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HYBRIDITY, KOREAN WAVE, AND ASIAN MEDIA

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Introduction: Globalization and hybridization

Since the early 1990s, the rapid development of communication technologies and the opening of media markets around the world have made the consumption of foreign culture and content more convenient and ordinary than ever before. Globalization, a concept that refers to the process and context of the world becoming closer, has correspondingly become part of our everyday vocabulary. In this chapter, we shall discuss the concept of hybridity vis-à-vis globalization by considering recent cultural phenomena such as the Korean Wave, format exchanges between media producers, and the coproduction boom in Asia.

Globalization discourses can be roughly categorized into three types, all of which are relevant to East Asian experiences. The first views globalization as an outgrowth of cultural imperialism. According to this discourse, the forces of cultural globalization are usually marshaled by the United States (or "the West") to subjugate weaker, national/cultural identities. While this approach has retained considerable resonance within the political discourse of many Asian countries, especially with the rise of foreign media content in their territories, it has fallen under scholarly critique as being overly simplistic (Chadha and Kavoori 2000; Morley and Robins 1995). In fact, it is no longer the case that a one-way flow of Western media content exists due to the increasing contraflow in international media and the growing plurality of regional media players. Japanimation, Hong Kong cinema, the Korean Wave, and Bollywood cinema all exemplify this point. In addition, this approach misses the complexity of audience reception (Wasko et al. 2001). Borrowing Stuart Hall's terms, oppositional readings of media content are no less likely than hegemonic readings (Hall 2006). There is also a danger of romanticism and fetishism in the emphasis on "national" culture (Morris 2002). For example, Salman Rushdie calls our attention to the danger inherent in the essentialist nationalism that is often found in the cultural imperialism thesis: "Doesn't the idea of pure cultures, in urgent need of being kept free from alien contamination, lead us inexorably toward apartheid, toward ethnic cleansing, toward the gas chamber?" (Rushdie 1999).

In the second type of discourse, globalization is understood as an outcome of the workings of the modernity project (Giddens 1991). According to John Tomlinson (1991), it is "the spread of the culture of modernity itself. This is a discourse of historical change, of 'development,' of a global movement towards … capitalism" (p. 90). This argument is already visible in Max

Weber's (1905/2000) idea that capitalism is a natural extension of the progress of reason and freedom associated with the Enlightenment. Support for this understanding of globalization can be found in the United States' push for the Marshall Plan after the end of World War II and in the U.S., support of modernization policies in many Asian countries during the same period. In more recent sociological studies, David Harvey (1990) and Fredric Jameson (1996) argue that since the 1970s humanity has been existing in a new historical epoch: the development of new communication and information technologies occasioned our moving from modernity to postmodernity, and from capitalism to late capitalism. However, some political economists criticize this notion by arguing that the conflation of modernity with capitalism is wrong. According to Ellen Wood (1998), when the eighteenth-century French bourgeoisie—supposedly the source of the modernity project—fought against the aristocracy, they fought for universalism and human emancipation. On the other hand, the main aim of capitalism is the improvement of property, not the improvement of humanity. Therefore, if capitalism has anything to do with modernity, it is that capitalism has destroyed modernity. Wood also argues that the geographic term "globalization" is imperfect as a description of and explanation for the present era. Considering that capitalism has penetrated into every aspect of life, society, and culture, Wood insists that "universalization of capitalism" better characterizes the current situation. In a similar vein, Robert McChesney (1998) criticizes the notion of globalization being an outcome of modernity because it tends to provide an aura of "inevitability" to the rise of neoliberalism and concentrated corporate control of (and hyper-commercialization of) the media in the present era.

The third type of discourse identifies cultural hybridity as an intrinsic attribute of globalization and cultural flow. Along this line of thought, Ulf Hannerz (1996) writes that world history has undergone a process of creolization and hybridization, marked by centuries of osmosis between different cultural groups through immigration, international trade, wars, etc. Similarly, Yosefa Loshitzky argues that today's globalization is a "postmodern variation on the Hellenistic period" (Loshitzky 1996, 335). According to John Thompson:

> Rather than assuming that prior to the importation of Western TV programmes etc. many Third World countries had indigenous traditions and cultural heritages which were largely unaffected by external pressures, we should see instead that the globalization of communication through electronic media is only the most recent of a series of cultural encounters, in some cases stretching back many centuries, through which the values, beliefs and symbolic forms of different groups have been superimposed on one another, often in conjunction with the use of coercive, political and economic power.
> *(Thompson 1995, 170)*

From this perspective, the penetration of U.S. popular culture into East Asia needs revisitation. When media and cultural exchange between Asian countries were less active in the second half of the twentieth century, U.S. popular culture became the common cultural form in the region. David Waterman and Everett Rogers (1994) even call U.S. popular culture "the common denominator" of popular culture in East Asia. As such, the idea of Asian media regionalization can be neither conceived of nor examined if we rule out the role that U.S. popular culture played in forming the common ground for modern Asian sensibilities.

As noted by Thompson (1995) above, globalization has taken place throughout human history, but in recent years the process has only intensified. In meetings between the local and the global, hybridity reveals itself as new practices of cultural and performative expression. For example, locals appropriate global goods, conventions, and styles including music, cuisine, cinema, fashion, and so on, and inscribe their everyday meaning into them (Bhabha 1994; Young

2003). The globalization of media ironically stimulates hybridization. In order to better understand the relationship between hybridity, globalization, and East Asian popular culture, it is valuable to pay close attention to the development of South Korea's media and the success of the Korean Wave. South Korea's relative lack of involvement with international systems of cultural production and consumption relegated it to the backwaters of global culture for most of the twentieth century. Since the 1990s, however, South Korea has grown into a regional hub of popular culture, with hybridity playing an important role in this process.

Korean media development and the Korean Wave

The Korean Wave is partly indebted to globalization in the form of the media liberalization that swept across Asia in the 1990s. At that time, Korean television dramas began to take up the expanded airtime that was made available on television channels in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, and Malaysia, countries which had for the most part adopted media liberalization measures. In addition, the Asian financial crisis which precipitated Korea's 1997–1998 bailout by the International Monetary Fund brought about a situation in which Asian media buyers preferred Korean programs because of their competitive prices; as of 2000, Korean television dramas were a quarter of the price of Japanese dramas, and a tenth of the price of Hong Kong dramas (Lee 2003). The liberalization of Korea's domestic media, which took place from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, was also a factor in the creation of the Korean Wave. In fact, we can view the Korean Wave as an outgrowth of Korea's efforts to retain its cultural identity as it confronted the threat of being dominated by global media. Under U.S. pressure, in 1988 the Korean government allowed major U.S. film companies to distribute their films directly to local theaters in Korea. By 1994, more than ten Korean film importers had shut down their businesses. Film production companies, which were also running film importing businesses, were also severely affected: the annual number of local films produced fell from 121 in 1991 to 63 in 1994. The market share of U.S. films in Korea rose to 80 percent in 1994, up from 53 percent in 1987 (Shin 1995; Yi 1994). Many felt the demise of Korean film was nearing, which further strengthened the discourse of American cultural imperialism within Korean society. Taking into account the importance of film as a means of national cultural expression, the government and the thinking public in Korea also expressed their concern about this situation.

Ironically, it was a U.S. film that laid the foundation for the revival of the local film industry. *Jurassic Park*, which sold out theaters around the world in 1993, inspired awe in both cinemagoers and policymakers in Korea. In 1994, the Presidential Advisory Board on Science and Technology submitted a report to then president Kim Young-sam suggesting that the government should promote media production as a national strategic industry. The report noted that the overall revenue (from theater exhibition, television syndication, licensing, etc.) from *Jurassic Park* was equivalent to the foreign sale of 1.5 million Hyundai cars (Shim 2002). The comparison of a film to Hyundai cars (which were then considered the "pride of Korea") was so striking that it became a topic of everyday conversation for years afterward. The Korean public had awakened to the idea of culture as an industry.

Influenced by the report, which emphasized the culture industry's potential contributions to the national economy, the Korean government established the Cultural Industry Bureau within the Ministry of Culture and Sports in 1994 to orchestrate the development of the culture industry. This was the first such government unit devoted to cultural industry affairs in Korean history. The government also instituted the Motion Picture Promotion Law in 1995 in order to lure corporate and investment capital into the local film industry.

Hybridity revealed itself in Koreans' pursuit of film and cultural industry development. For starters, Koreans emulated the U.S. media industry and appropriated its systems with the mantra "Let's learn from Hollywood." Many media industry experts argued that Korea should have "big business" media companies modeled after U.S. media giants. Taking their cue from this, sprawling family-owned conglomerates in Korea (*chaebol*), such as Samsung, Hyundai, and Daewoo, to name a few, expanded into the media sector to do business in the production, import, distribution, and exhibition of film and other media content. Their participation profoundly strengthened the Korean culture industry. The *chaebol* introduced sophisticated business know-how into an industry once made up of small and mid-sized companies, and each stage of the filmmaking process became more rigorous. To give just one example, customer research techniques were applied not only to the marketing of films, but also their production. Audiences were invited to participate in the scriptwriting, revising, and editing processes to an unprecedented degree. It was reported that the scenario for *Friend*, a 2001 Korean blockbuster, was revised 21 times (Shim 2001).

The U.S. film industry was both the impetus and the model for the Korean film industry's reinvention, and by the late 1990s Korea was churning out blockbusters. Aided by this string of hits, domestic films have come to occupy more than 50 percent of the local market share throughout most years since 2003, up from 15.9 percent in 1993. Building on this domestic success, Korean film exports also greatly increased, from 14 movies with a total revenue of US$173,838 in 1993 to 164 movies earning US$30,979,000 in 2003 (Korean Film Council 2004). Put briefly, the meeting between Hollywood and a local film industry on the brink of collapse resulted in a situation in which hybridity came to play a role in the development of Korean media.

The Korean music industry

Like the Korean film industry, Korean pop music also underwent hybridization during the 1990s, thereby successfully transforming itself into an exportable industry. Before the 1990s, Korean youth preferred Anglo-American pop to the rather monotonous local music, but changes originating from globalization as well as democratic reforms at home began to transform the local music scene. After the government's lifting of restrictions on foreign travel, which was occasioned by Seoul's hosting of the Olympic Games in 1988, the country became more exposed to the outside world. Rapid economic growth during this period also led to a sharp rise in disposable income, and many Koreans began to purchase satellite dishes to pick up Japanese stations and channels like Star TV, which was beamed from Hong Kong. During this period, Koreans also began to patronize such global franchises as Burger King, T.G.I. Friday's, and Starbucks. At the same time, the novels of Murakami Haruki and the films of Wong Kar-wai provided new perspectives and sensibilities to Korean youth. With all the diverse cultural forms flowing into the country, the 1990s was one of the most dynamic periods in Korean history.

Against this backdrop, Korean music fans became savvier about global music trends and began to demand fresh and innovative tunes from local musicians. Cultural producers realized that they had to become unique if they were to succeed in gaining audiences. Like the film producers who appropriated foreign production techniques, more and more musicians experimented with various foreign musical styles and Korea's indie music scenes became more vibrant. Deserving of special attention is the three-man band Seo Taiji and Boys, who released their debut single "I Know" in 1992. The song was arguably the first rap track in Korea, and along with the group's intriguing dance moves, it excited local music listeners who were fed up with the lack of dynamism and musical experimentation in the Korean pop music scene (Taiji Mania).

Until the group disbanded in 1996, Seo Taiji and Boys enjoyed both tremendous popularity and critical acclaim in Korea. Their success was attributable to their innovative hybridization of musical styles. The band creatively mixed genres like rap, soul, rock 'n' roll, techno, punk, hardcore, and traditional Korean ballad, and invented a unique musical form which "employs rap only during the verses, singing choruses in a pop style" (Morelli 2001, 250). This musical mixture was spiced up with dynamic dance moves. In the end, Seo Taiji and Boys set a pattern for contemporary Korean pop music; what has gradually come into existence is a hybrid but distinctively K-pop style. With endless crops of boy bands and girl groups who were influenced by Seo Taiji and Boys being formed, Korea became the second largest music market in Asia with US$300 million in album sales per year by 2002 (Macintyre 2002).

These days, K-pop is characterized as a "global hybrid" of genres including pop, rock, hip-hop, R&B, and electronic music, and like Seo Taiji and Boys, it also places a strong emphasis on visual performance. K-pop is also well known for its unique talent production system. Starting with trainees as young as the age of nine, Korean talent agencies provide rigorous instruction in dance, voice, and—since they target overseas markets—foreign languages. Of all the K-pop agencies, S.M. Entertainment is the most prominent in terms of sales revenue, having produced such popular boy bands and girl groups as H.O.T., BoA, TVXQ, Girl's Generation, SHINee, f(x), and EXO. The story behind the founding of S.M. is relevant to our discussion. Lee Soo-man, the founding chairman of S.M. Entertainment, was a successful musician and television host in the 1970s. As a musician, he usually sang American-influenced ballads. In 1980 he organized a band "Lee Soo-Man and 365 days," arguably the first heavy metal band in Korean history. Seeing another military regime taking over the Korean government in the same year, however, he decided to quit his music career and go to the United States to pursue a master's degree in robotics at California State University, Northridge. However, witnessing the vibrancy of the U.S. entertainment scene and the revolution in music technology occurring there in the 1980s, Lee decided to return to Korea to produce music.

After some struggles in the early 1990s, S.M. successfully produced the hugely popular boy band H.O.T. in 1996, and, as noted above, it continued to produce a long list of successful artists in following years, eventually becoming the biggest music company in Korea. As a leading Korean Wave music producer, S.M. places an emphasis on exporting music. For this, the company takes advantage of its own list of more than 500 composers from around the world, and the meetings and conferences it organizes to discuss and develop new music intended to appeal to global audiences. As a result, S.M.'s music is noted for its hybridization. For example, while the words of Girl's Generation's "Genie" were written by a Korean lyricist, its music was composed by the Norwegian songwriting company Dsign Music, and its accompanying choreography was created by Japanese dancer Nakasone Rino (Yun 2011).

Media regionalization and format exchange

It is often said that globalization is about new connections between cultures around the world. In Asia, however, globalization has expedited existing cultural flows among countries in the region. For example, Japanese films popular in Hong Kong in the 1960s influenced works that were part of the Hong Kong film boom in the 1970s. In turn, Hong Kong films that were popular in South Korea in the 1980s and 1990s titillated the imagination of Korean filmmakers and music video directors. The Korean Wave of the 2000s demonstrates that more and more Asian audiences enjoy Asia-originated content than ever before. The popular Korean drama series *Boys Over Flowers* (꽃보다 남자 2009) provides a relevant point of discussion for this kind of cultural flow in East Asia. It was a remake of the Taiwan megahit TV drama *Meteor Garden*

(流星花園, 2001), which itself was a televisual adaptation of the Japanese manga *Hana Yori Dango* (花より男子). Then, *Boys over Flower*'s pan-Asian popularity spurred a Chinese television production of the story, *Meteor Shower* (流星雨) in 2009. In 2014, an Indian remake, *Kaisi Yeh Yaariyan*, aired on MTV India.

Recently, the regionalization of Asian media has been characterized by the import and export of TV program formats. A TV format refers to an aggregate of concept, ideas, and know-how associated with a copyrighted television program, and usually includes processes such as script writing, production, marketing, audience research, etc. A format exchange can be beneficial for both parties. Format exporters can evade the TV program import quota systems that are adopted and practiced by many countries. By employing already-proven ideas, format importers can lower their risk and save costs associated with researching and developing new programs. And unlike directly imported programs, importers can tailor an imported format to meet the expectations of their locally targeted audience.

It is worth noting here that the Japanese television industry has played an important role in the development of Asian media. The Japanese television broadcasting industry, which began in the early 1950s, at first relied mainly on U.S. program imports, but it quickly worked out how to localize these Western cultural forms. By the late 1980s, Japanese stations had begun to export their own formats. In 1987, the Japanese TV station TBS exported the format for *Wakuwaku Animal Land* to a TV station in the Netherlands. In 1989, TBS sold the format rights for a segment in the variety show *Katochan Kenchan Gokigen Terebi* to ABC, a television network in the United States. ABC developed it into *America's Funniest Home Videos*, and made a huge profit by selling its format rights to many countries around the world (Iwabuchi 2004). By copying Japanese TV programs, television stations in Taiwan, Korea, and other Asian nations were able to develop their own production know-how.

The television format franchise *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* (1998–) is arguably the one that is most responsible for vitalizing the practice of format exchange in recent years. A TV game show of British origin starting in 1998, its U.S. version was launched in 1999. Seeing its success in the United States, many countries launched their own local versions and Asian countries were no exception. Beginning in 2000, India, the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Indonesia, to name a few, aired locally produced versions of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* The ratings success of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* led many Asian countries to import the formats of other hit shows such as *Survivor*, *America's Next Top Model*, *The Price is Right*, and *American Idol*.

Format imports in South Korea began rather late—not until the mid-2000s. At that time, cable channels were suffering from a lack of production personnel and creative ideas as compared with terrestrial channels, and they began to more aggressively import program formats. Since 2006, they have imported programs such as *Saturday Night Live Korea* (channel tvN), *Challenge! Super Model Korea* (On Style), *Top Gear Korea* (XTM), *Korea's Got Talent* (tvN), and *The Voice Korea* (Mnet). While they were emulating the production techniques of American and some European TV shows, both cable and terrestrial channels in Korea were also producing their own reality shows. What set the Korean shows apart from foreign shows was that the Korean TV productions frequently featured the personal lives of celebrities, making use of the producers' influence and connections with talent agencies and stars. Interestingly, the Korean reality shows began to attract the attention of viewers across Asia, who went gaga over any scenes in which they could spot their beloved Korean Wave stars. Some would argue that celebrity-driven reality shows are the distinguishing genre of Korean Wave 3.0, as K-pop was for Korean Wave 2.0, and television drama serials were for Korean Wave 1.0.

Chinese television stations have been particularly active in importing TV formats from Korea. For example, Hunan Television bought the rights of the singing competition show *I Am*

Table 3.1 Selected Korean program format exports

Title (Ownership)	*Transaction Year*	*Importing TV*
Ring the Golden Bell (KBS)	2003	CCTV (China)
Ring the Golden Bell (KBS)	2006	Viet Nam Television (Vietnam) through Mindshare Singapore
We Got Married (MBC)	2010	Turkey
I Am a Singer (MBC)	2011	Hunan Television (China)
Super Diva (CJ E&M)	2012	Shanghai Media Group (China), Argentina, Mexico, Colombia
Immortal Songs (KBS)	2012	Shanghai Media Group (China)
Daddy, Where Are We Going? (MBC)	2013	Hunan Television (China)
2 Days & 1 Night (KBS)	2013	Sichuan TV (China)
Real Men (MBC)	2013	Hunan Television (China)
K-Pop Star (SBS)	2013	Shandong Television (China)
Super Star K (CJ E&M)	2013	Hubei TV (China)
The Genius (CJ E&M)	2013	Netherlands
Running Man (SBS)	2014	Zhejiang Television (China)
Ding-Dong-Dang (EBS)	2014	China Education Television (China)
Grandpas over Flowers (CJ E&M)	2014	Shanghai Dragon Television (China), NBC (U.S.)
Hidden Singer (JTBC)	2014	NBC Universal (U.S.), Hunan Television (China), Turkey

a Singer from MBC in 2012, and its first two Chinese seasons (2013 and 2014) received high ratings. In 2013, Sichuan Television bought a format for a reality-variety show *2 Days & 1 Night* from KBS. Other Korean reality show formats that have been sold to Chinese television stations include *We Got Married* (MBC), *Running Man* (SBS), *K-Pop Star* (SBS), *Real Men* (MBC), and *Daddy Where Are We Going?* (MBC). The usual contract between the Korean and Chinese sides specifies that Korean producers be flown to the production sets in China to provide production expertise to the local production staff and crew. These Korean shows are invariably localized as they are reproduced for the Chinese market. As Kim Yong-jae, the producer of *Running Man*, put it:

> We have tried to localize *Running Man* capitalizing on the interfaces between Chinese and Korean cultures. In our passing the original format on to the Chinese counterpart, we have made efforts to dramatize Chinese traditional cultural forms such as *Journey to the West* in it. Therefore, I would say that the Chinese version of *Running Man* is an outcome of co-production with a ratio of 40% Korean and 60% Chinese production crew.
>
> *(Jang 2015)*

The result of this localization process is a hybridized show: the Chinese version of *Running Man* and similar shows is a Korean format with a Chinese cast, production team, and sensibility. See Table 3.1 for a list of selected TV format exports from Korea in recent years. Table 3.2 lists selected Asian remakes of Korean dramas.

Table 3.2 East Asian remakes of Korean dramas

Original Title (Ownership)	*Remake Title (TV Station)*	*Broadcast Period*
Hotelier (호텔리어, MBC)	*Hotelier* (ホテリア) (TV Asahi, Japan)	Apr. 19, 2007–Jun. 14, 2007
The Devil (마왕, SBS)	*Maō* (魔王) (TBS, Japan)	Jul. 4, 2008–Sep. 12, 2008
Autumn Love Story (가을동화, KBS)	*Fall in Love* (一不小心爱上你) (Hunan TV, China)	Jan. 7, 2011–Jan. 30, 2011
Temptation of Wife (아내의 유혹, SBS)	*Temptation to Go Home* (回家的诱惑) (Hunan TV, China)	Feb. 21, 2011–Mar. 31, 2011
Stickleback (가시고기, MBC)	*Good Life* (グッドライフ) (Kansai TV, Japan)	Apr. 19, 2011–Jun. 28, 2011
You're Beautiful (미남이시네요, SBS)	*You're Handsome* (美男ですね) (TBS, Japan)	Jul. 15, 2011–Sep. 23, 2011
Brilliant Legacy (찬란한 유산, SBS)	*My Splendid life* (我的灿烂人生) (Dragon TV, China)	Nov. 22, 2011–unfinished
My Sassy Girl (엽기적인 그녀, film)	*My Sassy Girl* (牵牛的夏天) (Hunan TV, China)	May 22, 2012–Aug. 2012
You're Beautiful (미남이시네요, SBS)	*Fabulous Boys* (原来是美男) (Formosa Television, Taiwan)	May 12, 2013–Aug. 4, 2013
Thank You (고맙습니다, MBC)	*Angelo* (天使的幸福) (Taiwan)	2013
Full House (풀하우스, KBS)	*Full House* (Channel 7, Thailand)	Jan. 18, 2014–Mar. 2014
Queen In-hyun's Man (인현왕후의 남자, tvN)	*Love Through a Millennium* (相爱穿梭千年) (Hunan TV, China)	Feb. 15, 2015–Mar. 16, 2015
War of Money (쩐의 전쟁, SBS)	*War of Money* (銭の戦争) (Fuji TV, Japan)	Jan. 6, 2015–

Korean–Chinese coproductions

China's keen interest in importing Korean TV programs is worthy of consideration in relation to our discussion of hybridization. The "Let's learn from Hollywood" discourse that once gripped the Korean entertainment industry seems to resonate within China, but these days the phrase has developed a new twist: "Let's learn from Korea." Concerned that its undemocratic polity and other issues have damaged its image overseas, China's government has sought to increase its soft power. To this end, Chinese authorities and the state-run media have been eager to emulate the "success story" of the Korean Wave. *China Daily*, the most influential English-language newspaper in China, attributing the popularity of a Korean TV drama *My Love from the Star* (2013) to "great innovations in Korean TV productions in terms of themes and narrative patterns," writes as follows:

> Hopefully, the innovation-induced success of Korean TV programs will prompt Chinese TV drama makers to think up new ideas and abandon their bad practice of copying foreign productions in order to attract more viewers at home, and possibly abroad.
>
> *(cited in* Korea Times *2014a)*

Against this backdrop, members of the Chinese media industry invited *My Love from the Star* director Jang Tae-yu to give a series of speeches to media professionals in China (Nam 2014). In

a similar vein, Chinese media industry professionals enrolled at the KBS Broadcasting Academy in Seoul for a six-day course to learn about the Korean media system in 2014.

However, China's State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television's 2014 enactment of a rule which specifies that any television station may not import more than one TV format per year was a signal to the Chinese media industry to find a new mode of production know-how transfer from Korea. As a result of this decision, the number of coproduction projects involving Chinese television stations and Korean production companies began to increase. For example, Korea's Pan Entertainment made a coproduction deal with China's Zhejiang Daily Media Group to produce the television drama *Kill Me, Heal Me*, which aired in Korea and China simultaneously in early 2015. About the same time, Korean television network SBS, entertainment group S.M. C&C (a spin-off of the previously discussed S.M. Entertainment), and Chinese video site Youku Tudou entered into a deal to coproduce the reality show *Super Junior M's Guest House* for Chinese audiences (Ku 2014).

In 2014, the Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Korea Concerning the Co-Production of Films was signed, which allowed Korean–Chinese coproductions to bypass China's screen quotas. The Chinese film industry interpreted this as a signal to push ahead with more collaborative projects with the Korean film industry. For example, Kwak Jae-yong, director of internationally popular *My Sassy Girl* (1999), was invited to direct a romantic comedy in China in 2014. The same year, a Chinese film company invited the above-mentioned *My Love from the Star* director Jang Tae-yu to direct a film in China. This deal included a clause that Jang was to bring his own production staff, including writers, cameramen, art directors, and dressers to China (Ku 2014), which was intended to facilitate the transfer of production know-how from Korea to China. As of July 2015, more than ten Korean–Chinese coproduced films have been released or are in production. For example, *Miss Granny*, a Korean film which drew audiences totaling 8,650,000 people in 2014, was remade into *20 Once Again* in China in 2015, which topped the box office for eight consecutive days and earned over US$59 million in China by February 8, 2015. It is reported that the film's commercial success was made possible because it was adapted to suit Chinese tastes. The following remarks made by an anonymous employee in charge of film distribution in China at Korean entertainment company CJ E&M is interesting: "Because of the Korean wave, so many Chinese viewers have already watched *Miss Granny* through illegal downloads. In this vein, Chinese staff emphasized that *20 Once Again* should differentiate itself from the original story of *Miss Granny*" (personal interview).

In order to better connect with the sensibilities of Chinese audiences, *20 Once Again* focused on the love affairs between the protagonist and three male characters, a different emphasis than in the original *Miss Granny*, which underlined the comic character of the heroine. This adaptation was made because the kinds of jokes that Korean and Chinese audiences find humorous are different, and because a young woman's romantic involvement with men from different age groups is more socially acceptable in China than in Korea. The main setting was changed from a café to a mah-jongg club, and the television drama that the heroine used to enjoy was changed from a typical Korean drama which revolved around birth secrets to the famous *My Fair Princess* (還珠格格). Taken as a whole, *20 Once Again* was not simply a translation of the Korean original, but in the process of adaptation it became a Chinese film.

Various entities in China have also recently decided to invest in the Korean film industry directly. For example, China Media Capital (CMC), a state-related investment fund, decided to invest 80 billion won (US$77.2 million) in a Korean cinema fund in September 2014. Alibaba, the world's largest e-commerce company, announced its plan to invest 100 billion won (US$9.6 million) in the Korean film industry (Lee, Tae-hun and Byeon, Hee-won 2014). There

are about 23,600 screens in China, and that number increases daily. The total number of filmgoers in 2013 was 830 million, which was 34.5 percent more than the previous year. Considering that the sales capacity of the Chinese film market is expected to grow to 11.34 trillion won (US$10.9 billion) in the near future and become the world's largest film market, coproduction projects with China are also appealing to the Korean side (Kim Su-yeon 2014).

Conclusion

The media liberalization that swept across the world during the 1980s and beyond led East Asian countries to open their national media markets. The short supply of domestic programming initially provided revenue opportunities to U.S. cultural producers, a development accounted for by conventional explanations of media globalization. However, this situation also motivated South Korea, Taiwan, China, and other East Asian countries to develop their own local media industries. As we have examined in this chapter, the Korean Wave demonstrates the coexistence of local power, regionalization, and globalization.

An integral part of Koreans' pursuit of media development is the mix of indigenous cultural elements and the sensibilities of contemporary locals with foreign forms and styles, an approach that has achieved commercial success at home and abroad. In their creative appropriation of foreign cultural practices and styles, we find that hybrid cultural forms are constructed. By this, we understand that globalization, particularly in the realm of popular culture, breeds a creative form of hybridization that ironically works towards sustaining local identities in the global context.

We can extend our discussion of cultural hybridization historically and in a wider geographical context; as noted above, Hannerz (1996) argues that all of world history can be defined as a process of hybridization. Since the mid-twentieth century, U.S. popular culture has been the common element of East Asian popular culture, influencing media and cultural forms and styles in almost every country there. So while Japan, as the first Asian nation to modernize, influenced media industries in Hong Kong and Korea, for example, we cannot deny that Japanese media had itself been influenced by images and ideas from the U.S. The fact that Asian audiences have formed similar cultural tastes through the consumption of U.S. and Japanese popular culture has facilitated the recent popular reception of Korean popular culture, which itself has been modeled after U.S. and Japanese popular cultural forms and practices.

As they grow and internationalize, culture industries in Asia mix and transform content and styles of cultural productions in order to maximize profit. In particular, the recent growth of TV format exchanges and the coproduction boom intensify cultural hybridization in East Asia. Through the processes of localization and hybridization, the reception and consumption of Korean pop culture in foreign countries has been facilitated. Also, it is convenient for China, where the government exerts a tight control over cultural industries, to import hybridized Korean content instead of directly importing more risqué and politically "dangerous" Western cultural productions. Korea is not a traditional powerhouse of popular culture production. However, as a regional media capital it has not only ignited cultural exchanges in Asia, but also awakened neighboring Asian countries to new possibilities in media industry development and cultural hybridization.

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