of mobile subscribers used LTE, passing CDMA users (14.1 percent) (Ministry of Science, ICT, and Future Planning 2014b). The export of smartphones and related equipment has soared since 2009 during the New Korean Wave era when Korea began to massively produce its own smartphones.

Smartphone *Hallyu* in the Global Markets

The rapid growth of mobile phones, particularly smartphones, has changed the map of exports in the telecommunication sector. In the early years of the 2000s, Korea advanced mobile technologies and played a role in the global markets. Korea exported US$2.25 billion worth of mobile equipment, including mobile phones and parts in 1996; however, its export increased as much as 112 percent in 1997. The growth of the export of mobile equipment peaked in 2008 with US$33.4 billion worth of exports, which is almost seven times higher than 1997. The export of Korean mobile equipment has started to go down since 2009 with the global boom of smartphones. Although there are several reasons for this new trend, the most significant factor is the decrease in the export of feature phones that were the major export item until 2008, in addition to the production of mobile phones abroad. As the global mobile market has rapidly been reshaped with the introduction of smartphones, for example, the export of feature phones in 2012 dropped 71.1 percent from its previous year (Ministry of Knowledge Economy 2013).

On the flip side of the same token, Korea has rapidly increased its export of smartphones since 2009, from $980,000 during that year to $20.2 billion in 2012. The swift growth of Korea-based smartphone makers has changed the map of the global smartphone industry. In 2009 Nokia was still number one in the worldwide mobile device market, with 67.7 million shipments, consisting of 38.9 percent of the market share, followed by RIM (19.8 percent) and Apple (14.5 percent). HTC ranked fourth (4.6 percent), and Samsung held the fifth position (3.3 percent) (IDC 2010). Until 2009 smartphones accounted for 15.4 percent of all mobile phones shipped in 2009, up slightly from 12.7 percent in 2008.[4] Nokia as the world's biggest maker of mobile phones was an undisputed powerhouse until a few years ago; however, Nokia has faded in many countries due to Apple's iPhones and later Samsung's Galaxy.

In fact, the situation has rapidly changed with the development of smartphones. Although many mobile makers, including Apple, have begun to produce

smartphones, Korea's two electronics manufacturers, Samsung and LG, have suddenly increased their global penetration with several popular smartphones. Back when Samsung still focused on feature phones in 2008 and 2009, the market share of Samsung in the global mobile markets was 3.6 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively. In 2010, however, Samsung became the second-largest mobile maker with a 20.1 percent market share and then became the number-one maker and exporter with 23.4 percent in 2012, surpassing Nokia (IDC 2012, 2013). Samsung claimed the top spot in the Chinese smartphone market for the first time in 2012 by nearly tripling its sales in the world's largest market. Samsung Electronics sold 30.06 million smartphones in China during that year, up from 10.9 million units a year earlier, garnering a 17.7 percent market share, followed by Chinese tech firm Lenovo (acquired Motorola) (13.2 percent) and Apple (11 percent) ("Samsung Tops China's Smartphone Market" 2013).

The Korean Ministry of Knowledge Economy (2013) identified that Korea's global market penetration rate was recorded at 39.5 percent as of September 2012 due to the rapid growth of several successful smartphones. It is also significant to understand that the United States has become the largest market for Korean smartphone makers. Korea exported $8.43 billion worth of smartphones to the United States in 2010, followed by $6 billion to China (National IT Industry Promotion Agency 2011, 574). Although the export of smartphones to the United States decreased in 2012, it was still one of the largest, and Europe and Japan followed. As part of its promotion strategy, Samsung has installed its own "experience centers" in eighteen hundred Best Buy stores, similar to what Apple has done (S. S. Kim 2013). This implies that the Western markets are much more significant for Korean smartphone makers than corporations in other Korean cultural industries, because North America and Europe together accounted for 38.6 percent, and this trend may continue in the near future. When feature phones outsold smartphones, Korea was behind other countries on a relative basis; however, with the rapid growth of smartphones, Korea has become the leader in the global mobile market.

The global popularity of Korea's smartphones has created two unique phenomena in the world: digital *Hallyu* and its linkage to the Korean Wave. On the one hand, the latest smartphone boom has developed a new digital *Hallyu*, pertaining to not only the sales of smartphones themselves, but also the popularity of Korean applications. Smartphone programs, such as mobile games and social games, are available online through sites like the Apple Store. One of the most well-known examples of a Korean-made app is KaKaoTalk because it is one of the top apps in the Middle East and Hong Kong app markets ("Smartphones, Apps" 2011).

The phenomenal development of apps underlines that people are increasingly going online using smartphones and other wireless devices (Associated Press 2013), which shows a new pattern of media convergence with smartphones. As smartphones have become a major part of people's daily lives, Korea has witnessed the rapid growth of KaKaoTalk and Line—two instant mobile messaging applications—and exported these apps to several Asian countries and other parts of the world over the past few years.

KaKaoTalk, launched by a Korean-based venture-capital firm, which is now KaKao, allows its customers to send and receive messages, videos, and photos for free.[5] Due to convenience and easiness in its message services and other functions, the number of subscribers has rapidly soared since its release in March 2010. The number of KaKaoTalk users was 100,000 in April 2011; by July 2015, this figure jumped to 100 million users (Millward 2013), who were sending 520 million messages through KaKaoTalk each day (Bachfischer 2013). This trend has occurred because virtually every smartphone user is on KaKaoTalk in Korea, and even its overseas user base is growing.

As a locally made application, KaKaoTalk has become popular in several countries, including Asian countries. KaKaoTalk has been expanding in Southeast Asia with recent TV ad campaigns in Indonesia and a partnership with Friendster to promote the messaging app in Malaysia (Millward 2013). KaKaoTalk said in a blog post on April 2, 2013, that it had hit 10 million downloads in Japan. The count was 7.5 million back in December 2012 when it began pushing TV commercials, featuring model and entertainer Anna Tsuchiya, in Japan. In March 2013, KaKaoTalk also launched its gaming platform in Japan. Perhaps KaKaoTalk's fast growth should not be too much of a surprise given that it has the backing of Yahoo in Japan. KaKaoTalk has also observed fast growth in countries like Vietnam and Indonesia. KaKaoTalk CEOs Lee Jae-boem and Lee Seok-woo will team up with the Indonesian mobile telecommunications firm AXIS to launch a joint promotion of KaKaoTalk. The Indonesian firm seeks to expand its mobile Internet customer base by utilizing KaKaoTalk services such as free messaging and Internet calls as well as emoticons (S. H. Han 2012).

NAVER's Line has also become one of the largest smartphone messenger apps. Developed in June 2011 by NAVER, Korea's largest portal corporation, Line had as many as 370 million users in the world as of March 2014. Line is the dominant mobile messaging app in Japan. NHN Japan, which is NAVER's subsidiary company, provides its service in Japan, so the popularity of Line in Japan is the result of localization of a Korean brand. Other than Japan, several Asian countries, including Thailand and Indonesia, heavily use Line, followed by several North American and European countries, including Spain, Mexico,

and the United States (with 10 million users) (NAVER 2014). Digital *Hallyu* had spread globally by the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Korean smartphone makers, such as Samsung and LG, have also developed their own hybrid strategies through a localization process. As discussed in chapter 7, online game corporations have utilized (g)localization as one of the major parts of hybridization, and the smartphone makers are doing the same. Samsung has established its own branches in Vietnam, China, and the United States in order to produce smartphones in these countries. Samsung established its American factory in Austin, Texas, in 1996 for semiconductors; however, Samsung planned to spend $4 billion starting in 2012 to upgrade it to make processors for smartphones and tablets (*BBC News* 2012). Interestingly enough, the two key customers of the Austin factory are certain to be Apple, which depends on Samsung to make essential smartphone chips, and Samsung's own smartphone business (Ladendorf 2012). Samsung has already established its branch in Vietnam and has utilized local forces in order to produce the Galaxy series (K. H. Chang 2013).

On the other hand, smartphone *Hallyu* is closely connected to the New Korean Wave because many global users enjoy K-pop and Korean movies as well as smartphone games. This implies that Korean smartphone makers are riding on the Korean Wave that has swept across Asia and other parts of the world in the past few years. In countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, China, and Thailand, Korean pop music, movies, and television dramas have become very popular, and Samsung and LG are benefiting from the popularity of the country's pop culture exports (Wong 2013). Therefore, the increasing role of these smartphones will not be curbed anytime soon.

The New Korean Wave has been distinctive due in large part to the growth of the digital wave, such as online and mobile gaming and smartphones. Given that smartphones for many youth are one of the most important gadgets to enjoy Korean popular cultures, including films, television, dramas, and K-pop, the New Korean Wave since 2008 has been the result of the integration of popular culture and digital technologies. In fact, in my interview with a male college student (age twenty), he stated: "The most significant factors for the growth of the New Korean Wave in Western countries are social/digital media, and in particular, smartphones are very significant because youth like to enjoy all kinds of cultural forms on these platforms. I think that it is very significant to develop online access for upcoming generations to discover local Korean performances. At the same time, it is also crucial to provide advanced technologies, including cutting-edge smartphones by local manufacturers because people want to use apps on these smartphones to play mobile games and enjoy other apps."

Cultural phenomena eventually fade away, just as Japanese pop culture once had its time in the sun, lifting up firms such as Sony and Panasonic along the way, but they then gave way to the Korean Wave (Wong 2013). Korean popular culture might follow a similar path. What creates the difference between Japan and Korea is that Korea has developed both popular culture and applications, resulting in the convergence of these two areas. This implies that unlike Japanese popular culture in the Asian region, Korean popular culture can expand its market with the help of locally made smartphones and digital technologies. In other words, while Japanese popular culture did not have the benefit of digital and social media in its heyday, Korean popular culture has benefited from digital technologies, in particular locally developed digital media.

Hybridity in the Smartphone World: Dominant Foreign Operating Systems

As the smartphone becomes more pervasive and as more and more aspects of life become digitalized, it is indeed becoming much easier for people everywhere to access and share varied and plentiful information, which makes the smartphone and its apps some of the most significant digital technologies facilitating the globalization process. Due to its function to make interconnectivity globally, the smartphone can be viewed as the essential catalyst of contemporary globalization. Unlike popular culture in a few Western countries in particular, the United States still continues its hegemonic dominance in the global cultural market; the realm of the smartphone, however, is no longer only an American phenomenon.

As usual, for the first several years of the smartphone era, interest in the smartphone revolution had been largely American-centric (Holroyd and Coates 2012). It is not surprising that Apple's iPhone opened the smartphone era in 2007, and indeed it has been an American firm that dominates public awareness of the smartphone in the early twenty-first century. However, Korean smartphone makers, including Samsung and LG, have jumped on the bandwagon, and they have rapidly become global leaders in the smartphone sector. Korean hardware is now being used globally, and Korea has played a key role in the development of digital technologies. As *Hallyu* means the sudden growth and dissemination of Korean popular culture in Asia, and later beyond the region, the smartphone has achieved a similar digital *Hallyu.* Korea reigns supreme even in the digital era.

The essential question for digital *Hallyu* in conjunction with smartphones remains whether technological hybrid smartphones and their contraflow from

non-Western to Western countries have changed the asymmetrical power relations between these two regions. In this regard, some people might think that there is no longer an uneven flow in the realm of smartphones and overall digital technologies. It is seemingly the case, and due to the rapid penetration of Korean smartphones, others might say once-peripheral Korea has achieved its status as an empire in digital media in both online gaming and smartphones.

However, we need to sustain a cautionary approach in interpreting the phenomenal growth and penetration of domestic smartphones, primarily because of the underdeveloped software, particularly operating systems. As discussed, technological hybridization mixes and uses technologies developed in two different countries, in particular between hardware and software, due to the different levels in advancing digital technologies. As manufacturers, Apple and Samsung are the undisputed leaders of the smartphone industry in the realm of hardware. Yet while iPhones operate exclusively on their own operating system (iOS), Samsung's Galaxy offers smartphones running different operating systems, with most users opting for Android. Operating systems are vital components in the hybridization of the smartphone; however, two American-based operating systems, including Apple's iOS and Google's Android, are dominant in global smartphone markets. Local smartphone makers have no choice but to hybridize with these operating systems due to the lack of skills in the software sector. In 2010 Android made up only 6 percent of the Korean market; however, this has since soared to as much as 89.7 percent ("iOS' Market Share" 2012), while Apple's iOS plunged from 43.3 percent as the dominant operating system in 2010 to only 9.3 percent in October 2012. Globally, growth was bolstered by strong Android product performance from a number of vendors, including Samsung and LG in Korea, HTC in Taiwan, and ZTE and Huawei in China ("Android Takes Almost 50% Share" 2011). Android and iOS constituted almost 95 percent of the market share in the third quarter of 2013 ("Android Captures Record" 2013). Although Samsung has become a global leader with its gadget, as far as software is concerned, the United States is still the major player. These U.S.-based Android and iOS seem to be everywhere, and they have formed hegemonic power in the smartphone industry. It is safe to call the result an American duopoly (Fingas 2013).

Korea is far behind in the development of software, and this causes the Korean IT industries to be dependent on American IT corporations. Samsung announced the company's intentions to release hardware operating on Tizen OS, Samsung's own open-sourced operating system, in 2013, as Samsung wishes to lessen its reliance and dependency on the operating systems of other tech giants. Samsung has started to sell its own smartphone with Tizen in a few

countries, including India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, since January 2015, and Samsung plans to extend its use of Tizen in expensive smartphones in the near future. If it is successful, Tizen could help the firm achieve this goal (Osborne 2013). Potentially, this would be a logical next step for Samsung, as it could be Samsung's chance to free itself from dependency on Google, while becoming a real global market leader in both hardware and software, although it might not be easy and will take time due to the difficulties in changing a software ecosystem dominating by iOS and Android in the smartphone industry.

In addition, the hybridity of Korean smartphones between a U.S.-based operating system and Korean hardware has brought about significant consequences in several areas, including intellectual property rights. As discussed in chapter 3, Korean broadcasters pay fees and royalties to buy television formats in order to produce domestic television programs based on global formats. As such, Samsung and LG and other manufacturers in Taiwan and China are paying a small fee, between ten and fifteen dollars for each Android smartphone they sell, to Microsoft, who owns some of the Android patents (Halliday 2011). Google and Apple have also fully capitalized the Korean market because they are able to sell several important apps in their Google Play and App Store. Either popular culture or digital technologies, hybridization is costly mostly for the local forces that have no intellectual property rights, such as copyright and patent. As Korea has increased its global visibility with several successful smartphones, the tug-of-war between Samsung, representing local forces, and Apple, representing Western forces, has intensified because they are dominating the global markets. Technological innovation drives industrial growth, and the importance of intellectual property rights has increased. Admittedly, a few Western countries have maintained their power due to accumulated intellectual properties (Jin 2015).

Digital technologies and cultures have become among the most significant venues for the Korean cultural industries in the twenty-first century. The issue is that the United States has swiftly expanded its influence in digitally driven technologies and culture due to platforms, as in the case of popular culture, such as films and music. Only two platforms, both U.S.-based operating systems, have dominated the global market, which has not been seen before.

Because technological hybridization refers to the process in which technology adopts one or more features of the other technology, the mix of smartphone hardware and operating systems is certainly one of the most significant cases of hybridization in technology. It is not deniable that domestic smartphone makers attempt to develop technological hybridization, not only because of enhancing efficiency, but also because of advancing a new type of technology to resolve any

existing problems, in this case the lack of original skills in developing operating systems. Likewise, it cannot be denied that American operating systems are dominating the global smartphone markets, which proves the asymmetrical balance of power that local forces currently cannot overcome.

The technological capabilities of smartphones have provided a new vehicle to accumulate capital through advertising and royalties from intellectual property rights. "Smartphones have become a battleground for major telecommunication corporations that want to increase their influence and dominance" (Castells 2007, 252). Unlike political or military dominance of earlier years, technological dominance has become significant in the early twenty-first century because of the entrepreneurship of inventors and corporations who develop social networking sites and smartphones that influence corporate culture, consumers, and information technology developers throughout the world. In technologically mediated spaces, power distribution and hegemonic negotiation are always at play, and such an assertion of dominance in the new public space of communication occurs through acts ranging from legislation labeling some Internet users pirates to disseminating symbolic ideas and philosophies to tame non-Western societies as well as their own communities (Castells 2007). Indeed, "Economic value, power, and ideology are dimensions of all social relationships and should by no means be understood as isolated levels or crystallized stages" (Gonzalez 2000, 108).

In the era of globalization, this implies that Korea cannot be free from American influences in the smartphone industry until the smartphone makers successfully develop and use their own operating systems. As American cultural products are still influential in the global markets, the United States has continued its dominance through control of the software in the digital era.

Conclusion

Over the past two decades, Korea has dramatically shifted the political-economic situation of the country in the mobile sector. Digital technologies, such as the Internet and social media, and digital culture have become among the most significant both nationally and globally in the twenty-first century. The technological landscape of the smartphone shows an interesting trend as local-produced digital technologies have become popular in the global markets. The digital Korean Wave driven by smartphones and video gaming has been harnessed to support and enhance a parallel phenomenon—the new Korean cultural wave, or *Hallyu* 2.0—in two ways. One is the increasing role of locally based digital technologies used by global users, and the other is the aid of the

dissemination of Korean popular music, film, and television drama at home and across the globe, a primary part of the New Korean Wave (Goldsmith, Lee, and Yecies 2011, 70).

Korea has indeed developed its own smartphone technologies, which are vital in the social media era, and penetrated the global markets. Although Korean popular cultural forms have taken many years to establish their footprint in Western countries, Korea's smartphone makers have taken only a few years to become global leaders in this particular sector. As in the case of popular culture, Apple's iPhone had rapidly become the major player in the Korean smartphone market, which showed the traditional flow from the West to the East, but it did not take much time for locally based smartphone makers to achieve contraflow in the realm of smartphone technologies. By appropriating technological hybridization, domestic smartphone makers, particularly Samsung and LG, have become among the major players in the sector worldwide, which could not have been imaginable several years ago.

Technological hybridization, mixing two different technologies between Western-made and non-Western-made, has been unique. It is important to understand the nature of hybridization in technology, because the United States is still controlling non-Western smartphone makers through their cutting-edge software, in this case operating systems. Local Korean corporations have developed their own smartphones and competed successfully with Apple, which might kick-start the growing role of the local in the ICT sector. We cannot deny this contraflow in the realm of ICTs. However, what might be developed further in order to enable a major role for locally driven ICTs is software. Without advancing the development of software, it is impossible to be the leader in the global markets.

The convergence of technology and culture produces a new chapter in the global markets. Previously, foreign consumers enjoyed Korean pop culture through their own technologies; however, with the rapid growth of domestic technologies, in particular, smartphones, tablets, and new forms of television screen (LCD and plasma), they enjoy local popular culture on local technologies. Unlike countries that penetrate other countries with their own local cultures, such as Brazil, Mexico, and Hong Kong, the New Korean Wave is unique because of the convergence of culture and technology. In other words, while the swift process of globalization has led to an increase in transnational cultural practices among global fans of Korean popular culture, alternative cultural resources from Korea made available through digital technologies and social media allow these global fans to enjoy local culture, both popular culture and

digital culture, which differentiates the New Korean Wave not only from *Hallyu* 1.0 but also from other non-Western countries' transnational cultural power.

The digital Korean Wave in the fields of smartphones and online gaming has proven the primary role of local Korean forces; however, this does not mean that the asymmetrical power relationship between the global and the local has been resolved, because as far as software is concerned, it is still American transnational corporations who wield dominant power. The digital revolution cannot be achieved only through the advancement of technologies and infrastructure, but must be advanced through software running on hardware. It is imperative for Korea to develop software as a major part of its locally driven digital technologies, which are critical for the growth of the digital Korean Wave. How to develop both hardware and software, therefore, will be a next step for the Korean government and corporations, which is crucial to their becoming locally headquartered but globally influential digital superpowers.

Conclusion

This book has investigated the New Korean Wave, which has been rapidly evolving since 2008, mainly through the converging lens of political economy and hybridization. Admitting that Korea's global cultural influence has continuously grown since the late 1990s, the major focus of this book has been the *Hallyu* 2.0 era, and the scope includes both popular culture and digital technologies. It has especially argued whether hybridization as a theoretical framework develops local popular culture in advancing the cultural uniqueness of Korean culture and digital technologies. After discussing the nature of hybrid culture, it has also analyzed whether the process of hybridization has resolved asymmetrical power relations between the global and the local. In this final chapter, I first summarize the book's content as a whole and discuss several major implications. Then I deliberate on a few suggestions that we need to consider for further study in cultural industries and hybridity, both academically and practically.

How to Understand the New Korean Wave

The Korean cultural industries, including digital media, have substantially grown over the past several years. Though the rapid growth of Korean popular culture is not new, due to changing cultural policies and increasing role of social and digital media, the Korean cultural industries have experienced a remarkable advancement. Although we cannot physically separate the *Hallyu* 2.0 era from

the previous era, several characteristics have been identified as major features in the New Korean Wave, which were not easily found in the first stage of the Korean Wave.

To begin with, major cultural forms exported have fundamentally changed in the New Korean Wave era. In the audiovisual industries, broadcasting has remained a significant part of the New Korean Wave, while the film sector has shown a fluctuation in relation to the government's cultural policy in recent years. In the broadcasting industries, television formats, including drama formats, are increasingly significant, as entertainment genres gain momentum due to the increasing role of younger audiences versus many years ago. Animation and K-pop have especially become new cultural forms targeting the global markets, while digital and social media sectors, such as digital gaming and smartphones, have exponentially grown to become major components of *Hallyu* 2.0 over the past several years. Regardless of the temporary setbacks within a couple of cultural forms, Korean cultural industries, such as popular music, television programs, and animation, as well as digital games and smartphones, have increased their global penetration beyond Asia. Consequently, Korea has far greater cultural visibility in the global cultural markets now than it did in the 1990s.

Second, the New Korean Wave cannot be understood without addressing the importance of the convergence of popular culture and digital and social technologies. Indeed, the convergence of the old media and the new media has become a crucial part of the *Hallyu* tradition because social and digital media have become new outlets for Korean cultural products. The audiences have heavily relied on social media, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, as well as smartphones to enjoy all kinds of Korean popular culture. As *Hallyu* fans increasingly operate through online communities and social media, it has become difficult to contain the *Hallyu* phenomenon within national boundaries (Dutta 2014), which creates a new form of transnational culture. The major fan bases in foreign countries have also changed. Previously, Korean popular culture, mainly television dramas and films, was consumed by those in their thirties and forties, primarily in several Asian countries; however, the audiences and users in the social media era have grown to include the more digitally savvy consumers in their teens and twenties. Many preschool kids around the world also enjoy Korean animation through YouTube and iTunes. The swift growth of animation therefore contributes to the shift of fans to preschool kids and their young parents in many countries.

Third, the burgeoning global presence of diverse Korean cultural products, digital technologies, and relevant culture cannot be seen from other non-West-

ern countries. To cross over, as far as the world of arts and entertainment is concerned, is to go from the margin to the center, from one set of culture to another, trying to succeed in the latter (Lam 2012). By penetrating the global cultural market with these forms of popular culture and digital technologies, Korea seemingly experiences "a crossover triumph," which is a move that makes Korea recognizable not merely as an industrial power, as evidenced by Samsung and LG in smartphones, but also as a provider of "play fantasies" that are transmitted through popular culture, grabbing the imaginations of fans around the world, as Japan's cultural power created a similar power in the 1990s (Allison 2006, 26). Unlike other countries, which made their regional cultural flows with limited cultural forms, Korea has become the only country that exports all kinds of popular culture and digital technologies globally on a large scale.

Fourth, the previous Lee Myung-bak government and the current Park Geunhye government have increased their roles as major players with their hands-on cultural policies, which are advancing the development of creative industries and the export of domestic cultural products in the midst of neoliberal globalization. These two recent governments have developed several initiatives to advance Korea's cultural industries, primarily due to their commercial imperatives. Unlike previous liberal governments, these new governments—seemingly the most neoliberal—have shifted their focuses and substantially supported the cultural industries. Although neoliberalism asks a decreasing role of the government, these conservative governments ironically have developed hands-on government policies. Of course, their priority in cultural policies is not to enhance cultural diversity or cultural sovereignty, but rather is an economic imperative.

The Korean cultural industries have been in transition, embedded in the global cultural markets, emphasizing neoliberal transformation. The contemporary phenomenon of cultural products that carry composite aesthetics and fused cultural elements is a product of neoliberalization. Post-Fordist practices and systemic forces account for the fact that "hybrid cultural texts reflect industry imperatives to target several markets at once with the same program or, alternatively, are symptoms of commercially motivated borrowing" (Kraidy 2005, 114). Hybrid cultural products are "the intertextual traces of an increasingly standardized global cultural industry where successful formats are adapted *ad infinitum*, hybridized to cater to the proclivities of one audience after another, but always remaining firmly grounded in the same commercial logic where hybrid texts are instruments finely tuned in pursuit of profit" (ibid., 115).

As such, the current milieu surrounding the growth of the Korean Wave is much different from the first several years of the twenty-first century. Korean

popular culture as one of the most successful local cultures in the early twenty-first century has arguably proved that local forces are able to be major players competing with Western forces. In this context, some may claim that the rise of Korean popular culture and digital media has become conspicuous in the global markets. *Hallyu* 2.0 is indeed about the flow of cultural products and digital technologies from Korea, once peripheral, to other countries, first Asian countries and later Western countries. Although it is premature to declare the full blossoming of Korean popular culture in the global cultural markets, it is not incorrect to suggest that Korea has meaningfully succeeded in many parts of the world with K-pop, animation, digital gaming, and smartphones.

Implications of the New Korean Wave

Based on the discussion, I am able to confirm a few significant implications. First, the increasing appearance of Korean popular culture in the global markets has stimulated changing patterns in both the transnationalization of the local culture and the direction of cultural flows. With the case of the New Korean Wave, at least some may argue that transnational cultural power gets dispersed when it encounters localizing processes and the symbolic center no longer seems to belong to a particular nation or region. The New Korean Wave has certainly become part of a globalization process by providing the possibility of a contraflow, regardless of the fact that it does not change the contour fundamentally.

Second, the New Korean Wave has implied a change in the nature of glocalization strategies. In the initial stage of *Hallyu*, corporations in the Korean cultural industries developed glocalization strategies for both production and dissemination of Korean popular culture. They realized the importance of glocalization strategies for the Western markets because they needed to incorporate global tastes in order to appeal to Western audiences. Some cultural industry corporations built local branches, hired local people, and adopted local cultural specificities, which were some of the major parts of hybridization. As Iwabuchi points out, "This emphasis on local [not Korea, but other countries here] specificity [in the process of production] has become the key to the global marketing of consumer goods in the 1990s" (2002, 89).

However, the New Korean Wave era has witnessed the change of the glocalization process, because some firms in the Korean cultural industries do not emphasize this kind of traditional approach anymore. Instead of establishing local branches and hiring local people, Korean music and game corporations have established platforms in Korea and use them to disseminate local

culture to both regional and Western markets. In the social and digital media era, the importance of a physical presence has somewhat decreased. K-pop powerhouses are hiring Western composers, and game corporations use social networking sites as their platforms for global game users. The increasing role of social media and digital technologies has consequently prompted adjustments in corporate policies. The corporations in the Korean cultural industries have pursued new ways to access global audiences, and they have strategically utilized social media and digital technologies. Korean broadcasters have also developed television formats and worked with regional television broadcasters to create similar television programs in other countries, which do not need to have local branches of the Korean companies.

Third, *Hallyu* 2.0 implies the potential creation of a third space, because several Korean cultural forms, such as animation, online gaming, and K-pop, have proven the possibility of locally driven hybridization. Popular culture, including music, films, and video games, has been the result of hybridization, and some of its elements are successfully developing the third space driven by local forces. Local cultural industries have made memorable successes in the regional markets, and some of them are also substantially penetrating the Western cultural markets by utilizing hybridization. In this regard, we cannot deny that hybridization plays a key role in the growth of the local popular culture.

However, because the major players during the hybridization process are in many cases Western transnational corporations and producers, such as K-pop and broadcasting sectors, local players cannot develop unique cultural forms to portray local cultural mentalities. It is perhaps naive to argue for the preservation of a pure local culture in the contemporary cultural scene. As Tomlinson (1999) points out, the hybrid is not a space between two zones of purity where mixing occurs. Instead, it is a significant point at which a global media culture is created. The point is that the current form of hybridity embedded in the New Korean Wave does not create Koreanness as a form of locality, with some exceptions. In other words, it is significant to emphasize the ways in which we develop local popular culture based on local mentalities and specificities.

In this sense, we need to consider the true nature of hybridization in Korean popular culture, and again it is certain that hybridity in the realm of popular culture cannot be merely a form and style. The bottom line is that hybrid cultures are not simple mixes of two different cultures; more important, hybrid cultures must generate the third space based on their own local authenticity. Because hybridity is an interpretive mode in which assumptions of identity are interrogated, the local forces should play a pivotal role in developing local culture amid hybridization. As Lin argues, "The government, cultural industries

corporations, and media researchers must pay attention to the tensions and conflicts stimulated by their interactivities and, moreover, how the actors solve conflicts and how power is configured in the process" (2011, 322). We should understand that the main concerns in hybridization theory discuss the power relations in the process of hybridization and the major actors who decide which cultural elements to keep. Most politicized, nuanced, and sophisticated hybrid cultures need to be continuously in the process of creation in order to continue the current boom of local popular cultures in the global markets. What we have to consider is that hybridity is a dialogical and dialectical process in which different actors interact and negotiate. Consequently, it is crucial to identify who are the major players and what their roles are during the negotiation process.

A globalization of popular culture and digital technologies has a more complex connectivity, because the changing global entity under globalization should be considered in the global-local context. Local companies based in peripheral or semiperipheral countries should be the natural candidates for globalizing local cultural products. Of course, not all local cultural firms are well equipped for global marketing (Wu and Chan 2007). As commodities and images are still dominated by a small number of wealthy countries, "many parts of the world are continuously excluded from enjoying the fruits of participation in global cultural production as well as consumption" (Iwabuchi 2004, 74). Incorporated into global capitalism, only some local cultural corporations that have not only gained the experience of how to do business in the global market but also become part of a global network involving both local and international players have some chance of success (Wu and Chan 2007).

We cannot deny that the concept of cultural hybridity in the New Korean Wave context provides a useful alternative tool to that of cultural imperialism to explain the multidirectional flows of cultural products in the global markets, including movements from peripheral countries, including Korea, to Western countries. However, cultural hybridity sometimes shows the lack of a political position or further contextual analysis. As proved in many previous studies, they ignored the important role of agents, including governments, in developing or enhancing the competitiveness of cultural products in the global marketplace (Kwon and Kim 2013, 3). Hybridity cannot be neutral, and when "hybridization takes place, it is necessary to recognize the major agents involved and ask how different forces interact in the process" (Lin 2011, 312–13). In other words, the hybridity of cultural products can be explained by the political economies present within different cultural industries, because a few Western countries, in particular the United States, remain in the global market, resulting in the increasing gap between the global and the local. Sparks indeed points out, "It

is the center that produces and distributes, and the periphery that modifies and adapts. Such a process is clearly distinct from the claim that the artefacts produced by the cultural industries of the developed world embody materials that originate elsewhere and which embody a global consciousness rather than that of a developed country, usually the U.S." (2007, 145). Pieterse also argues, "Hybridization may conceal the asymmetry and unevenness in the process and the elements of mixing"; however, "relations of power and hegemony are inscribed and reproduced within hybridity" (2004, 53, 74). Although it is important to note the ways in which hegemony is not merely reproduced but refigured in the process of hybridization, we also need to understand that hybridity raises the question of the terms of mixture and the conditions of mixing (Pieterse 2004).

Therefore, we cannot overemphasize the importance of historical and structural perspectives in hybridity theory. The hybridization process of local popular culture and its cultural flow in the global is highly politicized regarding issues related to power relations between the two different forces, the global and the local. As Kraidy correctly points out, "Most analyses that focus on hybridity in media texts tend to minimize the importance of structural issues. In studies of that type, hybrid texts are often explained as symptoms of cultural pluralism, not indicators of dominance" (2005, 5). Rogers also explains, "Transnational cultural flow in the context of hybridity "is not only distinct from cultural exchange in that multiple cultures and multiple acts of appropriation are involved but it also retains the implications of unequal power of cultural dominance and exploitation while acknowledging the radically different nature of appropriation in the global-local contexts of transnational capitalism" (2006, 493).

With this in mind, the popularity of Korean cultural products and digital technologies in the global markets has raised some fundamental questions with globalization theory, because this new phenomenon implies that globalization processes are much more complicated in the sense that they are multidirectional but still uneven. Although the production of hybrid culture and the global flow of popular culture are not necessarily linear anymore, these trends cannot resolve inequality in the power relationship between the global and the local. Although a few countries, including Korea, have increased their cultural penetration in Western markets, their global presence through cultural genres is still restricted, and a huge gap between regional penetration and global presence remains.

What More Can We Do in the Future?

What is a matter to be determined now is whether Korea will continue to become one of the most significant local forces in the realm of culture, because

the trends within popular culture in terms of global trade are in many cases temporary. In this regard, I believe that Korea needs to learn lessons from Japan, which once reigned supreme in the Asian markets. Japanese popular culture was well received in East Asian markets until the early twenty-first century. However, arguably, it is now not significant, partially due to the emergence of Korean popular culture. Conducting extensive research on the regional penetration of Japanese popular culture, Nissim Otmazgin (2013) explains that the export of Japanese popular culture has declined since its heyday in the 1980s and 1990s. Although Japan maintained its own cultural stardom in Asia until the early twenty-first century based on its unique hybridization process, known as odorless Japanness, the depoliticized Japanese popular culture has lost its grip in the Asian market and has not been able to penetrate the global markets meaningfully. As Iwabuchi (2002) himself admits, Japan's reach in Asia, in terms of traditional resonance and imagination, has already gradually shrunk. Previously, Hong Kong enjoyed fame with Hong Kong cinema, but this is not the case anymore. Meanwhile, China and India in Asia are emerging in the cultural sector and may challenge the New Korean Wave in the future.

Against such a backdrop, corporations in the Korean cultural industries and the government have to develop their policies, both corporate and governmental, with lessons learned from what happened in the Japanese cultural industries. They also need to understand the complexity of cultural globalization, which is still uneven and fluctuating. This implies that primary players in the New Korean Wave era should develop long-term strategies, strategies that Japan and other countries should have prepared previously. These strategies are not only marketing skills but also creating new cultures and technologies driven by local forces with a Korean odor. The cultural hybridization discourse in the Korean context provides a richer theoretical alternative, emphasizing the adaptation and active articulation of global processes with local or regional norms, customs, needs, and traditions. Otherwise, the New Korean Wave might be a transitory success but not become a long-term or permanent influence in the realm of global culture and technologies. On the one hand, producers in the Korean cultural industries need to develop the unique culture through the hybridization process; on the other hand, the Korean government and cultural industry corporations must play a key role in developing cultural policies and cultural products. By doing so, Korea will be able to make a compelling case for the growth of local popular culture and digital technologies in the global markets.

Notes

Chapter 1. The Rise of the New Korean Wave

1. There are a few attempts to document the current growth of *Hallyu.* Taking an example of Korean popular music, In-Hee Cho and Yeo-Kwang Yoon (2013) divide the Korean Wave era into three distinctive periods—1997–early 2000s, early 2000s–around 2006, and around 2007–present—based on major regions for the exports of Korean popular culture and primary cultural forms. Although it is limited to K-pop and does not provide significant rationales for the periodization, it certainly shows a new attempt to understand the current Korean Wave in a different perspective.

2. It includes advertising in addition to other traditional cultural forms, such as broadcasting, music, animation, and games.

3. Some researchers primarily define *Hallyu* 2.0 as the penetration of K-pop in the Western markets in tandem with the creation of K-pop fandom with or without social media. However, K-pop has to be considered as one of the major cultural forms characterizing the *Hallyu* 2.0 era because other cultural products, such as animation and digital media, are also primary drivers of the New Korean Wave. Even *Newspaper and Broadcasting,* which is a monthly magazine in Korea, took *Hallyu* 3.0 for granted with no particular conceptual and methodological consensuses and put several articles together in the name of *Hallyu* 3.0 in its May 2014 issue. See S. A. Kim 2013; E. Y. Jung 2015; Lie 2015.

4. Apple debuted its first smartphone, the iPhone, in 2007, and it was introduced in Korea in 2009, when Samsung and LG began to produce their own smartphones. Therefore, the influences of these digital platforms were not significant in the *Hallyu* 1.0 era.

5. YouTube's counter previously used a 32-bit integer, which is a unit used to represent data in computer architecture. This means the maximum possible views it could count was 2,147,483,647. Google, which owns YouTube, explained that "engineers saw this coming a couple months ago and updated our systems to prepare for it." YouTube now uses a 64-bit integer for its video counter, which means videos have a maximum viewer count of 9.22 quintillion (*BBC News Asia* 2014).

6. As a reflection of the remarkable appearance of Psy in the global music market, several scholars in Korea have recently discussed the impact of social media on the growth of K-pop in several regions, including Europe and North America (Song and Jang 2013; I.-H. Cho and Y.-K. Yoon 2013; S. K. Hong 2013; S. Kim and J.-S. Kang 2013).

7. In the Korean context, the government has changed its cultural policies in conjunction with the name of cultural industries, from cultural industries to content industries and later to creative industries. Regardless of some differences in their focuses, they all emphasize economic imperatives, not cultural diversity or cultural sovereignty; therefore, this book mainly uses the term *cultural industries* but sometimes interchanges it with *creative industries.*

8. Other fields, including Korean food and clothing as well as plastic surgery, are also gaining momentum throughout the world. However, this book limits its analysis within popular culture and digital technologies.

Chapter 2. Cultural Politics in the New Korean Wave Era

1. The drive for liberalization culminated in the 1997 WTO agreement, because it required countries to open their domestic markets to foreign competition and to allow foreign companies to buy stakes in domestic operators. The International Monetary Fund also enrolled in the liberalization effort in the 1990s and pressed governments to open their markets to foreign investors. See McChesney and Schiller 2003.

2. Several media scholars and local distributors in East Asia have argued that the most important factor behind the boom of Korean dramas in Asia was the similarities between Asian countries' cultures based on ethnicity and Confucianism. After conducting audience research, some of them claimed that many Asian consumers liked Korean dramas because these proximities often reinforced their traditional Confucian values. See Iwabuchi 2008a; Leung 2008; Ryoo 2009.

3. The export of music consists of three major areas: recorded music (sales of music CDs), digital music (online sales), and music events. Over the past decade, the sales of music CDs through foreign distributors and agents have accounted for the majority of the exports, followed by digital music and music events. However, due to the growth of digital technologies, the proportion of recorded music has decreased, while music concerts and online sales have increased with concerts held in foreign countries and through the growth of social media. With the recent popularity of K-pop musicians, including Psy, music events in foreign countries are becoming significant

for the Korean music industry, although they are still less than 5 percent among the three major categories.

4. In 2000 the Kim Dae-Jung government initiated the growth of new local producers because it wanted domestic competition as the foundation for the growth of foreign trade. The number of independent producers soared, from 8 in the late 1980s to 349 in 2003, although they were reduced to 136 as of January 2012, due to severe competition. The development of independent producers was one of the major hands-off policies, given that two networks (the Korean Broadcasting System [KBS] and Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation [MBC], a quasi-private network) out of the three major networks were owned by the government. Instead of supporting the existing networks, the government deregulated the broadcasting market to indirectly provide the environment whereby broadcasting firms worked to create quality programs, resulting in the growth of television programs in global flows. See Korea Independent Production Association 2012; Foundation for the Broadcasting Culture Act, Article 6.

5. The screen-quota system, which asks domestic theaters to show a certain percentage of domestic movies in a year, was introduced in 1967 in order to prevent theaters from concentrating on foreign movies.

6. As an anecdote of his interest in the game industry, during his visit to the Ministry of Knowledge Economy on February 4, 2009, Lee wondered why Korea could not build video game hardware to compete with Nintendo, which has sparked corporate interests in the game sector.

7. The Lee government integrated a few executive bodies; therefore, the overall budget of the ministry increased. The proportion of the budget for the cultural industries sector of the ministry increased as well. The Lee government changed the name of the department dealing with cultural and creative industries within the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism from the Department of Cultural Industry to the Cultural Content Industry Office in 2008.

8. In the twenty-first century, cultural diplomacy has become one of the most significant public diplomacies because culture is a field of international relations in its own right. Cultural diplomacy is mainly considered as "the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding" (Cummings 2003, 1).

Chapter 3. Transnational Television Programs

1. Korea added a new private network, the Seoul Broadcasting System, in 1991, and eleven new local terrestrial broadcasting channels were established between the mid-1990s and 2002. In 1995 the Korean government also introduced cable channels, including twenty cable television program providers and fifty-four cable television system operators (or local cable operators).

2. *My Love from the Star,* which was about an alien who landed on Earth four hundred years ago in the Joseon dynasty, who then falls in love with a top actress in the modern

era, was very popular in China in early 2014 primarily due to its popularity through the Internet and mobile services. Only a few years ago, Korean drama production companies started to tap into the online market to enter the Chinese market. As Korean dramas grew in popularity after the mid-2000s, China strengthened regulations on non-Chinese dramas. However, the Internet does not have a prior screening process. As Korea targets the new media popular to young Chinese people, their favorite genre has changed. They used to like family dramas or historical dramas such as *What Is Love All About* or *Dae Jang Geum.* Now, they are fascinated by trendy dramas such as *The Heirs* ("A Popular Korean Drama" 2014). However, in March 2014, as online streaming video websites, such as Sohu, Youku, and Baidu, increasingly become the platform young audiences use to watch American and British TV shows, as well as Korean dramas, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio Film, and Television of China announced new regulations aimed at strengthening the supervision of audiovisual programs such as online serial dramas and microfilms as well as over the broadcasting entities, which included warnings to both companies and investors that violators would be given warnings, fines, or punishments lasting up to five years, which may impact the recent trend in China (Coonan 2014). These two developments as of early 2014 mean that social and digital media play key roles in both the dissemination of television dramas and the change of major television genres in China, regardless of policy implications.

3. With the rapid growth of communication technologies and transportation, the notion of transnationalism draws attention to the ways in which "the intensifying scale and speed of the transnational flow of people, capital, and media has disregarded, though not entirely, the efficacy of demarcated national boundaries and ideologies" (Iwabuchi 2004, 52).

4. Whether reality competition shows such as *American Idol* and *Super Star K* have been dedicated to the notion of democratization of fame is not the major concern of this chapter. In order to understand the debates, however, see Park and Baruh 2010.

5. Due to the increasing popularity of reality shows both inside and outside of the country, the number of participants has soared: 713,500 (season 1), 1,346,402 (season 2), 1,967,000 (season 3), and 2,083,447 (season 4). As competition grows among audition programs, the prizes for winners are also getting larger. The winner of *Super Star K2* earned 200 million won, about $180,000. When *Super Star K3* came along, M.net Korea raised the top prize to 500 million won ($450,000), including money to produce an album.

6. For example, *Super Star K* requires advertisers to bear a certain amount of the production cost in exchange for product placement. The main sponsor, Coca-Cola, has invested 1 billion won, and other sponsors such as Daum, Renault Samsung, Motorola, and Lancôme each spent 500 million won during *Super Star K*'s first season (Yoon-mi Kim 2010).

7. Of course, the meaning of *Koreanness* itself is changing with time. Until the late 1990s, *han* (the Korean sentiment of grievance or grudge) was one of the most signifi-

cant Korean characteristics that portrayed Koreans' passive desire for redemption after enduring pain. In "Arirang"—a Korean song—the passive sadness and tenderness of Koreans and their grudges, yearnings, betrayals, despair, and revenge are intensively expressed. Over the past decade or so, Korea's *han* has rapidly been changing into *heung* (excitement), as economic development and democratization have resulted in growing self-confidence among Korea's people. Dynamism has now become synonymous with Koreans, as K-pop demonstrates (A. Chang 2011). Therefore, it is challenging to argue that we must preserve or develop Koreanness because of the changing nature of culture.

Chapter 4. Cultural Globalization in Korean Cinema

1. The role of the Chinese market for Korean cinema may continue at least for a while, in particular, for the remake of Korean films in China, due to the preliminary agreement on the Korea-China FTA signed in February 2015. In it discussion about coproduction between Korea and China also took place, and if the two countries produce a film in collaboration and the film is recognized as a coproduction, then the film is free from China's screen-quota restrictions. Accordingly, it is none other than remakes that gained big momentum with a spur to Korean-Chinese coproductions ("Korean Film Remakes" 2015).

2. In the midst of neoliberal cultural policies supporting big corporations, in 1995 Samsung organized the Samsung Visual Media Business Team, the first *chaebol* organization that was in charge of the film business. As Samsung and Daewoo led the entry, other *chaebols* such as LG, Hyundai, and Cheil Jegang (later CJ) invested in the film business. However, in the early twenty-first, some of them retreated from the market, mainly because they could not make expected profits, resulting in the increasing major role of small venture-capital firms in the Korean film industry. See Jin 2011c; K. Noh 2009.

3. I analyzed similar issues elsewhere (Jin 2010a, 2013). This part has greatly extended my previous analyses in order to provide a more extensive and comprehensive as well as nuanced overview of Korean cinema.

4. Melodramatic sensibility refers not only to the properties of a particular field of texts (including personal narratives) but also to their dialogic context (that is, to the talk that so often surrounds them). See Abelmann 2003, 23.

5. According to this legend, a serpent (Imoogi) transforms into a celestial dragon every five hundred years through the sacrifice of a chosen girl (Yuh-Yi-Joo). This transformation is necessary in order to protect mankind. During the Joseon Imoogi's preparation for transformation, an evil Imoogi emerges and attempts to steal the Yuh-Yi-Joo for himself. The Yuh-Yi-Joo's protector, who also develops into her lover, decides that it is better for both himself and the Yuh-Yi-Joo to commit suicide than to sacrifice her to the evil Imoogi. Using the traditionally well-known Buddhist values of transmigration and reincarnation, director Shim moves the legend into twenty-first-century Los Angeles, where the Yuh-Yi-Joo has been reborn as Sarah and her

protector as Ethan. This story is developed through the Hollywood-style format of the science fiction and action genres. In this way, the content of *D-War* is hybridized (J. Cho and Lee 2009).

Chapter 5. Hybrid Local Animation's Global Appeal

1. Pucca is in love with the twelve-year-old ninja Garu, and Pucca always seems to beat him in combat and unintentional competition, simply by sheer luck.

2. As briefly discussed in chapter 2, in the midst of the increase in the foreign exports of domestic animation and characters, in February 2015 the Korean government announced its plan to invest a total of $345.8 million in nurturing the domestic animation and character industries by 2019 to help them tap deeper into overseas markets. The Korean government believes that the global animation and character industries are predicted to grow to become a $2 billion market by 2018, and this is a big opportunity for local companies. Therefore, the government is stepping up efforts to stir companies' desire for creative work and create an environment that can help them reach out to the world market (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2015).

3. Tie-ins are promotional campaigns tied to films, television programs, and animations and associated with products distinct from these cultural products, based on characters or objects used in these cultural products (see Wasko 1997).

4. The Korean animation sector has continued to make its efforts to break into the American market with characters such as Pororo and the Larvas. When the Korean Creative Content Agency hosted the first "K-Characters in Los Angeles" event in June 2015, the showcase attracted about fifty animation insiders from companies like Netflix, Amazon, Nickelodeon, and Mattel. American viewers can already find *Pororo* and *Canimals* on Hulu and *Larva* on Netflix ("Can Korean Animation" 2015).

5. Of course, this was something that Hollywood used to do to a degree during the 1920s and 1930s to ensure wide acceptability for its movies. All scripts would be vetted by the Production Code Administration office to ensure there was not anything that might offend in any of its overseas markets, in particular the nationality of the villains (Newman 2013).

6. At the first level, hybridity refers to the visible manifestation of difference within identity as a consequence of the incorporation of foreign elements. Postcolonial theorists have adopted hybridity on a third level. It has been used as a perspective for representing the new critical and cultural practices that have emerged in diasporic life (see Papastergiadis 2005).

7. Of course, these values are not the same as what contemporary Korean society believes as Korean "cultural DNAs" are changing, which means that the Korean cultural industries deliberately utilize Korean mentalities because some of them are also universal values that foreigners find easily accessible. In 2012 the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and Korean Studies Advancement Center conducted in-depth interviews with one hundred experts and a survey of one thousand rank-and-file

citizens and came up with ten cultural DNAs of Koreans: Jeoug, Heung, dynamism, naturalness, togetherness, community spirit, propriety, fermentation, perseverance, and humor (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012d).

Chapter 6. Critical Discourse of K-pop within Globalization

1. In the Korean context, "trot, known as *ppongtchak* in Korean, has been said to have been associated with the two-beat rhythmic pattern of fox-trot" (Son 2004, 4).

2. Due to the significant role of Seo Taiji and following younger musicians, several scholars, including Joowon Suh (2012) and Jamie S. Lee (2004), identify K-pop as the youth music usually consumed by the younger generation, thus excluding Korean traditional popular music such as trot, ballad, or any type of so-called adult contemporary music. However, ballad is still one of the most significant genres, and some old musicians, including Cho Young Phil, are still influential in the Korean music industry; therefore, it cannot be categorized by musicians' ages alone.

3. In terms of the starting point of K-pop, several scholars have different views. For example, Hyunjoon Shin (2005) believes that K-pop is the continuation of *shinsedae* music primarily developed in the 1990s, although the term *K-pop* appeared in Japan in the early 2000s. Meanwhile, John Lie (2015) argues that K-pop is not only chronologically but also musically a post–Seo Taeji phenomenon, starting in 1998. However, since several key idol groups started their performances before 1998 (for example, H.O.T. in 1996 and S.E.S. in 1997), and their music was already hybrid and dynamic, as well as strategically developed by entertainment houses, we cannot simply admit K-pop as a post–Seo Taeji youth culture.

4. The export of music consists of three major areas: recorded music (sales of music CDs), digital music (online sales), and music events (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism 2012a).

5. BoA made her U.S. debut in 2008 with a song titled "I'll Eat You Up." However, the single flopped disastrously in that market (S. Jung 2011). Se7en also tested his luck in the U.S. market, releasing the English-language single "Girls" in 2009. Like BoA, he returned to Korea after "record low" sales of his single.

6. By country, in 2011 Japan was the largest (423 million), followed by the United States (240 million), Thailand (220 million), Taiwan, and Vietnam.

7. Songwriters have focused on getting their work covered by British and American artists; however, for the past few years, many songwriters and producers such as Will. I. Am and Sean Garrett have been shuttling back and forth to Korea. Universal Music Publishing's European A&R executive Pelle Lidell started working with SM in 2008. He has said that pretty much every song he has delivered to the company has become a hit (Lindvall 2011b).

8. Cho Yong Phil is a consensus superstar of Korean popular music. Although he dabbled in several musical styles, including his early infatuation with rock music, his initial popularity was owed to trot, which he sang in traditional *pansori* style. Suggestively,

he claims to have mimicked the traditional training of *pansori* singers, which entailed destroying one's vocal chords by singing loudly and repeatedly in the woods (Cho 1984, cited in Lie 2012).

9. According to the Annual Top Fifty *Kayo* (contemporary pop music) Charts on Melon, a music site that records music trends and ranks, including both K-pop and foreign music, K-pop indeed demonstrates the changing patterns not only pertaining to English usage but also music genres and styles. Melon.com ranks K-pop based on two major resources. One is the sales of music CDs and cassette tapes (70 percent), and the other is the number of appearances on television and radio (30 percent).

10. YG Entertainment—Psy's entertainment agency—allowed fans to upload their parody videos of "Gangnam Style" instead of prevented them from uploading. By law, parodies are normally considered a violation of copyright law when fans upload them online; however, they did not claim it because they expected that parodies would substantially help the popularity of the song. In fact, many music fans in the world enjoyed both an original video and parodies, resulting in the boom of "Gangnam Style" worldwide (Soochul Kim and Kang 2013).

Chapter 7. Digital *Hallyu* 2.0: Transnationalization of Local Digital Games

1. With the case of the exports of *telenovela* to Europe, Biltereyst and Meers (2000) empirically analyzed the possibility of contraflows; however, they concluded that the contraflow is relatively weak in Europe because the overall European pattern of *telenovela* imports has been related to marginality or even, in some parts of Europe, dehydration. In the case of one particular telenovela, *Betty la Fea,* a phenomenally popular Colombian show, this program had been exported as both canned programming and as a format to approximately seventy countries by 2010, including the recent U.S. prime-time hit *Ugly Betty.* Given the location of the headquarters of the major *telenovela*-producing corporations and the global success of their locally produced content, it is tempting to think of *telenovelas* as primarily products of the global South: an example of cultural contraflows running South to North and disproving notions of Western cultural dominance. However, a closer look at the global connections and flows of capital in the telenovela industry reveals a more complicated picture (J. Miller 2010, 207).

2. In the Chinese game market, MMORPGs got their foothold around 2000, and they soon dominated the market. Several reasons exist for the instant success of MMORPGs in China: online gaming was fueled by the rapid progress of China's telecommunication infrastructure; online games are based on subscriptions, with recurring revenue; online games build lasting relationships with their customers (gamers); and online games offer social interaction opportunities to young people. In China most urban youngsters have no siblings and are thirsty for peer-to-peer interactions (Cao and Downing 2008, 518). The emergence of Chinese online gaming in the global video game market has influenced the nature of the Korean Wave as well, because China has taken over the leading position in the online game sector as the largest game market in the world since 2008.

3. The number of PC bangs decreased from a high of 22,171 in 2005 to 13,796 in 2013; however, the number of PCs per PC bang significantly increased to an average of 67.5 in 2013. During the early years of PC bangs in the late 1990s, the majority had 20–30 PCs; therefore, the actual number of PCs for users has remained at the same level over the past fifteen years (Korea Creative Content Agency 2014). During my interview with an owner of a PC bang in Seoul in December 2014, he said, "The size of PC bang has significantly enlarged since 2010, and the business has been going well in these bigger PC bangs with several popular MMOPRGs developed both nationally and globally."

4. *StarCraft* was originally published by a division of LG Electronics, LG Soft, in Korea as a contractor of Blizzard Entertainment. Because of the financial crisis of 1997, the company could not avoid the huge wave of severe downsizing. A managing staffer of LG Soft at the time, Young-man Kim, made a bold decision to establish a new game start-up based on *StarCraft,* named HanbitSoft. The first thing that HanbitSoft did was to distribute free copies of the game to the newly proliferating PC bangs. At that time, PC bangs were a focal point among the youth who could not find their first jobs and the unemployed who had been fired due to widespread corporate downsizing (Huhh 2008).

5. The lawsuit came about after NCsoft fired Garriott in 2008 and then marked his departure as voluntary, causing his stock options to expire instead of remaining intact through the end of his 2011 contract. In 2010 a court found NCsoft to have breached its contract, and it ordered the company to pay $28 million plus interest and attorney fees to Garriott and his legal team (Olivetti 2011).

6. For example, crowdsourcing as a new form of localization has gradually changed glocalization strategy because game corporations are able to develop some locally targeted games through technologies instead of by establishing local branches. SCS Software, a Czech video game development company producing simulation games for the PC, Mac, and Linux platforms, including the *18 Wheels of Steel* and *Euro Truck Simulator* series, utilizes crowdsourcing to localize some elements, including translation, of their games. Previously, translating German Truck/UK Truck generation games into twelve languages cost the company about the same as a full year's salary of a member of SCS Software's team ("Crowdsourced Translations" 2013). Even after the huge expense, there were still several important languages left out, so the company has decided to use crowdsourced localization, which means multiple people in different countries who work in parallel on translation into the same language. With voting on quality of other people's translations sentence by sentence or word by word, the technologies the company introduced for this catch any mistakes and develop relatively fine translations.

Chapter 8. Global Penetration of Korea's Smartphones in the Social Media Era

1. *Mediatization* refers to the significance of media to culture and society in developing media-induced shifts in the public representation of education, politics, and

religion and the adaptive behaviors of diverse institutions, because media permeate and thus alter all aspects of modern culture. Mediatization has appeared as "a way of speaking about the seemingly pervasive influence of media, in its various forms, on social, cultural and religious practices and institutions" (Boutros 2011, 185–86; see also Hjarvard 2008).

2. In the early 1990s, the global wireless telecom market evolved from an analogue to a digital system with the availability of digital mobile technology. Korean firms could either adapt to the digital technology by importing the products from time-division multiple access–based companies or by commercializing CDMA on their own. Commercial TDMA service was already in operation in the European mobile market, but European firms were not willing to share it with Korean manufacturers (Jho 2007, 129). The Ministry of Information and Communications advocated the mobile system based on CDMA digital technology. It had been pursuing the indigenous CDMA development project since the late 1980s (MIC 1994, cited in Jho 2007). The MIC used its licensing power to control KT and to protect CDMA technology. This was an important decision for the ministry as well as for the Korean mobile market. The ministry extended its jurisdiction over the telecom services market and the telecom equipment industry by relating the development of digital mobile standards to the selection of the second mobile carrier. "For the government, CDMA digital technology standards could provide it with a device with which to control the mobile telecom industry and prevent the penetration of foreign companies into the domestic market" (Jho 2007, 130).

3. In Korea, "the iPhone's debut was belated primarily due to both protectionist government telecommunication policy in the name of privacy (which blocked the sale of iPhones in the domestic market until 2009) and concerns about the future of business raised by telecommunications corporations" (P. Kim 2011, 261–62).

4. Samsung's global share has declined since early 2014, partially because of a handful of emerging handset makers in China; however, Samsung also developed and started to sell its Galaxy 6 in March 2015. Therefore, while there are some fluctuations, it is not unreasonable to claim that Samsung has been one of the largest handset makers, if not the only one, around the world in recent years.

5. KaKaoTalk allows person-to-person and group chats only by entering users' phone numbers without any limit on the number of participants and without registering or login.

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