

Editorial: Special Section on Korean Screen Cultures

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This special issue aims to showcase the vibrancy of new research in Korean Screen Cultures Studies. It does so by bringing together four papers by early career researchers in the field, each of whom is publishing in English for the first time. The articles address different forms of media, including genre film, TV chat shows, the television drama industry, and K-pop music videos. Although this special section merely aims to bring together new research on Korean screen media, the articles collected here are linked by a loose theme. They explore ways in which different types of identity are constructed and negotiated through both media texts and their production processes. Tanja Eydám's article analyses the construction of 'desirable foreigner' identities in the comedy chat show *Non-Summit*. Hyung Gyun Kim address a different type of identify, by tracing the shifting values constructed around celebrities in the Korean television industry as it was liberalised over the last two decades. Yonsue Kim's detailed analysis of the intermedial relations of BTS music video, *Idol*, shifts back to questions of Korean cultural identify amid the structures of intercultural legibility necessitated by K-pop's global circulation. Finally, my article introduces an emerging sub-genre that combines gangster film and family drama tropes to negotiate contradictions between familial and employee identities for certain Korean audiences.

Hyung Gyun Kim examines issues the changing value of actors as celebrities in the Korean television drama industry. The topic of Korean Wave celebrity has attracted significant scholarly interest, yet much of this has focused on the regional and global circulation of K-pop and K-drama stars. In her work on Korean masculinity, for example, Sun Jung demonstrates the ways in which a flexible, innocent/cute yet sexually appealing masculinity is constructed around stars such as Rain and Bae Yong-Jun to better the appeal to the complex desires of differing regional audiences (2010). Kim's contribution is to refocus Korean Wave research towards the Korean domestic origin of Hallyu products, both textual and human. She specifically addresses the production of television drama stars, drawing on interviews with industry professionals. Kim charts the changing values ascribed to TV celebrities; their rise from the much-disparaged level of employee under the broadcaster studio system to valuable assets whose appearance can make or break drama productions. She details how this transformation resulted from structural industrial change when the Korean television drama industry was first liberalised and later financialised from the early and late 1990s respectively. Kim approaches this transformation through Olga Fedorenko's reading of Marxist use-value theory (2017). She argues that Korean actor celebrities have become 'image commodities'. They comprise a form a human fixed capital that simultaneously renders the labour of countless other involved in drama production invisible and facilitate the production of further capital acumination through their sign value in the industry. Overall, Kim addresses a lacuna in English-language scholarship on the history of the Korean television drama industry, and provides a critical perspective that stands out from more industry-focused accounts.

Yonsue Kim's article contributes to debates around cultural hybridity in K-pop. The hybridity of K-pop has been well established: it repackages western popular music forms, combines Korean and English/multilingual lyrics (Jin and Ryoo 2014), however it can be used to express particularly Korean and/or East Asian regional sentiments, and its originality may lie in its creative mixing of music genres (Shim 2011). Kim's contribution lays approaching the issue of hybridity through the lens of intermediality, and in tracing juxtapositions of the global and Korean traditional forms that characterise contemporary Korean modernity. Her analysis of BTS's music video for *Idol* (Bang *et al.* 2018) begins with the song's lyrics. Patterns of repetition and alternation between English and Korean lyrics help to ensure that the song's central theme, the exploration of the boy band's identities as both Korean and global celebrities, is comprehensible to Korean and non-Korean speaking audiences. Kim suggests that the inclusion of vocalisation and interjections more commonly found in audience responses to Korea's traditional street opera form, *Pansori*, invite global audience participation in the song's thematics. She builds on these insights in her visual analysis of the video's images, animations and moving images, as well as their articulation to the music and its repeating chorus lyrics. Images and action scenes that draw on traditional Korean folk dance forms, such as the lion mask dance, re-evolve the call for audience participation. At the same time, juxtapositions and montage cuts between drawn and photographic images, modern European and traditional Korean architecture, global and Korean scene-scapes, combine with depictive methods used for group members to articulate more strongly the group's ambivalent celebrity identity between (the expectation of) Korean roots and appeals to global modernity. Therefore, her analysis implies a shift of perspective, seeing the K-pop music video not a hybrid form per se, but as a product of Korea's hybrid contemporary modernity.

Tanja Eydam's article contrasts well with Yonsue Kim's. While Kim focuses on the music video as a text, Eydam explores a television show within the social and cultural contexts of its production. In *Idol*, Korean celebrities negotiate their own Korean/Global identities before a global and local audience, and Kim's focus on textuality perhaps elides some of the idol/fan power relations inherent here. Eydam takes the opposite approach. She clarifies the power relationships through which Korean television producers select (and exclude) groups of 'foreigners' and then construct identities around them for the consumption of local Korean audiences. She addresses *Non-Summit* (Kim *et al.* 2014-17), a Korean television chat show that features a cast of non-Korean panellists and Korean hosts. Her article builds on Gil-Soo Han's seminal work on multiculturalism in Korean television (2016) and provides a more detailed analysis of *Non-Summit* than Kang's overview of Korean television shows featuring foreigners (2018). Eydam's employs a novel 'historical and socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis' methodology to examine interrelations between Korean multiculturalism discourse, production practices and the TV show text. She argues that Korean aspiration to conform to global/western multiculturalism combines with Korean nationalism and the desire to place Korea within an imagined 'hierarchy of nations'. This results in an assimilationist form of multiculturalism in Korea. Within this context, Eydam delineates a complex set of power relationships between Korean production staff, Korean audiences, and different groups of non-Koreans through which *Non-Summit* constructs a dominant image of foreigners. The show privileges a cast of mostly white, mostly western, well-educated and middle-class contestants. Therefore, it elides

the everyday realities of migrant populations in Korea, the vast majority of whom mostly comprise foreign spouses and young male factory workers from China and South East Asia. Eydam further argues that by carefully controlling the script, and selecting contestants on the basis of fluency in Korean language and culture the show constructs the non-Korean cast as exotic yet assimilated, thus consumable ‘para-Koreans’.

My article rounds out the section’s spotlight on screen media with an analysis of Korean genre film. It touches on the loose theme of identity that runs through the section by highlighting the way in which one film genre, the Korean gangster film, adapted to address conflicts between longstanding worker roles and emerging parental identities. I argue that this adaptation led to the emergence of a new sub-genre, which I imaginatively dub the ‘family drama gangster film’. Films in this sub-genre are identified by their depictions of domestic space, which contrast with the gangster film’s more common gritty urban-streets milieu. Featuring significant family plots, these films combine genre norms from both gangster film and melodrama to bring the traditional virtues of gangland loyalty and family duty into conflict. I provide a detailed analysis of *The Show Must Go On* (Han 2002), in which I outline the key sub-genre conventions. As in many other film in the sub-genre, the gangster protagonist is torn between the necessity of working as a gangster to provide for his family and his family’s distain for his profession. He is also torn between loyalty to his gang boss and betrayal by other gang members. Despite his efforts to ‘do the right thing’, plot contingencies block his agency. He can’t fulfil both gang and family obligations. The insolubility of this dilemma is the point of the contradictions at play in the family drama gangster film. However, the affectionate bonds of family relations are prioritised in many of these films. My analysis suggests that gang obligations stand in for the demands of Korean corporate work cultures. I argue that the new sub-genre form allows some audiences to negotiate conflict between traditional expectations placed on predominantly male providers and new conceptions of caring fathers/husbands. In this way, the Korean gangster film remains relevant to Korea audiences by addressing changing ideologies of familism and the realities of family life under neoliberalism.

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