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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Information and Announcements

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the SEAMSJ special issue 3.3 themed "Glocalization of Popular Culture in Southeast Asian Media." Comprising a collection of five research articles, this is the final issue in a trilogy that has already seen the publication of the 2021-special issues 3.1 "Communication Outbreaks" and 3.2 "Critical Mass Media Histories."

Many media experts have devoted much of their time and energy on making this a high quality SEAMSJ publication. First and foremost, I thank all the authors for contributing their well-researched articles and for patiently going through a number of quality cycles with the editorial board. The authors have shown great commitment and trust in the editorial process. I am also grateful to the external reviewers for contributing their expert feedback in the double-blind peer-review process. Finally, I thank the SEAMSJ assistant editors for all their efforts. They have had their fair share in elevating the quality of the articles and the journal as a whole.

The issue begins with the article "Beyond the Screen: Transnational Flows in Early Southeast Asian Cinemas" by Darlene Machell de Leon Espeña, an investigation of the interconnectedness and influences of national cinemas in Southeast Asia. The article presents a detailed discussion of the postcolonial cinema histories and industries of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia and highlights the collaborative spirit of Southeast Asian film directors, Hollywood's influence, as well as the role of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs as financial backers of numerous films. One of the author's central claims is that the transnational connections in Southeast Asian cinemas have supported the widespread notion of one coherent region.

Staying in the world of Southeast Asian cinemas, the second article, authored by John Adrianfer Atienza, is entitled "Locating the 1960s Filipino Western Genre." Atienza outlines the situation of Philippine cinema in the 1960s and analyzes the adaptation of the Western genre in the Philippine context. In the spirit of the journal's special theme of glocalization, the author also discusses the appropriation of the American Western (global) genre in the context of Philippine (local) filmmaking and explores the establishment of the Filipino Western of the 1960s. The two popular Westerns *Daniel Barrion* (1964) and *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion* (1968) serve as suitable case studies.

The third article moves the discussion of glocalization to cinema in Singapore. In their article "Destination Storytelling Singapore: *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018) and the Constructed Global Audience," Joshua Babcock and Kenzell Huggins investigate the concept of destination storytelling in the context of Singapore and with a contextualization of the success of *Crazy Rich Asians* with a global audience.

The authors put a particular focus on tourism promotion, the idea of a location as a consumer good, destination branding on local and global scales, as well as the construction of destination storytelling in relation to media development.

The article "Glocalization of Popular Culture in Selected Filipino Remakes of 'Koreanovelas'" was co-written by five authors, namely Janine Aberin, Patricia Luisa Dealca, Benjamin George Meamo III, Ellainemor San Pascual, and Tamara Jane Ventanilla. The authors discuss the contents and storylines of remakes of so-called Koreanovelas, the popularized Filipino terminology assigned to popular Korean TV drama series aired in the Philippines. They put a particular focus on the production, consumption, and glocalization of popular culture, the underlying motivation of Filipino TV networks to adapt Korean series for the local market, creative and industrial processes, as well as the incorporation of aspects of Filipino culture to appeal to local audiences. The article includes detailed discussions of *Full House* (2009–) and *Pure Love* (2014), among other Koreanovelas.

This journal issue closes with the fifth article: "The Logic of Affective Economics in Philippine Fans' Discursive Articulations in Response to a *League Of Legends* Skin Sale" by Manuel Enverga III. The eruptions of Taal Volcano in Batangas, Philippines, in January 2020 caused much devastation. In an attempt to raise awareness, the producers of the globally popular multiplayer online battle arena video game *League of Legends* launched a so-called skin sale. Drawing on analytical approaches in fan studies, the author scrutinized the reactions of thousands of Filipinos to the promotion, for instance their brand loyalty, and presents the results of his study in his article.

My sincere hope is that this publication does not only bring many new insights about the intersections between mass media and glocalization, but that it also showcases the SEAMSA Executive Council's efforts to establish the association as a premier academic force and vibrant community for media studies in Southeast Asia.

The year 2021 will soon come to an end. I wish all readers a joyful and prosperous new year 2022.

Alexander J. Klemm
Editor-in-Chief
eic.seamsj@gmail.com

ORIGINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

THEME

Glocalization of Popular Culture in Southeast Asian Media

OBJECTIVE

Southeast Asians consume various traditional and new media contents, which makes the region a big market for content distributors. In particular, drama series produced in China, Japan, Korea, India, and the United States have aired in Southeast Asian countries and were presented either through dubbed or subbed content. Music and fashion sense inspired by popular music groups in East Asia have also developed and gained a large fan following in the region. This issue collates papers that analyze the various manifestations of glocalization in media content exhibited in Southeast Asia. Roland Robertson in *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (2000) conceptualized glocalization as the accommodation and/or contextualization of foreign ideas, which results in cultural diversity. In this case, we refer to the concept as the process in accommodating global media content and contextualizing it according to the tastes of local consumers. Due to the broad scope of the theme, the journal invites papers revolving around, but not being limited to, the politics of global media content localization, translation studies on dubbed content or songs, and the sociology and economics of fan studies. As such, the issue is interdisciplinary, incorporating papers with a focus on linguistics, history, politics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, visual arts, culture, and economics relevant to Southeast Asian media studies.

RECOMMENDED TOPICS

- Relations between glocalization, popular culture and social media
- The effects of glocalization on social media
- Strategies by which global (or Asian) media companies localize their pop culture products in Southeast Asian countries
- The digital glocalization of entertainment
- Filipinization, Thaization, etc. of East Asian drama through dubbed content
- Studies on Japanese songs translated to Bahasa Indonesia, Filipino, Thai, Vietnamese, and other Southeast Asian languages
- The interplay of international political and economic relations in the consumption of global media content

- Sociological and anthropological studies on Japanese and Korean pop communities in Southeast Asia
- The economics of fan merchandise consumption
- Critical approaches in popular culture glocalization
- Historical studies on the glocalization of films in Southeast Asia
- Food, gender, and ethnic identities in glocalized media content
- Cultural con/divergence in the process of glocalizing content
- Ecomedia and glocalization in Southeast Asia

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

All submissions must be original and may not be under review by another journal or other forms of publication. Authors should follow the guidelines found here: https://bit.ly/2m41qOA

All manuscripts should be sent to eic.seamsj@gmail.com.

Please use the subject "SUBMISSION: Vol.3 No.3_Surname_Short Title" (e.g. SUBMISSION: Vol.3 No.3_Ching_A Review of Southeast Asian Media Theories).

DEADLINE

30 June 2020

Beyond the Screen: Transnational Flows in Early Southeast Asian Cinemas

DARLENE MACHELL DE LEON ESPEÑA
Singapore Management University

ABSTRACT

National cinemas in Southeast Asia did not appear in isolation. The emergence and development of national cinemas across the region were facilitated by key transnational connections and influences. This article explores three transnational factors that helped pave the way for the emergence of the national cinemas in postcolonial Southeast Asia. Travelling across borders to collaborate with one another, Southeast Asian filmmakers shared their ideas, filmmaking techniques, and political ideals. Hollywood productions also influenced their craft. All these ideas and influences would find their way into the films they created. Facilitating the transnational exchange and productions were the ethnic Chinese who funded numerous films that later served as an impetus for the local filmmaking industry. Through these transnational exchanges, collaborations, and financial support, the post-war Southeast Asian film industries became notably vibrant and popular with the local population. The locals would embrace the films as valuable entertainment products and as significant parts of their social and cultural lives. The article further argues that these transnational linkages reinforced the notion of Southeast Asia as a coherent region as it was formally institutionalised in 1967 with the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Keywords: Hollywood, national cinema, Southeast Asian Cinemas, transnational history

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly globalised world, the notion of national cinema does not fully capture the dynamics and interconnections in film production, circulation, and consumption. This article looks into the vibrant cinematic exchange within Southeast Asia, where Southeast Asian filmmakers, producers, and actors engaged in dialogue with each other, forming cultural as well as political networks. Focusing on the cases of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaya/Malaysia, it highlights the interconnectedness of national cinemas in Southeast Asia. Through this, it pushes the scope of the history of national cinemas in the region by exploring the transnational exchanges and linkages in national cinemas from the end of the Second World War up until the establishment of Southeast Asia as a coherent region in 1967.

While the technology underpinning modern cinemas was of European origins, it is imperative to deepen and complicate our understanding of the development of Southeast Asian national cinemas in relation to nation-building, decolonisation, and regionalism. To date, there has been a tremendous production of academic publications exploring Southeast Asian cinemas (Gaik, Barker, and Ainslie 2020; Sim 2020; Baumgärtel 2012; Lim and Yamamoto 2011) from a myriad of approaches. The themes of these publications include the history and development of national cinemas, the rise of independent films and filmmaking in the region, and critical and aesthetic appraisal of Southeast Asian films and genres, to name a few. While most of these works tend to focus on the nation as a framework and method of analysis, in recent years, prominent film scholars have explored the concept of transnational cinemas (Tolentino 2014; Taylor 2011; Barker and Imanjaya 2020; Durovičová and Newman 2009). To be sure, transnationalism is not a novel approach and it has had a huge impact in various fields, such as literature, political science, and film studies. In the field of history, transnational refers to "complex linkages, networks, and actors… its central concern [is] with movements, flows, and circulation" (Hofmeyer 2006).

Foregrounding Southeast Asia, I offer a historical investigation of the facets of transnationalism in Southeast Asian cinemas following the Second World War. This article argues that the climate of post-war Southeast Asia amidst decolonisation and Cold War contestation paved the way for Southeast Asian filmmakers to explore collaborations and co-productions. I identify three transnational flows that influenced the development and transformation of national cinemas in the region. The first link to be examined is the transnational role of ethnic Chinese businessmen and immigrants in instilling non-Western cinematic roots in Southeast Asia. They provided capital and financial resources to filmmakers, imported films from China, and were responsible for a lot of technical, aesthetic, and stylistic transference. More importantly, they conjured an alternative (i.e. non-Western) lens of viewing or portraying Southeast Asia and its people – an alternative perspective that would then influence and shape Southeast Asian national cinemas. Second, the local filmmakers and producers formed an informal network of technology, people, and ideas that further invigorated the maturation of national

cinemas. These transnational collaborations were made easy by the region's collective historical, social, and cultural attributes. Finally, Hollywood, a global cinematic force, impacted the region as a whole. Hollywood flooded the market and gained unprecedented popularity in the region. It influenced the cinematic apparatus, material productions, business-model, techniques, as well ideologies of Southeast Asian cinemas. As perhaps the most enduring transnational linkage in the region, Hollywood infiltrated the region in so many levels and ways, inciting perceptible, albeit varied, responses from Southeast Asian societies.

Focusing on three countries – the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaya/Malaysia, this article argues that the emergence of national cinemas in Southeast Asia was a transnational process. These three cases are selected on account of their vibrant film industries in the post-war era and their key role in the nascent regional politics and formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967. I further argue that films from these three countries laid out the foundations of the idea of regionalism or regional identity among Southeast Asians. The writers of the film (and indeed, political) scripts came from different states across the region. They formed transnational networks, exchanging ideas, and influencing one another. The products of those transnational exchanges were films that moved the people of Southeast Asia to imagine not only what their respective nations were like but what lay beyond their borders and to develop a sense of affinity with the histories and cultures of their neighbouring countries.

STRONG CHINESE LINKS

The ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs played key roles in the development of the film industry in the region. They started and managed many of the earliest studios and film companies that produced and screened local films. Growing the film industry in Southeast Asia, they produced films that stirred the imaginations of peoples about their countries and neighbours. Developing a transnational network of relations among the peoples in the film industry in Southeast Asia, they also facilitated the exchange of technology, ideas, and cinematic narratives among interested parties in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaya/Malaysia. In other words, the ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs facilitated the development of cinema in the region at two levels: national (cinema industry and the national construct) as well as transnational (regional cinematic web and regionalism or a sense of regional identity). Trained in countries like the United States, the ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs saw the film industry as one sector of the economy that could potentially reap significant financial gains. But they also entertained certain ideas about Southeast Asian localities and the broader region. They produced films that reflected their ideas about the emerging Southeast Asian nations, the peoples, the cultures, and the heterogeneity of the region.

The ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs were key actors in Indonesia's nascent cinema industry. Aside from Oriental Film, which produced *Kris Mataram* (1940), Chinese businessmen owned other prominent film companies: Wong Brothers established in Bandung in 1928, the Tan Films opened in 1929 by Tan Khoen Hian, and in 1931, the Cino Motion Picture Corporation was opened by The Tend Chun in Batavia (Amri 1988). They are credited for being among the pioneers of Indonesian cinema (apart from Western companies), producing the first feature films in the country. Their movies included *Melatie van Java* (Jasmine of Java, 1928), *Njai Dasima* (Mistress Dasima, 1929), *Nancy Bikin Pembelasan* (Nancy Seeks Revenge, 1930), *Melatie van Agam* (Melatie of Agam, 1930), *Impian di Bali* (Dreams in Bali, 1939), *Zoebaidah* (1940), and *Kris Mataram* (Mataram Keris, 1940). Ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs and producers also collaborated among themselves and with European filmmakers to produce films. *Terang Boelan* (Full Moon, 1937), for example, bore the imprimatur of Dutch filmmakers Albert Balink and Mannus Franken, and the Wong brothers Othniel and Joshua (Heider 1991, 15-16; Ruppin 2016, 215-262).

Employing the Shanghai film style, techniques used by Hollywood filmmakers, and local traditional theatre narrative practices, these films acquainted Indonesians with the lives and aspirations of the ethnic Chinese community as well as their identification with Indonesia. Njoo Cheong Seng's film *Kris Mataram*, for example, features scenes about East Indies society. Instead of portraying it as being associated exclusively with one cultural group in Indonesia, Njoo used the big screen to show it was cosmopolitan and linked to different cultures. The film's lead actress was also ethnic Chinese and wore traditional Javanese attire. To convey its message of inclusivity and promote the film, Njoo further employed publicity posters worded in both Dutch and Malay (Setijadi and Barker 2010, 30). In other words, Njoo's work effectively propounded the idea of an Indonesia that was culturally multi-coloured but also distinctly Indonesian. Similarly, this can be seen in *Terang Boelan*, another work produced by the Chinese filmmakers that contributed to the 'Indonesianization' of films in the East Indies (van der Heide 2002, 128). As Heider argues, after watching the film, audiences would have left the cinemas with the vivid notion of Indonesia as a complex but viable nation made up of multiple cultures (1991, 162-173). The filmmakers, in sum, promoted an image of Indonesia "that is complex, idiosyncratic, and unique, yet connected to global flows and modern practices… such an image of Indonesia is different from later insular indigenist imaginings of Indonesian belonging" (Setijadi and Barker 2010, 27). Their film techniques, styles, and narratives brought new understandings of the Indonesian nation onto the big screen and into the public consciousness.

It is also important to note that these early productions were, in fact, circulated across the colonial borders. *Kris Maratam* and *Terang Boelan* were screened in Singapore. The latter has scenes filmed in Singapore as well (Sunday Tribune, December 5, 1937). In an advertisement, *Kris Mataram* was described as "new Malay Musical" (The Straits Times, March 24, 1941) and continued to be screened at least twice at the Garrick Theatre in Geylang in April 1941 (The Straits Times, April 5, 1941). The

actors and actresses of these films also visited Singapore. In 1951, Fifi Young was one of the Indonesian artists who attended a musical show and fashion parade held at the Happy World Covered Stadium. Other Indonesia stars included the beauty queen Maria Manado, and Riboet Rawit, then a 22-year-old Sudanese singer and actress (Singapore Standard, November 21, 1950). *Terang Boelan* was equally popular and deemed as "an ideal entertainment for Malays and other Muslims to celebrate the Hari Raya festival" with a "universal appeal" (Singapore Free Press, December 6., 1937).

When ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs were active in the Indonesian film industry, they also invested in and keenly developed the Malayan and Singaporean film business. The principal film enterprises were the Shaw Brothers and the Cathay-Keris. The Shaw Brothers, Tan Sri Runme, and Sri Runrun arrived in Singapore from Shanghai and established the Hai Seng Company. They were initially focused on distributing films in Singapore and Malaya. They then turned to making them. In 1937, the Shaws bought second-hand film production equipment from Hong Kong and began producing films. Among their early creations was *Ibu Tiri* (The-Step Mother), released in 1937. Seeing much economic potential in the business, the Shaw Brothers expanded their film empire in the region. They built amusement parks and theatres and operated over a hundred movie houses across Southeast Asia (Barnard 2008). They established the Capitol Theater and constructed a studio in Singapore, hoping to use it to produce Malay and Cantonese films. To appeal to the local audience, the Malay works featured prominent Malay and Indonesian artists, such as Haron and Tina. These films were undoubtedly popular. Following the end of the Second World War, the Shaw Brothers decided to expand their operations and meet the heightened demand for entertainment. In 1949, the company's Malay film department became the Malay Film Productions. Through this new set-up, the studio made films in the region, and even brought filmmakers from the Philippines, Malaya, and Indonesia together to create the earliest transnational film productions. This will be further elaborated in the succeeding section. Suffice to note that the Shaw Brothers contributed to the establishment of a transnational network of filmmakers that would churn out productions that shaped the peoples' attitudes toward the region and the world.

Like the Shaw Brothers, Cathay Organization was another prominent ethnic Chinese film company that was influential in shaping the cinematic narratives in the region. Formerly known as Associated Theatres, the company was established by Lim Cheng Kim (wife of Loke Yew) and her son, Loke Wan Tho. Loke Yew, the patriarch, was born in Guandong, China, to a simple farming family. In 1858, he travelled to Malaya to look for better opportunities. For several years, he worked in a provisions shop. He built up his savings and was eventually able to open his own store. Loke also explored opportunities in the Malayan peninsula and invested in the tin mines of Perak. In due course, the entrepreneurial Loke Yew managed to expand his commercial ventures, diversifying into the liquor, real estate, and transportation businesses. His fourth wife, Lim Cheng Kim (born and raised in Malaya), and son, Loke Wan Tho, drew upon the large financial war chest that he built to start the Associated Theatres Ltd. in 1935 (Basri and Alauddin 1995, 58-73; Sen 2006, 171-184).

The Lokes opened numerous cinema houses in Singapore and Malaya. In August 1941, the company finally completed the construction of the 14-floor Cathay Building along Handy Road, the tallest structure in Singapore. Construction of the building had incidentally begun in 1937, and its cinema was opened to the public in 1939. At that time, the Cathay Building boasted a 1,300-seater cinema lined with armchairs. It also had air-conditioning. The first movie the cinema screened was Zoltan Korda's *The Four Feathers*. It attracted a sizeable crowd, which included prominent guests, such as the Colonial Secretary Sir Alexander Small and Lady Small. While the Cathay Building consistently drew large crowds until the war, the Lokes continued to expand their business. They developed an extensive network of cinema houses in the region and led the way in producing Malay and Mandarin films. They even employed mobile film vehicles to bring cinematic productions to far-flung villages and rural areas. Cathay Organization played a vital role in developing the cinema and entertainment industries of Singapore and Malaya and, to a certain extent, the entire region (Muthalib 2013; Sen 1985, 1-55).

If ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs helped develop the film industry in Malaya and Singapore, they also played significant roles in the Philippines. The pioneering group of businessmen, apart from the Spaniards and other Europeans, who invested in making films, included *chinos cristianos* (Chinese Christians). Among them were the Palanca and Leongson clans. These Chinese Christians, who were mainly businessmen, had reportedly been in the movie business before Jose Nepomuceno, the more famous "founder" of Filipino cinema, started his operations and released his first feature film (Deocampo 2003, 237-238; Musser 2017).

Nepomuceno released *Dalagang Bukid* (Country Maiden) in 1919 featuring Atang de la Rama. The locally produced silent film garnered significant attention and generated a lot of ticket sales. Yet another equally laudable work, *La Conquista Filipinas* (The Conquest of the Philippines) had been released seven years earlier by Edward Meyer Gross's Rizalina Film Manufacturing Company. Backing Gross were ethnic Chinese businessmen in the Philippines (Deocampo 2003, 239-242). Gross was an American businessman who decided to move into the Filipino film industry in the early 1910s. He ostensibly had help from key individuals in the Philippines – those who were familiar with the country's history – in crafting *La Conquista Filipinas*' screenplay. The film's storyline explores the ancient history of the Philippines prior to Spanish colonisation. It also narrates the early years of contact between the colonised and the colonisers. Other works released by the Rizalina Film Manufacturing Company, such as *La Vida Rizal* (The Life of Rizal, 1912), *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not, 1915), and *El Filibusterismo* (The Reign of Greed, 1916), similarly deal with local and nationalist themes, or historical subjects, such as the revolution against Spain and the Filipino martyr Dr. Jose Rizal. Apart from local experts, such films undoubtedly had the imprimatur of Filipino business people and government officials. Reflecting local production practices, the movies featured these businessmen and officials playing bit parts (Deocampo 2003, 239-242).

As an American who had only recently settled in the country, Gross would therefore have had assistance from the locals, including ethnic Chinese partners, in producing the films. A well-known ethnic Chinese businessman had, in fact, funded the production of *La Conquista*. Born in Xiamen, Don Carlos Palanca had moved to the Philippines in 1869 to look for better opportunities. Like Loke Yew, Palanca started his new life in Southeast Asia as a humble shop assistant. Tagged as "Manila's Noted Chinaman" (The Lincoln Sentinel, April 24, 1902), he worked diligently, accumulated enough funds to open up his own merchandise shop, progressively expanded his businesses, and eventually made his fortune. Among his many economic interests was the film industry and agreed to fund the production of *La Conquista* (Deocampo 2003, 239-242; Carpenter 1900). Palanca's financial support to Gross, though, was neither exceptional nor incomprehensible. Many ethnic Chinese who had acquired wealth and built their investments in the Philippines also financed the film industry. They included Don Francisco Lichauco, Don Francisco Leongson, Don Jose Tiotoco, and Don Jose Lauchengco. The returns could be handsome as movies were popular forms of entertainment in the country. Given their endeavours in the film industry, the ethnic Chinese magnates certainly had significant sway over popular entertainment and public perception of issues in the Philippines. As a scholar notes, one should not neglect "the role that the *chinos cristianos* (Chinese Christians) played in the cultural affairs of the emerging nation" (Deocampo 2003, 242-245; Carpenter 1900).

Apart from funding the production of films, the ethnic Chinese community also built theatres in the Philippines. In 1915, the Yu Uy Tong Clan Association erected one of the very first theatres in Binondo. This establishment eventually came to be known as the Rex Theatre. Another Chinese-owned movie house was the Asia Theatre Building. It was controlled by Vicente Gotamco. Born in Amoy in 1875, Gotamco came to the Philippines in 1885 to seek a better life. He made money, but lost most of his investments in a fire after the Filipino-American war. He rebuilt his businesses again, establishing a lumber company and acquiring large tracts of land in Pasay, a suburb of Manila. Gotamco also went into the film industry. At the Chinese-owned Asia Theatre Building and Rex Theatre, numerous Chinese and Hollywood movies would be screened (Taylor 2013, 1588-1621). Ultimately, like Indonesia and Malaya, the ethnic Chinese community in the Philippines was one key actor that helped develop the country's film industry.

Although ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs featured prominently in the movie business across Southeast Asia, they did not pompously compel the scriptwriters and actors to overtly advance political messages in their cinematic works. They could not, for example, openly call for the British imperialists to be violently booted out of Malaya. They would have been incarcerated (Muthalib 2013, 1-38). Yet their films reflected the societies of their times, and these societies were evidently ripe for reform and change. Putting images and generating narratives of racially-stratified societies on the silver screen would have invariably provoked reactions. Ethnic Chinese filmmakers and producers thus participated,

whether consciously or not, in the process of creating images and meanings of the nation. They would eventually rouse the local imagination.

The substantial Chinese investment and involvement, then, facilitated the development and growth of film enterprise in the region. Prior to the increased participation of other Southeast Asians in film production, the ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs had helped fund and build the infrastructure and facilities for a dynamic network of national cinemas. They further contributed to developing the moviegoing culture in Southeast Asia, offering movies in the local languages. Their involvement prevented the industry from being dominated by Western entrepreneurs and European-produced films. The ethnic Chinese business people enabled Southeast Asia's film industry to develop its unique identity. As one of the first groups of non-Western film producers in the region, these ethnic Chinese managed to assemble the initial bits and pieces – fragments of what eventually would underpin the development of a distinct Southeast Asian political and strategic culture.

CO-PRODUCTIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL DISTRIBUTIONS

The Southeast Asian film industry that the ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs helped build saw much transnational collaboration and exchange of ideas. The mobility and exchange of cultures, ideas, and filmmaking technology in Southeast Asia generated cultural products that people across the region could relate to. The interconnection and interaction among Southeast Asian filmmakers and producers after World War II were dynamic. A number of outstanding films were made through co-productions among pioneering Southeast Asian filmmakers. Film distribution also expanded beyond national borders. Films from the Philippines made their way to Malaya and Indonesia. Cinematic productions from Malaya crossed easily to Indonesia and the Philippines. As the European empires retreated, intra-regional collaboration in film production and circulation intensified. Through these transnational associations, national cinemas progressively became transnational cinemas, producing films that resonated with audiences across national territorial borders.

The filmic collaborations in post-war Southeast Asia generated enthralling movies that illustrate the physiognomies and nature of cultural and social interaction within the region. These co-productions pervaded all levels of film making and brought together Southeast Asia directors, producers, technicians, cameramen, and actors to work on films. The filmmakers also circulated the films intra-regionally (Barnard 2009, 65-86). In a microcosm, the Malayan case was quite telling. Malaya was a highly fragmented and plural society, divided along ethnic lines, but as Timothy Barnard points out,

> [a]s film was a new form of expression in the region, the Shaw Brothers, Chinese migrants from Shanghai, hired Indian film directors to oversee the nascent industry. These Indian directors – mostly from India, although few has grown up in

> Malaya – wrote screenplays based on tales from their homeland, and used actors from *bangsawan…* to perform on-screen. This pattern – of Chinese owners, Malay *bangsawan*-based actors, and Indian writers and producers, which also reinforced stereotypes of the labour profiles of the region – held true for the period from 1947 until around 1955 at the two major studios.

The movement and screening of these films across national borders helped connect communities culturally and bring forth a nascent sense of regionalism among the peoples of Southeast Asia. Malayans, Filipinos, and Indonesians learnt more about each other. Finding common ground in their decolonisation experiences, they also consumed cinematic productions that revealed the socioeconomic and political aspirations of their fellow Southeast Asian citizens.

One of the foremost examples of these transnational cinematic productions in Southeast Asia is a work that resulted from the collaboration between Lamberto Avellana, a pioneering Filipino director, and P. Ramlee, who is known as a great actor, composer, director, and singer in Malaysian film history. *Sergeant Hassan* is one of most memorable films of post-war Malaysia and, by extension, of Southeast Asia. It is also a good case to examine transnational production in the region not only because it was made by two pioneers of Southeast Asian national cinemas but also because it portrayed nationalist sentiment at the peak of decolonisation and the Cold War.

The film was set at the height of the Japanese invasion of Malaya and explores the story of a simple orphan turned soldier during the war. Hassan's parents died when he was young. His father's friend subsequently adopted him. Embittered by the attention that was lavished on Hassan, the latter's foster brother, Aziz, bullied him. As grownups, Aziz continues to hate Hassan because Salmah, a woman he likes, fancies Hassan instead of him. With the outbreak of war, the Royal Malay Regiment calls for volunteers. Aziz joins but Hassan is forced to stay at home to manage the land owned by his foster father. As a result, he is labelled a coward by the townsfolk. Hassan decides to leave and join the regiment and is soon promoted to Sergeant. Hassan proves to be a good and brave fighter and even saves Aziz when he is captured by the Japanese.

The film was screened in Malaya in 1958 – only one year following the granting of independence by the British. It has subtitles mainly in English and Malay and was supported by the Royal Malay Regiment (Singapore Free Press, August 30, 1958). The memory of negotiations, limbo, and tension was very much present and alive in the minds not only the Malayans themselves but of their neighbouring countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia. While the Philippines was granted independence in 1946, Indonesia declared sovereignty in 1947. The founding political leaders of Malaya led by Tunku Abdul Rahman were surveying for ways on how to build the country, navigate international relations, and design the internal institutions and framework of the newly independent

state. In the broader social and cultural context, the period corresponds to the comprehensive process of decolonisation – moving away from the grip of their former colonisers. The very same trend was apparent in the Philippines and Indonesia.

The entire film captures the dilemma of ordinary citizens at the height of the Japanese occupation. It puts the narratives of resistance at the forefront of its filmic message. It argues for the awakening of Malay/Malaysian nationalist fervour. At a significant juncture in the film, the main character, Hassan, bravely proclaims: "*Memang bangsa kita masih muda dan masih lemah. Aku tak peduli ito semua. Harapanku hanyalah kita sama bangsa bersatu-padulah hendaknya."* ["Even though we are still a young and new nation, I do not care. I hope we can all rise together."] (Ramlee and Avellana 1958). Clearly, the film recognises the state of the Malay nation – its vulnerabilities at a stage of decolonisation and its efforts of coming to terms not merely with the Japanese occupation but more importantly with British hegemony. Further, it envisioned the growth of a young yet sturdy nation and despite the strong presence of the Malay – as a race and group, as epitomised by the hero himself, P. Ramlee – it also incorporated other ethnic groups through key characters such as a Chinese person who assists Hassan during the skirmishes.

It is also salient to underscore that this film produced through collaboration and cooperation between a Filipino and Malay filmmaker not only indicates the transnational relationship between the two countries' budding film industries. It also reflects their shared history and experience under the Japanese occupation. In this respect, the film represents a shared vision – a common imagination within Southeast Asia forged through the region's experience under Japanese rule. As in the film, the war disrupted the life of ordinary citizens in the region. While some Filipinos and Malays fought fiercely against the Japanese, as in the film, some also worked with the Japanese and facilitated their occupation. The production of *Sergeant Hassan* exemplified a collective desire to depict the memories of the war and the possibilities of moving forward. The transnational production of *Sergeant Hassan* established the continuity of a narrative that crossed national imaginaries and subjectivities. Both Lamberto Avellana, as a Filipino director, and P. Ramlee, a Malay/Malaysian popular icon, comprehended the quintessence of the film and through their shared experiences produced a single and cohesive narrative that traversed national borders. In this respect, the division that separated the 'Filipino' from his 'Malay/Malaysian' counterpart ceased to exist. What surfaced, then, was an amalgam of their common histories under foreign rule and a shared vision of coming to terms with their colonial past.

More importantly, the main character, Hassan ceases to be a Malay soldier – he becomes a hybrid persona who can easily be recognised by Southeast Asians. In other words, the film is an early Southeast Asian attempt to paint recognisable images of Southeast Asians. According to Malaysian film scholars, *Sergeant Hassan* remains a symbol of Malay production at the height of the studio era in

the country. Malays identified with the Filipino who directed the film, since both societies had undergone colonisation, and understood the broad cultural and historical landscape of Southeast Asia. This then indicates a coalescing of the prevailing subjectivities shared by the societies in the region (Lacaba 2000, 52; Muthalib and Cheong 2002, 304-306).

Films such as *Sergeant Hassan* created the opportunities for Southeast Asians to imagine not just the nation but also the cooperative region. By the 1950s, more transnational co-productions had transpired. Filipino directors travelled to Malaya and collaborated with local filmmakers. Their joint works resulted in transnational and hybrid narratives and styles that resonated with Filipinos, Malayans, and even Indonesians. Familiar with Malay culture and language, Filipinos cooperated easily and fruitfully with the Malayans. They also helped their counterparts to develop new shooting and lighting techniques – skills that the Filipinos acquired from Americans (Heide 2002, 136). The end result were films that connected with and inspired the peoples of the region.

Aside from Lamberto Avellana, other Filipinos also gained prominence in Malaya's and Singapore's cinema industries. Three of the most important Filipino filmmakers who operated in Malaya were Eddie Infante, Teodorico C. Santos, and Ramon Estella. In 1955, Infante worked for the Shaw Brothers and created the film *Gadis Liar* (Girl of the Wild, 1955). The work effectively bridged the cultures of Southeast Asia and promoted especially the sense of affinity between Filipinos and Malayans. *Gadis Liar* effectively accentuated "the cultural similarities between Malay kampong life and the world of the Muslims in the southern Philippines." The rituals, norms, and social fibre of Malayan communities certainly resembled those practiced and developed among the Muslim communities in the Philippines (Heide 2002, 127). By bringing those practices onto the big screen, *Gadis Liar* helped lodge onto the consciousness of those who watched the film that peoples in the region shared similar cultural practices and traits.

Teodorico C. Santos only made one movie, entitled *Taufan* (Typhoon, 1957), with the company. He arrived in Singapore in August 1957 and mentioned that "His firm was looking forward to producing a series of Malay-Filipino films in Malaya in the near future" (The Straits Times August 8, 1957, 5). Famous Malayan actors Ahmad Mahmud, Salleh, and Zaiton starred in the film. Initially entitled *Ribut di-Pulau Mutiara* (Storm on the Pearl Island), it is set in a fishing village after a horrendous typhoon has ravaged the people's homes and affected their livelihoods. It centres on the turbulent love story of Fatimah and Amir. A devious moneylender has coerced Fatimah to marry him instead of Amir. A heartbroken Amir copes with his loss by exploring pearl diving. The movie depicts life in Tanjong Kling. But in actuality what Santos was able to project were scenes that mimic life elsewhere in Southeast Asia. The stilt houses look like those in the rural villages of the Philippines and Indonesia. The setting, which includes coconut trees all around, the sea, and natural calamities such as a typhoon, projects a distinctive illustration of life in rural Southeast Asia. Similar to *Sergeant Hassan,* this film is an

interwoven tapestry of cultural and ideological elements of the region. The production of the film also crossed national borders. The distinctive nationalities of the actors are also blurred. The characters cease to be Malay or Filipino. The film is transnational in scope and in meaning and managed to accentuate the then-burgeoning notion of Southeast Asia. The film might have been shot and produced in the Malay language, but the complex network of narratives, techniques, and individuals employed in the film made it Southeast Asian.

Another Filipino, Ramon Estella had one of the longest and most successful transnational careers in Southeast Asia. He had experiences working in Malaya, Philippines, Vietnam, Italy, and the United States. Run Run Shaw, then the head of Shaw Brothers, hired him when the latter went to the Philippines during the Asian Film Festival (The Straits Times 1958, 2). He worked for the Shaw Brothers for almost eight years until 1963. Thereafter, he transferred to Cathay-Keris and made a few more Malay films including *Darah-Ku* (Of My Blood, 1963) with lead actors Maria Menado and Melak Selamat. Among his key productions are *Matahari* (The Spy, 1958), *Samseng* (Gangster, 1959), *Saudagar Minyak Urat* (The Liniment Merchant, 1959), *Pontianak Kembali* (The Return of the Pontianak, 1963), *Melanchong Ka-Tokyo* (Holiday in Tokyo, 1964), and *Dupa Chendana* (1964). During his time at Shaw, Estella brought to cinematic life one of Malaya's (as well as Indonesia's) mythological creatures – the ghost of a pregnant woman called *pontianak*. Estella contributed to the rising popularity of *Pontianak*-themed movies. His *Anak Pontianak* inspired B.N. Rao to roll out *Pontianak* and *Dendam*, both produced by the Cathay-Keris film studios in 1957. Abdul Razak wrote the script as well as the anthology of stories on which the *Pontianak*-themed films were based. The Shaw Brothers joined the bandwagon and convinced Abdul Razak to come up with a new manuscript for them. They hired Estella as the director and released the movie in February 1958 (Muhammad 2010).

Interestingly, *Pontianak* was not entirely foreign to the Filipino director. In the Philippines, there is another folklore creature called *tianak.* It is a demonic baby, or the ghost of a new-born who died, or an aborted foetus. Despite the intrinsic differences between the two creatures, these images belong in the same cultural landscape and imaginary. Thus, when shown in films, they were immediately recognised among Southeast Asians. Apart from the storyline, the geographical setting could also help Southeast Asians develop an affinity for the film and for each other. The movie would feature some village in Cebu or a community located a few miles away from Yogyakarta. With the exception of language (the region has diverse languages), the world unveiled in the film captures Southeast Asia in a nascent yet coherently recognisable form. Moreover, the presence of proverbial underworld characters that were easily understood and appreciated by the audience underscores an emerging Southeast Asian collective fantasy, or, in this case, a shared fear. Such visual images helped develop a collective regional imagination and worldview. As Milja Radovic explains about transnationality in films, "a stereotypical representation of 'others', and self-representation are dialogical: while our view of 'others' springs from our specific local ideological viewpoint, our self-representation might just as well

be shaped by global stereotypes" (Radovic 2014, 5). A transnational filmmaker such as Ramon Estella furthered the process when he produced films that transcended the themes of "national cinema." His productions, which dealt with transnational themes, helped impress on his audiences the notion of Southeast Asian regionalism.

Like Estella, another filmmaker also encouraged Southeast Asians to imagine a political space beyond their national boundaries. The father of Indonesian national cinema, Usmar Ismail, collaborated with producers and actors in Malaya/Malaysia and Singapore. Ismail entered into a joint venture with Cathay-Keris and produced the film *Bayangan Di-Waktu Fajar* (Shadows at Dawn, 1962). The film was co-produced by two giants in the region's film industry, Cathay Keris, who was based in Singapore, and Indonesia's PERFINI. The film also involved actors from the two countries (Berita Harian 1962, 7). The language was in "standardised Malay, which can be easily understood in both Malaya and Indonesia (The Straits Times, February 20, 1963).

Indonesian as well as Filipino films also found their way to Malaya and vice versa. For instance, Lamberto Avellana's award-winning film, *Badjao: Sea Gypsies* was screened in Malaya as *Badjau: Anak Laut,* with Malay subtitles. Usmar Ismail's films were sent to Manila for processing and he even encouraged some Indonesians to go to the Philippines for further training in film production. According to Said, "[i]t was in fact this Manila-connection that opened his [Ismail] eyes to the possibilities of the domestic film industry." Said further mentioned that when Ismail established his own studio, he used the Manila model as a basis (Heide 2002, 136). The interconnection among Southeast Asian filmmakers and their national film industries were clearly strong.

In a pivotal work on transnational history of Asian cinemas, Sangjoon Lee (2020) astutely unfurled the collaborations, networks, and competitions between newly independent states in Asia and highlighted the significance of American financial and administrative assistance in the emergence and development of Asian cinemas. Paradoxically, the first film festival in "Southeast Asia" organised by the Federation of Motion Picture Association in Southeast Asia was in fact held in Tokyo in May 1954. The following year, the festival was held in Singapore. We see here both the malleability of the concept of Southeast Asia, but more important to the subject of this article are the emergence of cross-border networks and platforms for exchange among Southeast Asian (and yes, Asian) filmmakers. In 1958, the Asian Film Festival was held in Manila, where the Shaw Brothers entered four films including P. Ramlee's *Orang Minyak* (The Curse of Oily Man), *Doctor*, *The Seal of Solomon*, and *Diau Charn of the Three Kingdoms*. It is important to note that *The Seal of Solomon*, directed by the American filmmaker Rolf Bayer, featured two Filipino actors and was presented in both Malay and Tagalog languages (The Straits Times, April 11, 1958). Indeed, this is a great development and echoes what Tom Hodge, head of the Malayan Film Unit, said in 1955 on the importance of bringing together Southeast Asian

filmmakers in film festivals as "it would lead to better productions" and thus, "give the public a chance to see the best films" in the region (The Straits Times, February 3, 1955).

The film industry in the region, then, was evidently interconnected and transnationally linked. These partnerships and cooperation influenced local filmmakers to produce cinematic narratives and employ images that subsequently formed a part of the web of perceptions and representations in the region. These cinematic products promoted the earliest collective imagination and perceptions of the region. They not only strengthened the connections among the people in Southeast Asia, they also opened new possibilities for Southeast Asians to visualise the region, and to develop empathy for the anti-colonial and decolonisation politics championed by their fellow Southeast Asians. Through the production, distribution, circulation, and consumption of the films, Southeast Asians were presented with the idea that they shared similar cultures, undertook common social practices, encountered familiar colonisation experiences, and confronted comparable anxieties in nation-building. The films effectively captured and fed their aspirations and fears as the Europeans retreated from the region.

THE HOLLYWOOD FACTOR

Hollywood was another transnational force that affected Southeast Asian cinema. Following the end of World War II, Hollywood became rather influential in shaping Southeast Asia's cinematic landscape. It radically changed the regional film industry's production techniques and use of technology to make films. It also influenced the plots and story lines of Southeast Asian films. Hollywood furthermore played a part in moulding regional public opinion toward the Cold War and international politics. As the ideological battle between communist and anti-communist states escalated, Hollywood became an important instrument employed by the American government to condition the hearts and minds of Southeast Asians. At the same time, Southeast Asian filmmakers responded to Hollywood's foray into the regional film industry by consolidating and configuring new discourses about regionalism and international relations. Hollywood's arrival in the region, therefore, opened a new site for Southeast Asian filmmakers to develop shared political, ideological, and cultural subjectivities of an emerging Southeast Asia. These subjectivities can be identified in the region's cinematic productions (Cooke 2007, 1-16).

Indonesia

In the case of Indonesia, the diffusion of politics into the cinematic world was apparent and can be understood by looking into the state, problems, and endeavours of American film companies in the country. The plight of American film companies resembled and reflected the complex and deteriorating

diplomatic relations between Indonesia and the United States. Various campaigns against the importation of American films began. Such campaigns were pursued mostly by members and officers of the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia) who were intensely anti-colonial and anti-American (Lacaba 2000, 27-29; Hanan 2001, 225-227).

As the US Embassy noted, the "matter was handled by the GOI more as a cultural and political problem than as an economic one. The PKI certainly saw it in this light and its attacks were almost entirely on the cultural and political level with little emphasis on movies as a branch of American business" (Ellis 1965). Clearly, Indonesians viewed Hollywood as a symbol and manifestation of American hegemony. Their clamour to stop the importation of Hollywood films reflects their desire to protect Indonesian culture and politics from any direct or indirect American influence. The Indonesian government, however, did not issue a decree banning American films. In fact, government intervention did not appear to be coordinated. American film companies such as Allied Artists, Columbia Films, MGM, Paramount Films, 20th Century Fox, United Artists, Universal Pictures, and Warner Brothers continued to be represented in the country by Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA). Some of these companies had also established local offices in Jakarta, which served as distributing companies for American-made films. The MPEAA also circulated films, in addition to its main function of acting as the primary representative body of American film companies (Jones 1965).

The campaign against American films was led by the Action Committee to Boycott American Imperialist Films (PAPFIAS), a group established by the PKI and other organisations in 1964. This was around the time when US official William Bundy publicly suggested that an expansion of Konfrontasi might result in a reduction of US aid. Konfrontasi began in 1963 when Indonesia's President Sukarno expressed his opposition against the formation of the Malaysian Federation, which included Malaya, Sarawak, Sabah, and Singapore. From Sukarno's perspective, Malaysia Federation would reinforce the neo-colonial power in the region. Both Sukarno and Minister Subandrio expressed their concern over the deterioration of their relationship to the US Ambassador Howard Jones. Utami Suryadarma, then the chairperson of PAPFIAS, was identified by the US Embassy as an extreme leftist. She also headed the Board of Censors (Hanan 2001, 211-251). The Suryadarma-led campaign was not novel. Before her group was established, there had been threats of an Indonesian boycott of Hollywood films. But no such boycott ever materialised. Nonetheless, following the establishment of PAPFIAS, an effective boycott started against American films (Hanan 2001, 211-251). At the request of American Ambassador Jones, President Sukarno instructed the First Deputy Prime Minister Subandrio to stop the boycott. However, Minister Subandrio's efforts were ineffective. Around mid-June 1964, more than 100 theatres were reportedly shut down. Film screenings were halted in the main cities of Java, except those done in the homes of Indonesian government officials, including the Presidential Palace in Jakarta. By July 1964, the National Front joined the campaign. Sukarno reassured Jones that the boycott would be resolved, but tensions escalated.

The film industry reflected the political tension between Indonesia and the United States. The development of Indonesian national cinema reflected international relations. By the 1960s, Indonesians regarded the United States with suspicion. Indonesian cinema united in opposition to Hollywood. It is clear that Indonesians perceived Hollywood as the end of a spectrum. As Salim Said suggests, Hollywood style (where the Chinese style of filmmaking was rooted) refers to the commercial pattern of making films where the director is not encouraged, or even allowed, artistic expression (Said 1991, 6). He further opined that Usmar Ismail and his cohort of friends represent the anti-thesis to Hollywood. They were the idealists – the nationalists, in essence – who attempted to portray the predicaments and challenges that Indonesia experienced (6-7). In other words, while Ismail epitomised the ideal Indonesian, the Americans exuded values and behaviour considered very un-Indonesian.

Hollywood's influence can be seen in the ways national cinemas reacted to it. Indonesian national cinema contested and opposed Hollywood, and in due course, constructed and defined itself. Indonesian filmmakers and producers opposed and held strong opinions about the dominance of Hollywood. Ardent nationalist leanings appeared in the movies and ideological and political debates within the film industry sparked. While opposing Hollywood's cultural and political sentiments grew, Indonesian filmmakers also adapted to the challenge posed by the US film industry. For example, Djamalludin Malik, a pioneering Indonesian film director, adapted the style and approach of Hollywood in his films. "Limited finances, equipment, and markets, of course, prevented the wholesale copying of Hollywood style but fundamentally, the working methods of this Indonesian producer [Malik] stayed close to Hollywood" (Said 1991, 8-9; Sumarno and Achnas 2002, 153-169). In other words, although filmmakers like Malik might have opposed American productions, they had no qualms about exploiting the filmmaking techniques and narrative styles of Hollywood to further their cinematic productions and widen the appeal of Indonesian cinema.

Philippines

If many Indonesians resisted and adapted to Hollywood hegemony, the people in the Philippines reacted differently to American films. Being under the tutelage of the Americans from 1899 to 1946 (interrupted by the Japanese Occupation from 1941 to 1945), Filipinos were more tolerant and accommodating towards Hollywood. In fact, Hollywood served as the model to imitate. Yet, while 'imitating' Hollywood, Filipino filmmakers also indigenised it. The Filipinos consumed Hollywood films and adapted them in their creative works. Hollywood thus functioned as the transnational factor that moved regional filmmakers to modify and improve their craft. It also served as the archetype of 'the other' against which Filipino and other Southeast Asian filmmakers constituted their regional identity. Via their movies, these filmmakers would help the people of Southeast Asia to entertain the notion of regionalism.

The first encounter between Hollywood and Philippine cinema occurred in 1919. Albert Yearsley, an American who owned a theatre in Manila, collaborated with Universal Studios to produce a film in the Philippines. Directed by the American Henry MacRae, a segment of *The Dragon's Net* (1920) was filmed at several locations in the country (Francia 2002, 346-348). This film is significant because it was the first American film that used the Philippines as a shooting location. Eventually, more and more American film companies began to look at the Philippines not only as a location of filmmaking but also as a market for Hollywood. The 1920s saw the rise of the popularity of films in conjunction with the appeal of Hollywood among local talents. Filipino filmmakers travelled to the United States to gain more knowledge of American filmmaking techniques, processes, and cinematographic styles (Francia 2002, 347). For instance, Vicente Salumbides in cooperation with Jose Nepomuceno applied Hollywood techniques of close-ups, props, and make-up in the film *Miracles of Love* (1925). A large number of American filmmakers and films also found their way to the Philippines. Two Americans, George Harris and Eddie Tait, established the first film company in the Philippines patterned on Hollywood studios (Hawkins 2008). They dreamed of making Manila the film capital of Asia. In 1933, they introduced the first sound stage in the Philippines (Lacaba 2000, 90-91).

Harris and Tait also produced a well-known film called *Zamboanga* (1937) in collaboration with the local members of the film industry. It was shown in the United States and was for a long time considered a lost film. It was rediscovered when the prominent Filipino film historian Nick Deocampo identified it at a screening in the United States in 2004. The film brought onto the big screen the way of life of the people in Jolo, the southernmost part of the Philippines. It starred the famous actor Fernando Poe Sr. alongside Rosa del Rosario. Fernando played the main character of a pearl diver who weds Rosa, daughter of the community chief. On the day of the ceremony, a pirate kidnaps Rosa and sparks a bloody tribal war. Produced by Americans and helmed by Filipino actors, the film reflected Filipinos' accommodating and positive sentiments toward Hollywood.

While Americans such as Harris and Tai helped transform the filmmaking business in the Philippines, they also left behind other enduring legacies. American filmmakers and executives helped the US colonial authorities to develop the Philippines into a technological captive, dependent on the devices and equipment that the American colonial master imported. The years following the Second World War witnessed an intensification of such technological transfer. This did not result in the demise or the 'Hollywoodification' of what was to become the Philippine national cinema. Instead, these developments invigorated the local industry and catapulted it to the attainment of its own style, identity, and flavour. Indeed, American-made technology served indigenous directors to produce films that embody their own perspectives and interests (Cooke 2007).

Hollywood became one of the most crucial conduits for the spreading of American values and ideas to the Philippines. American films sparked the imagination of the Filipinos on what America was all about

or what Hollywood perceived the United States to be. It was an agent of cultural imperialism. It was an instrument to condition the hearts and minds of the Filipinos to believe in the benevolence of the Americans. This study does not elaborate on this subject matter, because there have been a few studies on this (Deocampo 2011; Deocampo 2007, 147-171). But it is crucial to establish how Hollywood was an essential imperial tool of the Americans to promote their values and ideology in the Philippines. The Vice President of Hollywood giant Warner Brothers, Joseph Hazen, once stated: "It [Hollywood] sells our motorcars, bathroom fixtures, furniture, electrical and the hundred and one articles which are shown in our films… But the American film is also America's greatest ambassador… It furnishes the principal means of entertainment for all the peoples throughout the world… and it is difficult for anyone whom you entertain and make laugh to hate you…" (Wake 1941, 37). This only corroborates that Hollywood was perceived as an important cultural carrier of American values. This does not mean though that the Filipinos merely borrowed Hollywood in wholesale. As in the case of other Southeast Asian states, the Philippines was not a passive recipient of American cultural flows. They selected, negotiated, and appropriated what was offered and presented by the Americans to produce their own identity. Hollywood provided the narrative style but local filmmakers altered to provide something that reflects Hollywood but is also innately Filipino.

The boom in Philippine secret agent films during the 1960s provides another good case to analyse the relationship between Hollywood and Southeast Asian national cinemas. Cold War tensions stimulated the production of Hollywood films that dealt, directly or indirectly, with the battle between communists and anti-communists. Films such as the James Bond series, particularly *Goldfinger* (1964) and *From Russia with Love* (1963), were popular with audiences. Their success encouraged Southeast Asian filmmakers to create their own indigenised versions of espionage films. In fact, during the 1966 Manila Film Festival, the Filipino James Bond was born. The film festival sought to shift the domestic audience's focus from foreign- to locally-made films. Among the entries, Tony Falcon's secret agent thriller *Sabotage* (1966) became the top-grosser. The film follows the plot and style of the James Bond movies. It revolves around the story of a Filipino spy who hunts down a syndicate planning to sabotage the country's power facilities. It has been described as the "best carbon copy of James Bond yet, with its torrid kissing scenes, chilling karate bouts, and very effective bang-bang" (Nolledo 1966, 69).

One can argue that this imitation of Hollywood reflects the lack of ingenuity of Filipino filmmakers and the prevailing 'colonial mentality' of the local audience. But the movie did not slavishly follow the plot and style of the James Bond movies. It sought to define, contest, and negotiate the notion of Philippine/ness vis-à-vis the imagery of Hollywood's Americanness. The triumph of a Filipino spy over his foreign adversaries can also be seen as the Filipinos' appropriation of foreign cultures to suit the local context. Not only was this film a box office hit in the country, it was also exported to Guam, Thailand, Hawaii, Indonesia, and Pakistan (Hawkins 2008, 295-370). The international success of a Philippine film was a way of contesting the power of Hollywood. In doing so, it asserted what was or

who was a Filipino. It became a source of national pride and honour. But more importantly, this film, like other Philippine films premised on the Hollywood-formula, became an arena to define the postcolonial identity of the Philippines (as well as its postcolonial relationship with the United States) at the height of the Cold War. It defined the Philippines self, not just in the cinematic world, but within the complex arena of the international system.

Malaya/Malaysia

The case of Malay/Malaysian national cinema bears similarities with the Philippines and Indonesian cases. Several things need to be clarified at the outset. First, Hollywood offered the technical and business model that facilitated the institution of the film industry in Malaya/Malaysia. Second, as in the rest of Southeast Asia, local Malayan/Malaysian directors borrowed and adopted cinematic styles from Hollywood. Third, Hollywood became a scape for local directors to negotiate and define the differences between American culture and Malayan/Malaysian culture. American films were associated with hedonistic ways of the West as opposed to the sophistication and elegance of British culture. In other words, Malayan/Malaysian cinema, like other Southeast Asian cinemas, resisted, responded to, or accommodated the dominant cultural and ideological influences of Hollywood. Finally, Hollywood served as a common external factor that pervaded Southeast Asia – as Malayan/Malaysian cinema in conjunction with other cinemas in the region responded to and maintained a constant 'dialogue' with Hollywood. The result was an integration of cinematic ideas, styles, and images across Southeast Asia that forged the burgeoning notion of regional identity.

Malayan/Malaysian cinema evolved in part because of its reactions and resistance to various external influences, among them Hollywood. At the beginning of Malay/Malaysian national cinema, directors from India adjusted Indian film narratives and styles to suit the local contexts and the response was positive. The Malayan audience patronised and welcomed the early productions by Indian directors such as B.S. Rahjan. Even *bangsawan* storylines influenced early film productions. Local legends, folktales, and historical and mythical accounts served as templates. Foreign films and narratives inspired local productions. For example, K.R. Shastry's film *Iman* (Faith, 1954) was an adaptation of Goethe's *Faust*. Hussein Hanif used Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as a template for his film *Istana Berdarah* (Palace of Blood, 1964). Through these adaptations, Malay cinema developed and at the same time acquired distinctive features of Malayan/Malaysian-ness (Muthalib and Cheong 2002, 204-306).

External influences are identifiable in Malayan/Malaysian cinema. The narratives and styles from Hollywood and British films influenced and inspired the production of Malay films. For instance, social realism from Hollywood inspired directors such as P. Ramlee and Hussein Haniff. The latter's first film, *Hang Jebat* (1961) is considered a classic depiction of the protagonist as the anti-hero (Muthalib and

Cheong 2002, 204-306). On September 18, 1926, *The Times* published an article entitled "The Cinema in the East: Factor in the Spread of Communism." According to the anonymous author, there was a growing resistance and derision among the locals towards the Europeans. He further maintained that one of the fundamental reasons for this was cinema. More specifically, he asserted that the locals were easily swayed by American cinema which portrays a lack of values and indecent or improper behaviour. The author states:

> The simple native has a positive genius for picking up false impressions and is very deficient in the sense of proportion. By the unsophisticated Malay, Javanese, or even the Indian and the Chinese, the scenes of crime and depravity which are thrown on to the screen are accepted as faithful representations of the ordinary life of the white man in his own country (The Times 1926).

While the author might have overstated his case, American cinema was undoubtedly popular in the region. Many movie houses screened American films. During the 1930s, 71 percent of the total number of films screened in Malaya were produced by Hollywood filmmakers. The rest were Chinese or Indian. Malayan filmmakers were not popular then (Heide 2002, 131). Heide relates that "[w]hile American been as pervasive in Malaysia as elsewhere, its overall popularity ran (until the late 1990's) a distant second to that of Hong Kong film and its cultural influence similarly ran a poor second to that of Indian cinema" (Heide 2002, 243).

As in the case of the Philippines, Malaya too was influenced by the international success and popularity of James Bond. The Shaw Brothers produced *Jefri Zain dalam Gerak Kilat* (Jefri Zain in Operation Lightning, 1966). The film performed very well at the box office and was acclaimed for the realistic performance of the main actors, Jins Shamsudin and Sarimah. The unprecedent popularity of Jefri Zain films resulted in the production of other secret agent films. These borrowings further establish how Hollywood became an important model for Southeast Asian national cinemas.

The case of Malaya/Malaysia is distinctively different in some aspects from the Philippines and Indonesia. The dynamics between Hollywood and Filipino filmmakers were more open and accommodating. The Indonesians expressed quite a strong antagonism against American film businesses. Malaya/Malaysia, while influenced by Hollywood, was also heavily influenced by the British. As the colonial masters of Malaya, the British played a crucial role in the transmission or contact between Malaya/Malaysia and Hollywood. They acted as cultural brokers – on the one hand, they helped facilitate the introduction of Hollywood in the country but in some ways presented Hollywood as an alternative to British film, then considered the ideal model of Western cinemas.

The English writer-philosopher Aldous Huxley was of the opinion that "Hollywood has scattered broadcast over brown and black and yellow worlds a grotesquely garbled account of our civilisation" (Stevenson 1974, 211). His sentiments were not exceptional. Indeed, there was a prevalent perception that American films were ignominious on various levels: economic, moral, political, educational, and most importantly, colonial (211). Although Hollywood influenced the plots and genres of Southeast Asian films, it was still evident that Southeast Asians translated what they borrowed, copied, or imitated into products and images that displayed distinguishable Southeast Asian elements. These encounters between Hollywood and budding Southeast Asian national cinemas fuelled the creation of clearer images of Southeast Asia. The indigenisation of Hollywood narratives became a way for Southeast Asians to regain their agency against Western hegemonic narratives. As local filmmakers borrowed images and styles from Hollywood and changed them to suit their own contexts, they were able to construct coherent depictions of Southeast Asia. In this respect, Southeast Asian filmmakers operated as Orientalists – looking at and studying themselves. They formed visualisations of their nations and, through transnational links, even the region. They defined national identity and at the same time facilitated the creation of Southeast Asian regional identity.

CONCLUSION

National cinemas in the region did not emerge in isolation. They were influenced by transnational forces that influenced their development and transformation. This article has explained how the transnational role of Chinese businessmen and immigrants instilled non-Western cinematic roots in Southeast Asia. They provided capital and financial resources to filmmakers, imported films from China, and were responsible for a lot of technical, aesthetic, and stylistic transference. More importantly, they conjured an alternative lens of viewing or portraying Southeast Asia and its people – an alternative perspective that would then influence Southeast Asian directors. The local filmmakers and producers formed an informal network of technology, people, and ideas that further invigorated the maturation of national cinemas. This article has also explained how these transnational collaborations were facilitated by the region's collective historical, social, and cultural attributes. Finally, Hollywood, a global cinematic force, impacted the region as a whole. Hollywood flooded the market and gained unprecedented popularity in the region. It influenced the cinematic apparatus, material production, business-model, technique, as well as ideology of Southeast Asian cinemas. As perhaps the most enduring transnational linkage in the region, Hollywood infiltrated the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaya/Malaysia in so many levels and ways, inciting perceptible responses from them. In other words, their own national identity was solidified and somehow refined upon direct contact with the seeming homogenous form of Hollywood. What we have seen in Southeast Asia was that the global potency of Hollywood (in conjunction with other transnational forces identified) brought about networks and individual communities that paved the way for the materialisation of their respective cultural particularities. This

phenomenon complements the case of Southeast Asia well as it is often described as a unified yet highly diversified region. These transnational linkages were crucial for various reasons. They helped in the development of the technology, apparatus, style, and technique of national cinemas, served as conduits for the connections and interactions among Southeast Asian nations, and, most importantly, crafted the preliminary ideas and notions of regional identity in Southeast Asia long before its formal institutionalisation.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DARLENE MACHELL DE LEON ESPENA is a cultural historian of postcolonial Southeast Asia and an Assistant Professor of Humanities (Education) in the Office of Core Curriculum and the School of Social Sciences at Singapore Management University. Her research interests include cinema, dance, and politics in Southeast Asia, cultural history of the Cold War in Asia, and cultural discourses on education in Singapore. She is currently working on her monograph *Heralding the Nation: Cinema and Politics in Postcolonial Southeast Asia, 1945–1967.*

✉: darlenee@smu.edu.sg

Locating the 1960s Filipino Western Genre

JOHN ADRIANFER ATIENZA
Marist School Marikina

ABSTRACT

The 1960s were deemed to be a dark age of Philippine cinema. The local film industry was at its downfall with *bomba* or sex films and Hollywood films filling up the theatres. With the heavy influx of foreign films, the industry found its survival through the imitations of foreign genre films, such as the themes of samurai, secret agent, intimate melodramas, and the Western. Known to be the most flexible genre, the Western, with its cowboy and mountain-valley themes, was one of the most duplicated in the local film industry. The study situates the Western genre in Philippine cinema. It articulates the process of how the local film industry appropriated and accommodated the genre within its native context. Utilizing Roland Robertson's framework of *glocalization*, the study seeks to analyze the process of how the global phenomenon of the Western genre was transposed to the locality of the Philippine cinema, focusing on the two known local Western films *Daniel Barrion* (1964) and *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion* (1968). It further discusses aspects of the American Western that were appropriated within the Philippine condition and reality, which reflected indigenous themes and native concepts. This cinematic process subsequently created new ramifications on the genre, making the localized Western genre called the Filipino Western. Ultimately, the study mainly attempts to examine this largely neglected genre.

Keywords: Filipino Western, film history, glocalization, Philippine cinema, Western genre

INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of cinema, the film domination of the United States was evident. Its technological capacity for producing motion pictures was considered a dominant force in the emerging industry. However, it was not until the 1910s that the United States fulfilled its dominant industry form. With World War I happening in Europe, the American film industry established its position internationally, paving the way for its domination in the international film industry through Hollywood. Since then, Hollywood has become global, focusing on setting up foreign studios, marketing popular films, and subsequently creating the standards and paradigm of filmmaking. As Scott Olson (2000) notes, "Hollywood has become an aesthetic" wherein it "has been increasingly adopted by other media production centers in other countries around the world" (4). In essence, its influence is not difficult to see, considering the emergence of film industries in several localities that were heavily molded in the image of Hollywood: India has Bollywood, South Korea's industry is known as Hallyuwood, Hong Kong is the Hollywood of the East, and the Nigerian film industry is called Nollywood. The establishment of several local film industries mirroring the United States industry manifested the global cultural dominance of Hollywood, hence, introducing the industry's globalization, or "the cinema of all humanity" (Teo 2009, 412).

Besides its industry prowess, the influence of Hollywood is more compelling in its filmic medium, as Stephen Teo (2009) notes: "[T]he power of Hollywood is effectively the power of the movies" (413). The industry's stability in producing a quantity of films with quality content was generated by its systematic industrial mode of production and distribution anchored on the studio system, star system, and genre filmmaking. Teo declares that the industrial factors were pivotal and fundamental to the development of several film industries and national cinemas outside the United States, particularly in Asia:

> The use of star and generic film conventions are still the fundamental means of producing movies on a regular, commercial basis, and it is the principle followed by the film industries of Asia's most popular cinemas in India, Hong Kong, China, Japan, and South Korea. Without stars and genre, it is doubtful whether these national cinemas could have flourished in the way they did, or continue to do so today. (413)

In this filmic development, the Philippines was also included. Since the 1890s, the country had been immersed in cinema, which was further enhanced during the twentieth century while being under the tutelage of the United States. For that reason alone, the Philippines was heavily influenced, if not the most in Asia, in all cinematic conventions employed by Hollywood (Deocampo 2011). From the establishment of studio systems and the utilization of the star system to the abuse of genre filmmaking and the use of American aesthetics and film techniques, Hollywood's influence was

apparent in the local film industry. Similar to other Asian cinemas, it can be said that the adapted conventions from the American industry served the development of the local cinema of the Philippines. Often, the globalization of Hollywood tends to correlate with the concept of Americanization, mostly pertaining to the creation of local culture as products of cultural and political hegemonies. In this sense, globalization seems to discredit localities, which only appear as recipients of the foreign culture. With this, it is difficult to venture away from the discourse of cultural imperialism. The intimacies of localities with the film culture of Hollywood intensely manifest the continuing control and dominance of the United States over several postcolonial states. In contrast with this, Mohammad Reyaz (2016) writes that "[Asian countries] have made a dent in the American hegemony and the relationship is no longer a simple one of core and periphery, but far more complex" (244). As popular cinemas were being molded by its foreign primate, they concurringly adapted, situating Hollywood's filmic conventions within their localities. In analyzing the dialectical oppositions between global and local, Roland Robertson (1995, 2012) transcends the concept of globalization, emphasizing the interrelatedness of the two in using the term 'glocalization.' He argues that glocalization rejects the standard ideas of binaries of global-local and center-periphery, emphasizing the dynamics of the local in the global and the global in the local. Hence, as Marwan Kraidy (2003) notes, the local and global are "engaged in a relational and reciprocal process whose dynamics are mutually formative" and considered as "complementary competitors, feeding off each other as they struggle for influence" (38). This implies the duality of perspectives in viewing global phenomena and their relations with the local. The mantra of 'think global, act local' of international business applies to the concept, wherein the international product was situated within the locality. As Reyaz (2016) contends: "[W]hile McDonald's opens in all community centers in Delhi, they increasingly also serve McAalooTikki" (244) to suit the needs of the local consumers. Thus, glocalization focuses on the accommodation of foreign sensibilities within the needs of the localities, introducing new native realities that pave the way for the interpenetration of the global and local polarities. With that, the concept is also connected to several hybridization theories, most of which pertain to the localization of foreign cultures (Bhabha 1994). Following this, this article contends that the same process of localizing also applies to the film industry.

One of the most duplicated film conventions of Hollywood is the practice of genre filmmaking. Several film studios used the practice to lessen the economic risk of making films through the repeated use of genres, such as melodrama, romance, comedy, thriller, Western, and horror, as they were recognizable and popular (Altman 1996, 280-281). Various cinemas outside of Hollywood employed genre filmmaking, producing several genres within their localities. With the adapted Hollywood genres, the Western is the most distinctive (Schatz 1981, 45). As Nick Deocampo (2011) notes: "Wide-brimmed cowboy hats and sharp-pointed boots, pistol in the holster on the hip and a horse to ride into desolate landscapes – who can mistake a movie that has these highly recognizable visual elements?" (506) Undoubtedly, the Western genre is one of the most remarkable and distinguishable visual representations and one of the oldest genres of film history.

The genre was born with Edward Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, which was released in 1903. Thomas Schatz (1981) contends that the film's release did not only result in the "birth of the movie Western but of the commercial narrative film in America" (45) too. However, it can be said that the Western film form predates cinema. Its thematic aspect is heavily rooted in the history of the United States, focusing on the struggle between cowboys and Indians since the nineteenth century. Edward Buscombe (1996) explains that the binary of cowboys and Indians rapidly became a "valuable commodity" incorporated in a range of American "fictional and quasi-documentary discourses, including the novel, the theatre, painting, and other forms of visual and narrative representation" (286). Hence, "the cinema Western… cannot properly be said to have existed until the [film] industry began" as it was already present in the consciousness of the film audience (286). As a result, the emerging film theme "soon developed a recognizable kind of narrative which displayed a distinctive combination of features" (286). The recognizable aspect became its significant feature in the Western genre's popularity in the United States, serving as an identifiable element in the viewer's eyes.

It would not take much time for the genre to be adapted in other cinemas. After its filmic developments in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, mainly through films by John Ford, the genre became global as it spread to the film industries of South America, Europe, and Asia. The genre's intrinsic accommodation appears within two filmic factors: narrative and visual theme, making the Western the "most flexible of narrative formulas" in genre filmmaking (Schatz 1981, 45). Its staple presentation of narratorial oppositions, such as civilization versus savagery, social order versus anarchy, and individual versus community, were easily contextualized in film localities (Schatz 1981, 49). Beyond the narrative lies the Western's distinctive film imagery. The visual archetype of cowboys and the Mountain Valley backdrops were instrumental in its strong adaptability, making it one of the most enduring genres Hollywood had produced (Higgins et al. 2015, 1). Following this, the wide adaptations of the Western genre in various cinemas can be considered as a global film phenomenon, making it a pivotal aspect in the process of globality of the American industry.

Italy was the most credited appropriator for having the genre circulated since the 1920s (Trento 2015, 42). In an article published in 1952, Jean-Louis Rieupeyrout (1952) wrote about the arrival of the genre, stating that "Europe cannot ignore the problems of the expansion of the American West. Willingly or not, Europe learns about it and is entertained by it" (118-19). Italy was the main point of Western genre production in Europe, consequently creating the so-called Spaghetti Westerns subgenre, heavily adapted from the American Western genre. Giovanna Trento (2015) claimed that between 1964 and 1978, "hundreds of Westerns were produced in Italy" (42). With its flexible film themes, the phenomenon of the rise of Spaghetti Westerns was also "assisted by the migration of a number of Hollywood stars" to Europe (Buscombe 1996, 292-293), including Clint Eastwood. It was widely stated that the Western films of Sergio Leone put the Italian Western on the world cinema map, most notably the *Dollars Trilogy* (1964–1966). Other notable directors of the genre were Sergio Corbucci, Tony

Anthony, and Cesare Canevari. The Western genre also found its path to the local cinemas of France, Spain, and Germany.

Latin American countries also had their local versions of Westerns. Charro Westerns or *comedia ranchera* were the nearest analogs of the American Western in the region (Berg 1992, 98). Mexican Westerns were shown in Mexican cinemas during the 1930s, credited for popularizing the *el charro* or the traditional horsemen in Mexico. Notable Charro Westerns are *El compadre Mendoza* (*Mendoza, the Godfather*, 1933), *Chucho el roto* (*Chucho the Bandit*, 1934), *Vamos con Pancho Villa* (*Let's Go with Pancho Villa*, 1935) and *Los de abajo* (*The Underdog*, 1939). Other local cinemas of Argentina and Brazil also adapted and featured Western films within their countries.

The Western is also known to be a popular genre produced in all major Asian film industries from the 1960s to the 2000s (Teo 2017, 7). For instance, East Asian countries had their Western versions, for examples *Man with a Shotgun* (1961), *The Drifting Avenger* (1968), and *East Meets West* (1995) in Japan and *Break up the Chain* (1971) in South Korea. In the same manner, countries in the South Asian region featured Western films like the *Sholay* (1975) and *Majestic Lion* (1990) of India and *Dost-Dushman* (1977) of Bangladesh. For some time, the production of Asian Westerns weakened. However, it was revived during the late 2000s with East Asian countries creating and releasing Western-themed films, with popular ones being *Sukiyaki Western Django* (Japan, 2007), *The Good, The Bad, The Weird* (South Korea, 2008), *Let the Bullets Fly* (China, 2010), *Wind Blast* (China 2010), and *No Man's Land* (China, 2013).

In the Southeast Asian region, Western filmic developments were witnessed as early as the 1960s. In the same period as in other film industries, several Western films were produced in the region, particularly in Thailand and the Philippines. Both countries were heavily influenced by the prevalence of foreign film companies, which concurred with the significant number of Western genres imported from Europe and the United States (Na Nongkhai and Phakdeephasook 2017, 190; Deocampo 2011, 506-510). The Thai industry was recognized for releasing the Western *Tears of the Black Tiger* (2000), which was critically acclaimed overseas. Following the breakthrough of *Tears of the Black Tiger* and the rampant production of other Thai Western films, subsequent film studies were conducted on the genre, most of which included hybridization as their main frameworks (Jimenez-Varea and Expósito-Barea 2015; Na Nongkhai and Phakdeephasook 2017; Teo 2017). However, while a substantial number of Westerns were produced in the Philippines, studies and scholarly engagements on the adaption of such Westerns were often neglected.

This study mainly attempts to uncover an overlooked subject in film history and film studies, i.e., the Filipino Western genre. In parallel with the Spaghetti Westerns of Italy, the genre version was dubbed the 'Pancit Western' or 'Adobo Western' to situate the Western genre in the local context (D'Bayan 2012). The 1960s spur of Western-themed films in the Philippine cinema was neglected, with little

scholarship focusing on the genre. Often, the 1960s have been treated as the dark age of Philippine cinema (del Mundo 2003; Hedman 2011). In some cases, studies only circled around the *bomba* or sex films produced during the latter years (Lumbera 1981; del Mundo 1999). The lack of scholarship on the genre seems intriguing, given the significant number of films generated in the decade, touching on several themes in the genres of the comedy, action, drama, and Western. Following this, the article attempts to contribute to the local Western genre scholarship. Utilizing Robertson's framework of glocalization, the study articulates the adaptation process of the Western genre in the Philippine locality.

Focusing on the two films *Daniel Barrion* (1964) and *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion* (1968), the study seeks to explain the process of how the local industry appropriated, accommodated, and localized the Western genre within native contexts, supplanting it with meanings and themes familiar to the Filipino audience. The study is divided into three parts. The first one focuses on the context of filmic imitation in the Philippines during the 1960s. The second one briefly discusses the arrival and the historical development of the Western genre in the Philippines. And the third one pertains to the glocalization process of the Western genre within Philippine filmmaking conditions.

THE 1960s PHILIPPINE LOCAL CINEMA AND THE 'IMITATION CRAZE'

"[T]he industry produced some of the worst in Philippine Cinema, [and] … was at the pits when a new generation of filmmakers took over in the 1970s" (del Mundo 1999, 42). This is how Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. described the local cinema during the 1960s. The decade was considered the "dark ages" of the local cinema (del Mundo 2003, 167; Hedman 2011, 11). In the initial years of the decade, the end of the studio system resulted in a scramble among the film producers that brought forth several fly-by-night companies, causing the disorder of the decade (del Mundo 1999, 40; Hedman 2001, 11-12). Bienvenido Lumbera (1981) states that the demise of the studio system resulted in two commercial phenomena that left an impression on the films during the period: "proliferation of various types of exploitation films" and "pursuit of commercially-tested formulas by many independent companies" (39).

Moreover, it also birthed the star system, which according to Nestor Torre (1994), "lowered the standards of filmmaking in the country since, in effect, anybody with money and the right connections could now make a movie, without the well-oiled filmmaking machinery of a major studio to back him up" (17 in del Mundo 1999, 40). With the studio system down, independent movie companies proliferated, leading to an increase in the number of films produced (Hedman 2011, 15). This coincided with the Manila Film Festival in the latter half of the decade, leading to a surge of purely entertaining

films which catered to a massive number of local audiences and drew them into movie houses or the so-called *bakya* crowd (Hedman 2011, 16). With the surge of Filipino films, del Mundo (1999) characterizes the decade as a struggle with regards to making "worthy films within the commercial system," wherein "artistic [films] had to continually compete with the more popular commercial films" (42). Lumbera (1981) stresses this statement in his definition of the period as the decade of "rampant commercialism and artistic decline" (39).

On the other hand, the continuity of the United States' hegemony in the Philippines was also reflected in the local film industry. Since the post-war years, the local audience consisted of staple viewers of foreign films, mainly from Hollywood. The downpour of the audience into theatres to watch Hollywood films reflected a deeply inherent colonial mentality on the locals. In relation to rampant commercialism, the 1960s were also characterized as the film imitation decade as local producers imported foreign genres, including spy films, Westerns, martial arts films, and intimate melodramas that were popular with local audiences (Lumbera 1989, 11). As Lumbera (1981) states:

> [During] the 1960s, the foreign films that were raking in a lot of income were action pictures sensationalizing violence and softcore sex hitherto banned from the Philippine theatre screens. Italian "spaghetti" Westerns, American James Bond-type thrillers, Chinese/Japanese martial arts films, and European sex melodramas – these were imports from which the independent producers had to take cue to be able to get an audience to watch their own films. (39)

With the influx of foreign films heavily catered to the local audience, local producers had to compete with foreign films for local viewership. However, the former failed to rival the latter in film appeal. This resulted in film companies using the foreign genre as an advantage to market their films, which led to a staple practice of film imitation (39). During the period, several films copied the trendy foreign genres of Westerns, samurai, and spy films. Nicanor Tiongson (2001) treats this imitation as the 'gaya-gaya' (copycat) syndrome of the Filipino film industry. As Tiongson argues, when the local film companies were "unable to compete with Hollywood, many Filipino producers or artists have tried to cash in on Hollywood, accepting it as the trend-setter, standard and premise of their own productions" (19 in Smith 2017, 96). The imitation of films goes as far as translating the foreign title into the local language. Some examples are: *Gunfight at the O.K. Coral* (1957) became *Barilan sa Baboy Koral* (*Gunfight in a Pigsty*, 1962); *Bonnie and Clyde* (1966) became *Bino and Clayd* (1969); *We Only Live Wa-is* (1968) imitated *You Only Live Twice* (1967); *Agent Flintoy* (1970) copied *Our Man Flint* (1966); *Titong Robin Hood* (1965) duplicated *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), and *The Man from A.N.K.L.A.* (1970) imitated the TV series *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (1964–1968). The imitation craze became embedded within the local film industry as imitation films were still produced in the 1990s and even the 2000s.

The surge was manifested in the intimate filmic relation of the United States and the Philippines, wherein the latter was heavily influenced by the former in several filmic aspects since cinema's early years. Nick Deocampo (2011) assessed the imitation practice in these terms:

> Tagalog (as well as Cebuano) movies cashed in on the use of ready-made formulas that Hollywood offered. Quick to imitate popular trends and faced by threats of their own, producers in the Tagalog movie industry absorbed the external trappings of Hollywood movies without being critical, and with little understanding of the content and formal demands of the genre films they were imitating. As long as capital was on hand and a great mass of hungry viewers was there to devour any form of entertainment that came their way, movies patterned after Hollywood genres continued to be made. (483)

The local film industry also adapted the practice of utilizing ready-made formulas from Hollywood. Genre filmmaking was constantly employed in the United States was used by movie studios to react to the economic risks of making movies. The repeated usage of affected film formulas then secured profits and minimized production risks. With the film industry seen on its verge, the practice of genre filmmaking and imitation was demonstrated in the Philippines.

This imitation trend concurred with the advent of nationalistic discourses of the 1960s (Deocampo 2017). Several critics condemn the staple practice of imitating. Some even questioned the authenticity of the local film production. Film scholar T. D. Agcaoili (1968) explains:

> If nationalism were used as a theme, then possibly some significant Filipino movies depicting the real nature and spirit of Philippine life and aspirations would be produced by serious filmmakers, instead of the spurious war movies, the imitation of James Bond secret agent films and the bogus Filipino westerns that are the current staple of an irresponsible, uneducated, and retarded film industry. (17 in Hawkins 2010, 351)

Agcaoili's statement correlated with other scholars searching for a film production suited to the local context. In an earlier statement, Wilfredo Nolledo (1964) lambasted the local film industry, stressing the "miscegenation between Hollywood and the Philippines" (42 in Hawkins 2010, 351). According to him, this "unholy pair" gave birth to an "ugly offspring" of Tagalog cowboy and James Bond pictures (351), a visualization of the politics of film imitation and colonial mentality. The laments and sentiments of the critics on the practice were clear echoes of disappointment, tethered to the desire for an authentic local cinema.

However, the films produced during the period were not limited to their imitation discourse. Despite being duplications, several film adaptations possessed native narratives and meanings and not merely

imitations. It must be stressed that local industries did not wholly duplicate their foreign counterparts. In analyzing the secret agent adaption craze during the 1960s, Michael Hawkins (2010) argues that the adapted films, when placed "in the hands of Filipino producers, directors and actors … could be crafted anew" (352). According to him, the imitation films contained "interpretations of immediate significance and meaning" (352) identifiable to the local context and audience. The local Western genre extends and shares with Hawkins' genre framework, wherein the adapted Western films were also situated on the rendition of the local film industry. Hence, the Filipino Western film presents embarked expressions of locality rooted in the audiences who produced and watched them. Considering Thomas Schatz's (1981) notion that the Western genre is the "most flexible of narrative formulas" (45), local film directors and actors established new meanings and interpretations on the film genre, which places contestation on the mere imitation discourse contended by earlier scholars.

The Italian Western is evident in this adaptation process. In his seminal work on Spaghetti Westerns, Christopher Frayling (2016 in Teo 2017, 7) opined that the Italian Western genre goes beyond the primate American Western, pointing out that the former's filmic development was within its local context of Italian cinema, history, and society. With this, Stephen Teo (2017) borrowed Frayling's paradigm and used it in analyzing Western films produced in Asia. Anchored on the idea that both were a "type of genre that is derivative of the American Western but yet departing from it in significant ways," the Eastern Western shared the genre transformation of the Italian Western, subsequently experienced filmic development based on its locality (7). Following this, the Eastern Westerns transformed the classical elements of American Western into elements suited to the Asian condition and environment. The Asian genre entered the process of reinterpreting the Western genre, resulting in the creation of several Western variations, including new tropes of film aesthetics, themes, and characterization relatable for Asian viewers. Hence, the Eastern Western became more than the American Western and interpreted the Western genre on its localized and indigenized themes and concepts.

Situated in the Asian region, the Filipino Western also shared this development. As a sub-genre of the Eastern Western, the Filipino Western also identified the post-American Western concept, wherein the adapted Western genre tropes were challenged, engaged, and subsequently localized. Moreover, it went further to incorporate native themes and concepts identifiable with the Filipino condition and viewers. The Filipino Western challenged its foreign genre counterpart and consequently renewed its filmic elements discernable to the Filipino viewers. Thus, as Deocampo (2011) stressed:

> There were Westerns which, while displaying iconic costumes and visuals, contained in their narratives local themes and conflicts that threw light on actual social problems such as the agrarian conflict arising from the feudal ownership of lands, which forces

> farmers to take up arms against their rich landlords, or in the story of a crusading hero out to seek justice from the hands of wicked forces. (509)

ORIGINS OF THE FILIPINO WESTERN AND ITS ADAPTATION HISTORY

As cinema arrived in the Philippines in the early twentieth century, also came the Western genre. Early accounts of cinema in the country reported that Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) was shown in 1905 (Deocampo 2011, 507). Western-themed films were regularly presented in the Philippines during the American colonial period, with the local cinema under foreign influence. Some films were shown in local theatres, including the Empire movie theatre in Manila and the Cine Republic in Iloilo in 1911 and 1913 (Deocampo 2011, 229, 244-245). Before the war, the local film industry began its attempt to produce Western films, for instance *Karayo* (1940). The film is about the story of an Ilokano cowboy. Deocampo praises it for its being a non-Tagalog film that pioneered the local Western-style theme (509).

One decade later, *Bandido* (1950) was credited to spearhead the production of Western genre films in the country during the post-war period. The film was directed by Ramon Estella, starred popular actors Efren Reyes Sr. and Virginia Montes, and pioneered the start of the Filipino Western (Jimenez 2011). During that period, the people in the industry were uncertain about the genre, considering the obscurity of the cowboy concept in the local scene. However, the film turned out to be a pivotal box-office hit and later paved the way for the surge of Filipino Western films in the country. Stephen Teo (2017) states that "the Philippines has the most prolific output of Westerns in any Southeast Asian country" (32). The production of local Westerns peaked during the 1960s, birthing film titles such as *Baril sa Baril* (1961), *Baril na Ginto* (1964), *Alamat Ng Pitong Kilabot* (1967), and *Barbaro Cristobal* (1968), among others.

With the huge Western film inputs, the decade of 1960s was termed the "golden age of goon cinema" (Leavold 2014, 148), with secret agent films and martial arts-themed films also filling up the local theatres. In addition to Efren Reyes Sr., notable leading men in cowboy suits were Fernando Poe Jr., Jesse Lapid Sr., Jun Aristorenas, Tony Ferrer, Joseph Estrada, Paquito Diaz, Eddie Garcia, and Max Alvarado. Moreover, local Western films were not limited to portraying heavy action films. Several action-comedy films also emerged. Some names that starred Western comedies were Dolphy, Chiquito, and Panchito Alba. Female actors were also featured as co-leads in some films, including Nida Blanco, Divina Valencia, and Mila Montañez. Western films still continued into the 1970s and even during the early 1980s. Popular westerns during the period were *Arizona Kid* (1970), starring comedian Chiquito; *San Basilio* (1981) with a masked man with *salakot* Lito Lapid; and *D'Wild Wild Weng* (1982),

which featured the four-foot-tall Filipino midget named Weng Weng. As the *bakbakan*, or action genre, gained popularity and crowded the cinemas, the Western genre production lost its appeal to viewers and eventually demised.

THE GLOCALIZATION OF THE WESTERN GENRE IN THE PHILIPPINES

The familiarity of the Western is manifested in its filmic elements of protagonist and setting. Following this, the majority of adaptations heavily supplement these Western tropes in their films. In Sergei Leone's Italian Western, the classical Western elements of cowboy imagery are apparent in the protagonist, wherein Clint Eastwood's lead character was seen with the vaquero apparel. The cowboy features and behavior of stone-faced expressions were also seen. In the setting, the films were also situated in a barren landscape, filmed in their contexts, resembling the American Western backdrop. Other adapted Westerns, specifically the Eastern and the Filipino, also recognized these filmic elements in their localized films. Given the significance of the elements on filming and depicting Westerns, it is reasonable to focus on the two in analyzing the glocalization process of the genre in the Philippines. In this case, the protagonist is to be termed the Western hero, and the setting is to be called the Western space.

Simply borrowing from Hollywood does not guarantee the effectiveness and popularity of the local film. In analyzing Bollywood films, Shakuntala Rao (2010, 6) opined that adapted films must retain 'Indianness' to be adequate to their local audience. The Filipino Westerns share this paradigm in their adapted films. Although classical Western elements were still hardly duplicated, the Filipino Western had transformed the genre suited to the local environment, establishing new interpretations and meanings. In other words, concerning Rao, the Filipino Western retains 'a touch of Filipino.' In doing so, the films can be fully engaging with the local audience.

The discussion that follows focuses on two films entitled *Daniel Barrion* (1964) and *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion* (1968) (Figures 1 and 2). Both films were popular at the time because they starred Fernando Poe Jr. as Daniel Barrion and *Daniel Barrion* was the only Filipino Western with a sequel. Moreover, both films were part of the 1960s film adaptation craze, which heavily produced cowboy-themed films. *Daniel Barrion* was directed by Efren Reyes. It narrates the story of Barrion's revenge on the man who killed his father. However, his journey to find his father's killer brings him together with the townspeople. The attachment subsequently results in his deep personal connections with the people, often serving and helping them when necessary. Because of this, Barrion becomes famous and his name a legend. On the other hand, *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion*, the sequel directed by Armando Garces, focuses on the return of Daniel Barrion. With goons causing distress, the townspeople search

for their hero. Barrion returns and defends the people from the evil goons' control of the town and massacres the people. However, the process is not easy as several of Barrion's companions are killed. The casualties fuel him, which subsequently leads to the defeat of the goons and the freedom of the townspeople.

The Western Hero

Every Western film showcases a rodeo cowboy or a Western hero. Similar to the filmic space, the Western hero is the most enduring element of the genre. The iconography of the American West is uniquely embedded in the hero: a cowboy hat, cowboy boots, a six-shooter, a leathered pistol case, a bullet belt, a sheriffs' badge, and most certainly, a riding horse. With the filmic surge of Westerns in the 1960s, the local film industry concurringly created the Filipino cowboy imagery. Heavily influenced by its Western foreign parallels, the resemblance of characteristics appears in the local Western hero.

In retrospect, foreign Western heroes were constructed heavily based on the potent American figure of the cowboy. The mythological meaning that ensembled the cowboy imagery of machoism and heroism was thematically transported to the Western hero of the films during the genre's birth. Andre Brodie Smith (2004) states that the character of Bronco Billy established the acting style of a Western hero, having the characteristics of "studied quietness, slow and deliberate movements, intense gaze, and stone-faced expressions" (173). Both features molded what can be known as the iconography of the Western hero, reflected in several Western lead actors, such as Gilbert Anderson, Joel McCrea, John Wayne, and Clint Eastwood.

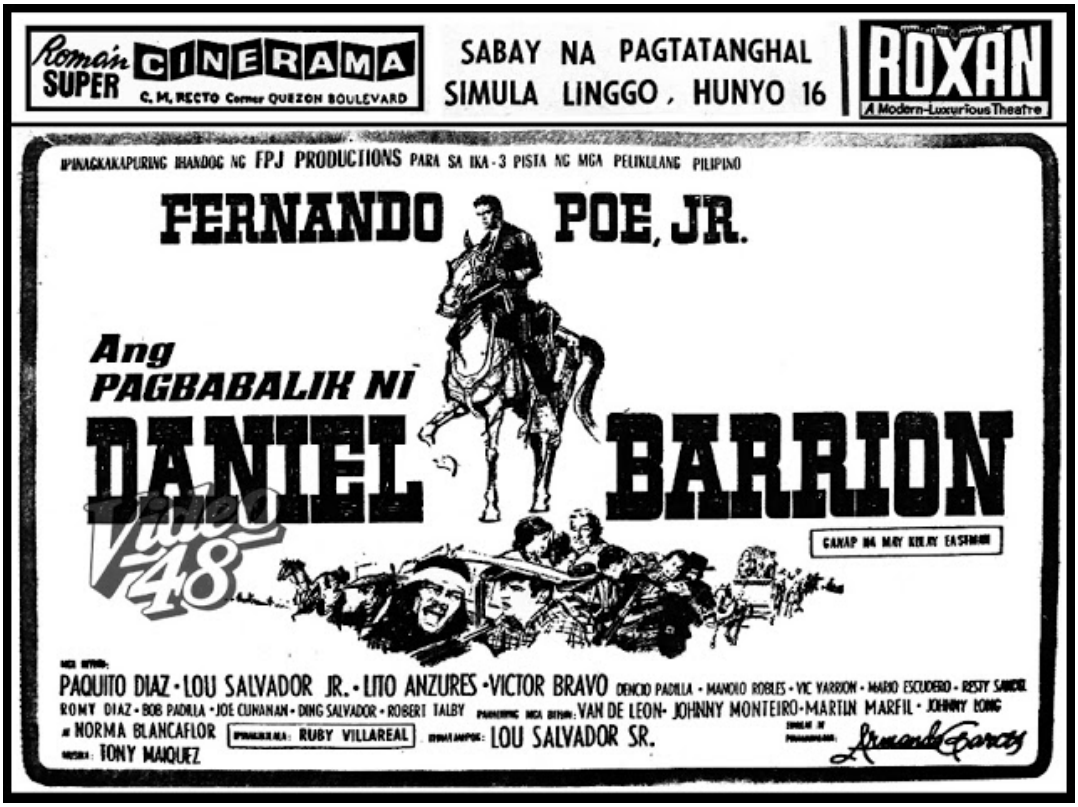

Figure 1. Film poster of *Daniel Barrion* (1964). Source: Video 48.

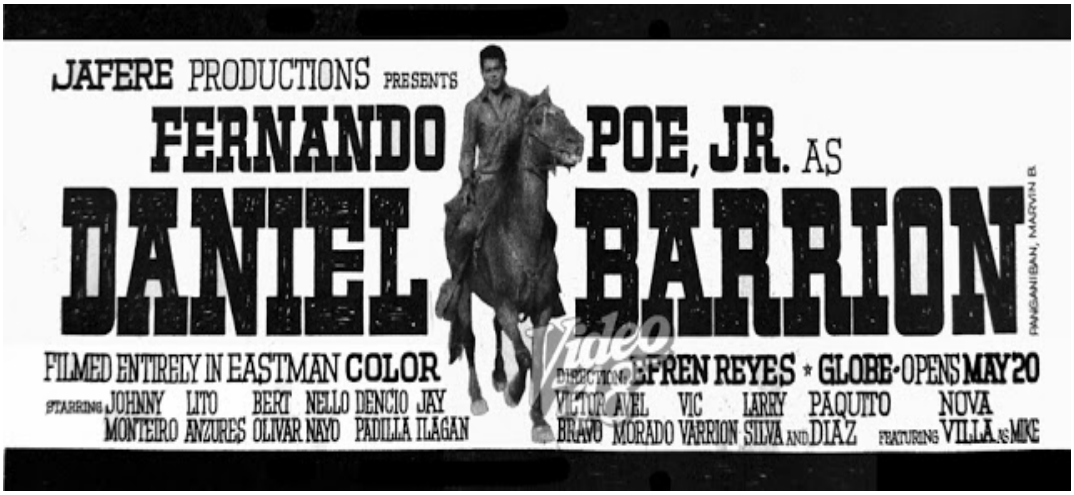

Figure 2. Film poster of *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion* (1968). Source: Video 48.

Both features were transposed to the persona of Daniel Barrion. Resembling the cowboy imagery of riding the horse, wearing his external attire of button-down shirt, fitted straight cut pants, and boots, the lead actor represents the Western hero in the body of a native. Stephen Teo (2014) assesses this as the "faciality of the Asian Western" that serves implications on the "deconstructing formation of the American or European Western" (131), which stresses the genre relocation. In the Philippine cinema, it seems that the characterization of the Western hero was eased through the artists behind it. During

the 1960s, no other name can be fully connected with the iconography of the local Western hero than Fernando Poe Jr. – or FPJ, as he is popularly known. Fernando Poe Jr. began to crystallize his historic film persona in specializing in Westerns (Sotto 1987, 5). The actor entered the genre in 1960 and popularized the Western hero in *Markado* (1960). Subsequently, an influx of Western films starring Fernando Poe Jr. followed, most notably *Angkan Ng Matatapang* (1963), *Baril Na Ginto* (1964), *Alamat Ng Pitong Kilabot* (1967), and *Barbaro Cristobal* (1968). Poe marked his visual persona of the local cowboy throughout the films, presenting attributes of confidence, composure, and calm demeanor. He also encompassed the feature of stone-faced faciality, known for displaying his anger with his gaze. In both films with him as Barrion, these cowboy archetypes are manifested, portraying and molding the ideal image of a Filipino Western hero.

In the staple Western formula, the true focus of interest was the adventure story of the Western hero, heavily focused on his role of vanquishing the obstacles of oppression and inequality. With this, the Western hero also embodies a set of moralities, which appears vital in his heroic figure. He was often characterized as "the handsome, mysterious hero, clad in gold-colored buckskin" (Peebles 2016, 123) fighting for fragile and weak people who were threatened and intimidated by the villain. Stanley Corkin (2004, 101) furthers this idea, stating the Western hero's valiant characteristics of willingness to risk his life for the common good and not to expect anything in return. Of all features, Daniel Barrion promptly and mainly identified with the latter. In both films, he serves as the champion of the oppressed, resolving local dilemmas with his prowess and vigor. In *Daniel Barrion*, he serves as the savior of the townspeople from the people that oppress them with land issues. *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion* correlates, with Barrion returning to defend the people from the group of goons. Barrion always saves the day, which leads to his popular appeal to the masses. As one character in the film states: "Hangga't mayroong naaapi, si Daniel Barrion ay hindi puwedeng mamatay" [While someone is oppressed, Daniel Barrion will never die]. Here, one factor must be stressed: the identifiable characteristic of the Filipino Western hero. The capability of the hero to have a sense of belonging with the people, in other words, the potent imagery of being 'one of us.'

Furthermore, Stacy Peebles (2016) writes on the 'violent persona' the Western hero possesses. In her view, the hero can be brutal at times, which Agustin Sotto (1987) relates as the "act of fighting never undertaken for its own sake" (9). In several foreign films, this aspect of the Western hero can be easily perceived, particularly in gunfights, quick-draw scenes, and stand-offs. However, the Western hero must not be confined as purely brutal and violent, considering the motive behind his acts. Peebles (2016) treats this aspect as a critical component in the genre's popularity, which in most cases, the Western was built on. According to her,

> the Western is built on its climactic moment: the violent rendering of justice. This is what we want to see – a person or group of people getting what they deserve even

> though they are beyond the reach of an established judicial system. And to satisfy that desire, we look to the Western hero, whose violent righting of wrong has always been his most compelling and potentially disturbing feature. The appeal of the Western hero, then, is akin to the appeal of a monarch – an exceptional figure who acts as a font of order and justice, thus serving as a model and a leader for those around him. (121)

The thematic portrayal of justice vis-à-vis violence is prevalent in various Western films. Most embed schemes of retribution and vengeance in their storylines, serving as the film's main plot, which subsequently circles heavily around the Western hero's action. Although the Western hero renders justice violently, in essence, these schemes often justify vicious actions. The hero is probably a brute, but his brutality is rooted in a reasonable basis for revenge.

In both films, this attribute is heavily highlighted in the persona of Daniel Barrion. Both films are encompassed on the traditional Western theme of retribution. Barrion is seen to practice the concept of violently rendering of justice grounded in certain situations wherein the hero's family and close companions are affected, either oppressed or killed. *Daniel Barrion* heavily focuses on this scheme, which seems to appear in the two conflicts presented in the film. The first is the revenge plot of Barrion for the murder of this father, whereas the second conflict focuses on the distressed condition of his companions over issues relating to land ownership. The latter conflict is resolved through violence by killing the leader of the goons, causing unrest. In the sequel, *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion*, the same revenge schemes are evident, but mainly focus on the group of goons called *alakdan* (scorpion) who also cause unrest among the townspeople and kill his close companions. Being first undersized, Barrion reverts with haste after his innocent friend Margarita Labrador is killed by the goons' leader. Barrion pursues the goons with glaring eyes and displays the violent rendering of justice.

The imagery of violence and justice appear to be the filmic persona that established Fernando Poe Jr.'s career. Rommel Rodriguez (2013) describes this as the double face image of the actor's character in most of his films:

> Most of the films he starred in depict an ordinary citizen victimized by social circumstances that impel his transformation; from a seemingly immaculate character into a character exhibiting violence and vengeance, a trigger-happy and sadist protagonist. From this, we can read a seemingly two-faced image of the male hero in several of FPJ's films; one good and the other evil, which in fact is still regarded by viewers as being good, for this was only brought about by the hardships the protagonist endured. (1)

The huge amount of viewership of his films manifested the effectiveness of the genre. Rodriguez finds this amusing, considering the ready acceptance of the audience despite its depiction of "vengeance employing violence [as] justice" (2). Without a doubt, the films were appealing. It seems that their appeal was rooted in the relatedness of the viewers to the circumstances embedded within. His films were reality itself, depicting local social issues the audiences constantly identify. Considering their unescapable condition brought by the unjust system, the viewers seek a savior persona that will make them feel defended, protected, and satisfied with justice. This was intensely embodied in the characterization of Poe, shortly relieving the viewers from dilemmas of life through the spectacle of the film screen.

One can see the commonalities of both Western and the local action film or the *bakbakan*. These can be perceived in the pivotal aspects of preference on action-oriented scenes and the centrality of the hero narrative. Focusing on the latter aspect, the heroes of both genres embody comparable attributes of the virtuous individual and protection of the weak (Sotto 1987, 9-10). The local Westerns can be considered as local prototypes of the *bakbakan*. Considering the early career of notable action film actors, one can observe that they first starred in Western-related movies. Most notably relevant is the historic career of Fernando Poe Jr.

As stated earlier, Poe's popular exposure began in several local Western films, slowly molding his action film persona. When the local action film achieved its peak during the 1980s, Poe fully established his film persona and was subsequently perceived as the ideal action film protagonist of his time. In that sense, the earlier local Western productions greatly influenced several aspects of the local action film, most notably the story of the hero and the creation of the hero imagery. Hence, the Western appears as proto-*bakbakan*, in a sense, wherein the protagonist embodies similar attributes although dressed in the cowboy outfit.

In retrospect, it is noted that the Western was heavily rooted in the American context. However, the process of genre transposition situated the genre within the local context, embracing native representations and origins. Patrick Campos (2009) writes that the *bakbakan* genre is "indicative of popular cultural consciousness" which was intimately related to "contemporary popular media (e.g., *komiks*, radio, TV), anchored on dramatic traditions (e.g., the *komedya*), the nineteenth-century *awit* and *korido*, and, ultimately, folk literature" (5). In further rooting the genre, Zeus Salazar (1989) states that the *bakbakan* films are modern ethoepics, and further:

> Isang modernong tradisyong epiko ang pelikulang bakbakan. … Ekspresyon silang lahat ng diwang bayan at, samakatuwid, ang kanilang mga istorya ay naglalaman ng mga pinakamahalagang elemento ng kulturang bayan. Ito ang dahilan kung bakit popular

> ang pelikulang bakbakan, kasing popular ng mga epikong etniko sa mga pamayanang etnolingwistiko ngayon at lahat ng mga Pilipino noon. (11)
>
> The action film is a modern epic tradition. … They are all expressions of the people's consciousness, and therefore, the stories contain the most important elements of the [*bayan's*] nation's culture. This is the reason action films are popular, as popular as the ethnoepics of the ethnolinguistic communities of both the present and the past. (translation by the author)

Having the same intricate filmic attributes as the *bakbakan*, the localized Western could also be considered connected to the same media cultural schemes, focusing on narrative play and storyline. Hence, using Salazar's analogical comparison, the localized Western can be regarded as the "modern epic" of the 1960s local film industry. Its appeal transcended its filmic elements, where the genre's popularity results from the inherent storyline of the epics which originated in the native Filipino culture.

Furthermore, Salazar (1989, 11) also mentions the correlation of the heroes of the traditional epic with the protagonist of the *bakbakan* films. Following the earlier analogy, local Western heroes can also be associated with epic heroes. The intrinsic identifiability of the Filipino Western hero seems naturally induced by his inherent traits, which resemble the persona of the native hero seen in traditional epics. *Bayani ng epiko* (epic heroes) are individuals who carry with them the tradition and culture of the people. With that, Salazar (1997, 3-4) defines them as individuals who act in reliance with the culture of the people, where it is with greater importance to show *kababaang-loob* (humility) and being equal with everyone. The reflected values of the epic hero in the Filipino protagonist of Western and *bakbakan* genres is the reason for the latter's popularity. The embodiment of the people's cultures not only made them more appealing to the audience, but it also manifests the glocalization process of the Western hero conforming to indigenous conditions, localities, and realities.

With this, one can relate the Filipino Western hero to the concepts of *kapwa* and *lakas ng loob*, which the native epic hero heavily embodied. Both concepts were indigenous and formulated by Virgilio Enriquez (1978), where the former focuses on the unity of the *sarili* (self) with the *iba* (other). In other words, *kapwa* implies the discourse relating the "recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others" (Yacat 2013, 2). This contrasted the English translation of 'others' that tends to divide the self from the other (Aquino 1999, 204, 228). In the film, the sense of *kapwa* is easily perceived through Barrion. Only knowing the people for quite some time and having no particular relationship with them, Barrion unhesitatingly lends them a hand. In *Daniel Barrion*, he helps the townspeople on their land dilemmas, while in *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion*, the character defends the people from the goons that cause unrest and violence in the town. Hence, Barrion is one with the people. He embodies the

concept of *pakikipagkapwa,* or the repudiation of the separation of the *sarili* with the *iba*. He implies the recognition of the *sarili* (himself) with the other or the townspeople unknown to him.

Barrion's actions also reflect the indigenous concept of *lakas ng loob* (courage). The concept focuses on the "inner source of change one must attain to confront challenges, including death, in order to uphold the good and defend dignity" (Enriquez 1977, 5; Kunting 2009, 98). The concept is evident in the conflicts manifested in both films wherein Barrion flees to the enemy with *lakas ng loob* and risks his life to retribute for his affected companions. In the last scene of *Daniel Barrion*, after settling with the members of the goons, Barrion goes toe-to-toe with the leader with fists and guns. Having the upper hand, it seems that he is content with the condition of the goons, warning the leader to veer away from the land issue and the townspeople. The leader, being the antagonist, resists and aims the shoot Barrion. However, Barrion is too quick and shots him instantly.

Similar schemes of events are seen in *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion*. After the murder of his companions, Barrion goes alone to the territory of the goons in search of revenge. Here, the essence of confronting challenges, including one's death, are evident. Although Barrion's actions are brutal, they reflect the attribute of upholding the good and defending dignity, which correlates with the earlier Western filmic aspect of the violent rendering of justice. Barrion's exposition of *lakas ng loob* for the townspeople justifies his portrayal as the native hero. Like the Filipino Western hero, the concept of *lakas ng loob* manifests the epic hero whose story centers on his duty of saving and providing harmony for the community.

Western landscape

One of the most conspicuous attributes of a Western film is its film landscape. Usually, Western films are set in a vast geographical space, with visible topographical features of dessert, prairie, and mountain ranges. Stephen Teo (2014) defines this landscape as the "Western space" which relies on "location shooting and action set in out-door exteriors, involving a lot of riding on horses through barren terrain and rough countryside" (124). When creating the first Filipino Westerns, the filmic space was treated to be a major dilemma, considering the distinct topographical features of the Philippines. The filmic space is essential, given its integrality in the genre's attraction value. Nonetheless, this major component of a Western film was localized using the natural landscapes of the country.

An example was the mentioned film *Karayo* (1940). The film pioneered the formula of transposing Western film settings from foreign to local in Philippine cinema. With its Western theme, it relocated the foreign landscape of the American West to local topography, where the mountains of Montalban in Marikina served as the backdrops and space of the film (Deocampo 2011, 509). The usage of the

local mountains and plains manifested a 'native flavor' that ensured the relatability for the local viewers. Teo (2014, 125) relates the transposition process of filmic landscape to the concept of reterritorialization, involving the Deleuzian concept of rhizome. Following this, when local film industries adapt the foreign Western, the filmic space was also adapted. According to Teo:

> As a genre, it has been translocated into other national cinemas. Normally when a genre is appropriated by other cinemas, its conventions and codes are transferred along with intrinsic features of behavior and speech as well as extrinsic features of dress, costume and topographical signs. For a genre so reliant on its spatiality, its space is translocated too. The space that travels from one locality to another may need to be re-conceived and re-theorized. (127)

Furthermore, primary features are not only confined in translocation. In the process, the appropriator of the genre and space also engages with the traditional elements of the foreign genre, applying their elements of locality, including culture and geographic spaces (131). This aspect is manifest in several local Westerns that used native landscapes as their setting.

Similar to foreign Western films, *Daniel Barrion* opens by presenting the leading actor with his horse, displaying the filmic space. However, the space presented was not the distinctive Western landscape which normally featured desserts, prairies, and the Mountain Valley. The viewers can see Barrion riding his horse, which appears to expose the native terrain of the film. This space aspect is also present in *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion*, where the films start with the presentation of cowboys running in their horses within the backdrop of trees and green fields. The native landscapes in the opening scenes seem to situate the viewer within the Western film's utilization of space locality in the film. The film presents its setting of local topographical features of mountain ranges, forests, grasslands (*bukid* or *talahiban*), and rivers that are different from and unfamiliar to the classical Western setting.

Most of the local Westerns created in other countries used the backgrounds of the American Western. The desert space of mountains and valleys as the setting was evident in Italy, Mexico, and Thailand. Also, in adaptation, several national cinemas came up with their localized forms of the Western space. For instance, the German Western film series (1962–1968) featuring the native American character 'Winnetou' chose locations in Croatia and former Yugoslavia to resemble the Western space. In contrast, rather than fully imitating the backdrops of classical Westerns, the Filipino Western films used native landscapes as their setting. The visual element of the varieties of color shade that was expressed in both films must be noticed. *Daniel Barrion* and *Ang Pagbabalik ni Daniel Barrion* (1964) employed shades of green in their settings, mostly the olive pastures of land and forest. It opposed the touch of foreign Westerns, which typically resembled the brownish nuance of space presented in the

American Midwest. The use of native themes exposed the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Filipino Western compared to its foreign appropriators.

The films reinterpreted the Western space with their use of indigenous themes. Both still presented distinctive Western structures, such as saloons and horse stables. However, what differs from foreign Westerns were the structures established in native grasslands and forests, contrasting with the classical prairie backgrounds. Edifices such as the solitary ranch house or cabin were transformed into native houses built with local materials of *bamboo*, *anahaw,* and *nipa*. The prevalence of churches and bell towers must also be noted. Compared with Western films, which only occasionally feature churches, the Filipino Western's inclusion of churches manifested the religiosity of the locality. With the utilization of local spatial elements of grasslands, mountains, and rivers, with indigenous themes in the film structures, the Western space was transposed, with meanings identifiable with the local audiences that consumed it. In other words, the Western landscape was reterritorialized.

CONCLUSION

In 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner presented his seminal essay entitled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" before a crowd of historians at the World's Columbian Exposition. Turner argued that the American frontier greatly influenced the development of American identity, culture, and civilization, and its continued expansion furnished the dominant American persona. Turner's thesis later illuminated discourses on the expansionist attitude of the United States, concurrently touching on aspects of Manifest Destiny, American individuality and nationalism, white dominance, imperialism, and ultimately American exceptionalism. Stanley Corkin (2000) discusses this expansion, relating it to the Western film, particularly with the genre's most enduring convention of space that reflects the frontier. Corkin notes that Westerns

> reproduce Turner's assertion of the terms of American exceptionalism. The Western commonly marks the transitional moment when social upheavals result in the coming of a re-elaborated Anglo-Saxon civilization, when the social structures and values usually associated with American nationalism are reborn and reinvigorated in a Western locale. (69)

Corkin adds that "these films remain cultural expressions that engage audiences in the process of viewing U.S. expansion as an ultimate good" and relates the genre with ideologies of "nationalism and a kind of imperialism", where Americans "readily promote affective assent" (71). The vivid relation of the frontier thesis and the genre made the process of Western adaptation a complicated effort, as it rendered several discursive aspects of imperialism, cultural primacy, exceptionalism, cultural hegemony, individualism, among others. Focusing on the first aspect, the Western genre is also

believed to transport its discourse of imperialism in the process of adaptation. Within it, the transposition of ideology is manifested, termed as the aggressive American foreign policy of 'cowboy diplomacy' or the Western neoliberalism of 'cowboy economics,' which also relates to the ideological statement that Westerns are "markedly imperialist" (Higgins et al. 2015, 1). Patrick Campos (2016), on the other hand, connects the advancement of the American motion picture and the frontier to the Western genre, considering it as the "fuel to produce and consume Westerns" which "impulses defined imperial fantasies about the rugged and peripheral Philippine islands" (345-346). Likewise, Deocampo (2011) situates the local arrival of the genre with the pending imperial movement of the United States in the Philippines. With the analogy of the *Great Train Robbery* (1903) and the imperial power of the United States, Deocampo assessed the "cinematic metaphor" present in the film and the imperial colonization, stating what "real cowboys [who rob in the film] (morphed into a killing machine that was the U.S. army) were doing: robbing Filipinos of their independence and changing the course of their country's history" (508). Following this, the Western genre and its films served as an allegory of the United States' imperial expansion and legacy.

However, the Western genre was reinterpreted in the locality, creating new filmic meanings and conventions embodied in localized Western films. With the globality of the Western from the 1930s to the 1960s, genre-affected countries underwent the process of glocalization. The Philippine cinema also had its local experiences with the genre adaptation, engaging its American Western counterparts. The Western films produced in the locality presented distinct characteristics compared to its foreign parallels in Asia and Europe.

In the glocalization process, new ramifications and interpretations of the Western emerged. The Western hero was interpreted as an epic hero, and the Western spaces were transposed to territory unknown and different from the classical Western. On the one hand, the Filipino Western hero transcended foreign attributes, exposing traits heavily rooted in native culture. Through the correlation of indigenous concepts, the persona of the Western hero is further situated within the local context. The appearance of the *kapwa* and *lakas ng loob* concepts established new interpretations in the discourse of the Western hero. Likewise, new meanings of the hero were created, meanings which are identifiable with the locality. Hence, the global concept of the Western hero became fully localized through the character of Daniel Barrion acting as a key Filipino Western hero. On the other hand, the classical Western backdrop in the United States was reimagined and relocated within the bounds of the Philippine locality, creating new interpretations and ramifications of the Western space, which was resituated within the local needs of the Filipino Western. With the integration of localized concepts, the genre appears to surpass its foreign genre primate in presenting the Western elements, transcending the classical interpretation done by other regional cinemas.

With new implications adapted from certain contextualities, the adjusted Western ruined its presupposed foreign genre identity. It removed the classic Western theme of ideology "perpetuated and reinforced a narrative structure of individualism, Manifest Destiny, settlement, and imperial capitalism alongside prescribed notions of racial and gendered assumptions of superiority and control" (Campbell 2011, xv). It transformed into a new genre removed from its original genre. With that, national cinemas are free from merely copying the Western tropes that originated in the United States. Although genre appropriators still utilized elements derived from classic Westerns, national cinemas "never simply [repeat] them, but instead adapt [...] them for new cultural, political, and social commentaries" (xiii).

New interpretations disintegrated the traditional opposition of the classical Western, which solely focuses on the binaries of inside society/outside society, cowboy/Indian, and civilization/wilderness, rooted in the American historical experience. It served as a complete reaction and counterculture to the conventions and themes of the genre from which it was derived. In other words, the adapted Westerns transcended the thematic constraints of the genre, challenged the classical genre, and in the process, integrated concepts related to the local context of the national cinema that adapted it. Thus, as Campbell (2011) writes, "the Western genre travels, becoming more than American, being both local and global, potentially 'worlding' through borrowing and mutating the Western and turning it outward, redistributed, to the world, ... beyond the classic Hollywood form and values" (xvii).

Following the above, the 1960s film imitation craze can be placed in a new perspective. The decade appears to be a developmental one in local cinema history, contrary to its common depiction of an obscure period. Confining and limiting the decade with its imitation discourse proves unfair to the local producers and directors who created films with themes and expressions of the locality. Likewise, it is almost unfair to the films with local elements that merely await resurfacing and analysis. The disregard for the decade also results in several scholarship gaps, resulting in the abandonment of several studies on various films produced during the decade. With a new perspective, several studies can be created about the films produced during the 1960s. Given the enormous volume of Western films, studies on the genre per se and its related subgenres of Western comedy, Western drama, and Western action can be conducted. Also, the linked topics and themes of post-coloniality and gender could be incorporated into the scholarship. Finally, other martial arts, samurai, and spy themes could serve as good starting points.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JOHN ADRIANFER ATIENZA graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. His publications have appeared in the journals *TALA: An Online Journal of History* (2019) of the University of Santo Tomas, *Saliksik E-Journal* (2019) of Bahay-Saliksikan ng Kasaysayan/Bagong Kasaysayan Inc. (BAKAS), and *Humanities Diliman* (2021) of University of the Philippines Diliman. He is currently taking his Master of Arts in Philippine Studies at the Asian Center of University of the Philippines Diliman. He is also a faculty member of the Department of Social Studies of Marist School Marikina. His main research interests include Philippine cinema, history films, and genre films.

✉: atienzaadrian1@gmail.com

Destination Storytelling Singapore: *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018) and the Constructed Global Audience

JOSHUA BABCOCK
University of Chicago

KENZELL HUGGINS
University of Chicago

ABSTRACT

This article examines deployments of the film *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018) framed and reframed as a case of Singapore's destination storytelling 'success' in both ethnographic data and published media. We analyze the interinstitutional production of destination storytelling as a professional practice that draws on media development, place/destination branding, and tourism promotion as its conditions of possibility. We argue that the destination-storytelling success in the case of CRA is constructed as a function of the film's recognition by 'global' audiences, a category framed as intersubstitutable with both Western and American. This global audience qua Western/American viewer is further constructed as eminently distractable, perpetually in need of new settings to consume, making Singapore's destination storytelling success a potentially temporary, fragile achievement. This case emphasizes how local/global contrasts and acts of accommodation that purport to bridge them are not given in advance, but rather come into being via contextually situated, comparative scaling projects.

Keywords: branding, image, local/global, media development, scale, Singapore, tourism promotion

INTRODUCTION

On 30 January 2020, a representative from the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) took the stage at an annual destination storytelling conference and awards ceremony held in Bangkok, Thailand. Titled "Tourism Boards Leveraging Film: Singapore," the presentation was a case study of one of the STB's recent successes in 'destination storytelling': the film *Crazy Rich Asians* (dir. Jon M. Chu), a 2018 romantic comedy that, in addition to making headlines as the first Hollywood film to feature an entirely Asian-heritage cast since 1993's *The Joy Luck Club* (dir. Wayne Wang), was set in Singapore. The case study presentation began, however, with the *Jurassic Park* films. Even though the films were wrong on many details, the speaker asserted, they nevertheless dominate global perceptions of what dinosaurs were like: "So, what I want to tell you is that movies are a very powerful tool. You can shape the way that people think, look, and see, and feel… and it gives the audience a very personal connection" (Choo 2020a) The topic of the talk, the speaker continued, was about how STB – whose job it is to "market and showcase Singapore" (ibid) – uses film to do just that. This served as a segue into two clips of *Crazy Rich Asians* (*CRA*).

The first short clip began with an exterior shot of a plane flying above clouds. The view faded to a world map, as an arcing line moved from the U.S. to Southeast Asia. The view zoomed in as the line terminated at Singapore's Marina Bay. The scene then cut to a moving aerial shot of the Singapore skyline viewed from the southeast, moving from Marina East toward the three towers of the famous Marina Bay Sands integrated resorts and casino complex. An onscreen title spelled "Singapore" in red and white letters. The scene then cut to Changi Airport, with a map of Singapore visible in the foreground. Once the first clip ended, the presenter continued: "Immediately in those few seconds, you know where Singapore is on the map. That is a very important thing for us as a tourism board, because people in the Western countries unfortunately are not so savvy on Asia (ibid)."

After a brief pause, the speaker asked, rhetorically: "Ok, what can we do in Singapore? (ibid)" This introduced a second clip. In it, the main *CRA* characters were shown driving along the highway from the airport to the city center. They ended at the open-air hawker center in the historic Lau Pa Sat Festival Market, where the viewer was bombarded by a fast-paced series of rapid-cut, close-up shots of food in various stages of preparation. The clip ended with lead actor Constance Wu's character visibly delighted by an unseen food item. The presenter once again took to the stage: "So, this scene is one of my favorites in the movie. It has everything that a destination marketer wants in these few minutes. Literally, once we've seen this scene" – dramatic pause for emphasis – "all sold." The presentation ended with the logo and tagline for the Singapore destination brand, *Passion Made Possible*, emblazoned in red neon.

Later, during a cocktail reception, one of the authors approached the presenter and asked why the Board had chosen *Crazy Rich Asians* as their case study, since many people in Singapore and Asia had a lukewarm-to-negative response to the film. The reply: "To be blunt, we don't care about this reaction. The film was a destination storytelling win in the U.S. and U.K. markets, which is what we were going for (Choo 2020b)."

Given this response, we ask the following: What are the conditions of possibility for constructing *Crazy Rich Asian* as a destination storytelling 'success,' and how is an image of Singapore generated across multiple scales to create this destination storytelling success? Rather than taking destination storytelling as possessing a coherent, determinate, self-evident referent (whether a set of professional practices, the durable products of those practices, or the like), this article examines destination storytelling as an interinstitutional nexus among 1) media-development strategy – the overt state policies and public–private partnerships designed to encourage media industries' growth and sustainability; 2) place- or destination branding – a corporate-style marketing and communications regime applied to the commoditized image of a locale; and 3) tourism promotion, which promotes branded place and destinations, but via a narrow focus on leisure travel. As it is enacted in Singapore, destination storytelling orients toward an imagined global audience (a sense of 'global' that, as the opening vignette shows, generally refers to a Western consumer).

Destination storytelling, then, emerges from two institutional strategies carried out across the three aforementioned institutional domains: first, a "Made-with-Singapore" media strategy, and second, the marketing and management of the *Passion Made Possible* place- and destination brand. As we will elaborate in greater depth later, "Made-with-Singapore" is a category deployed by Singapore state's media development apparatus, referring to an ostensibly new approach to local/global media-production partnerships. *Passion Made Possible*, meanwhile, is the latest slogan in a branding campaign designed to showcase the presumed passions of everyday Singaporeans, a value proposition held to encompass both the unique image of the place, and to drive tourism and investment.

Yet while *Crazy Rich Asians* is a film set in Singapore, "Made-with-Singapore," and adapted from a literary work of Singaporean authorship (at least as far as citizenship is concerned),[1] it was not, for many self-positioned Asian or Singaporean viewers, a Singaporean film. In other words, this case involves not a straightforward accommodation of the 'global' to the 'local' (reframing or re-presenting media originating outside Singapore), nor a modification of local products to global sensibilities (telling an ostensibly Singaporean story to non-Singaporeans); rather, it highlights the fact that local and global are contextual scales (Carr and Lempert 2016). Though *Crazy Rich Asians'* success is constructed by the representative via its having reached a global audience, this audience is not fixed, with 'global' sometimes indexing all Western locales, sometimes all locales outside Singapore, but more often an imagined American gaze. Moreover, the global audience, variously constructed, is cast as fickle, as

perpetually seeking new, non-Western (local) settings to consume. We argue that, as an instance of destination storytelling success, *Crazy Rich Asians* coordinates a range of interinstitutional sites and ideological interests in both production and reception, variably scaling destination Singapore as local, global, both, or neither according to the interests that ideologically structured the film and its discursive surround. This has important implications for theorizations of the heterogenization–homogenization dynamics of glocalization as a modus operandi of the space–times of globalization (Robertson 1997). Our study brings into relief the fact that, like local and global, 'glocalization' is always perspectival, deployed as a resource in ever-shifting ways.

The remainder of the article proceeds in four sections. First, we provide an overview of the theoretical and historical background on which we draw, and outline the features of the practices of destination storytelling that animate our analysis. Second, we give an overview of the narrative construction of histories of Singapore's media industries, articulated locally as the shift from "made-*in*-Singapore" to "made-*with*-Singapore." Next, we detail changes over time in place- and destination-branding practice leading up to, and following from, the 2017 launch of *Passion Made Possible*. Lastly, we analyze the construction of Singapore as a storytelling *setting* – as opposed, for instance, to a character or narrative genre – in efforts to attract the attention of a mercurial audience ambivalently and alternatingly cast as generically foreign, or particularly American.

BACKGROUND

Scaling 'Local,' 'Global,' and 'Glocal' Destinations

In claiming that local and global are perspectival, contextual scales, we draw on anthropological and other social-scientific scholarship that begins with the perspective that scale "is process before it is product" (Carr and Lempert 2016, 4). This approach does not presume scalar distinctions in advance, whether analytic or empirical. Rather, it attends to the "culture and politics of scale making" (Tsing 2000, 330), which works through "complex, heterogenous, and sometimes far-flung assemblages" (Carr and Lempert 2016, 10). Scale always involves situated evaluations at sites of ideological work (Gal and Irvine 2019, 21-23), enacted via the deployment of models for comparison that organize interpretable distinctions: space, time, number, degree of encompassment (Gal 2016, 92), etc.

Local/global, in this view, is one among many models for comparison, even if it is a highly naturalized, valorized model (Tsing 2000, 330). As a scalar process, globalization involves more than the dynamics of cultural homogenization or heterogenization – a constructed binary that operates as an "essential ingredient of contemporary capitalism" (Robertson 2000[1992], 173; see also 1997). Rather, while acknowledging its intensified "articulations between… cultural forms and practices, […] proliferation of

seemingly novel forms of identification, and new ways of negotiating difference" (Palmié 2013, 464), globalization is a site of ideological work, used as an ideological frame for interpreting a range of processes and phenomena. Similarly, the glocal, enacted through acts of "accommodation" – activities that point to both the interconnections (and power asymmetries) across differently scaled positions (Dreisbach 2018, 62) – also comprises ideological work. Accommodation is accomplished through deployment of models for comparison, not the jumping or blending of a priori scales.

Questions of the global and the local are particularly important when it comes to understanding how discourses of migration, tourism, marketing and destination-storytelling mobilize the concept of destination. More specifically, the concept of destination – both as it is used by destination-storytelling professionals, and as it has been dealt with in studies of migration and tourism – draws on and entails the presumption of a divide between a (contextually constructed) local and its contrastive opposites. The question of what localities count as a destination often grounds implicit or explicit hierarchies between or among destinations. Destination serves as a figure for the articulation of desire, as well as for articulating the shifting moral, socioeconomic, and geopolitical personhood(s) of the desiring individual:[2] not all places are deemed worthy of becoming destinations, and not all destinations confer the same values onto the subjects whose mobilities are constituted in and through the desire for and pursuit of destinations.

In the sections that follow, we track how Singapore is differentially and hierarchically scaled as a destination across sites of official, state-led, nationalist narration and mediatized discourses about Singapore's 'crazy rich' status. We then focus on the scalar processes mobilized through historical and present representations of Singapore's media industries and institutionalized image-management practices in and around *Crazy Rich Asians*.

History and/as the 'Singapore Story'

Widespread, official narratives about Singapore describe it as an unlikely success existing at a confluence, or contradiction, of global flows. Emerging from an originary trauma of a forced separation from the Federation of Malaysia in 1964, which cut the city-state off from key resources, like water (Newman and Thornley 2005, 247; Kaplan 2016), Singapore is narrated as having nevertheless risen to attain a globally enviable state of socioeconomic advancement. It is also narrated as having attained a similarly enviable degree of harmony in spite of its population diversity. As of 2019, official census records documented 76.01% Chinese, 15.00% Malay, 7.47% Indian, and 1.53% Other, demographically categorized via a standardized, institutionalized racial model known as CMIO (PuruShotam 1998). Despite being framed as a mere statement of demographic fact, Chinese majority in Singapore has driven racialized narratives of the city-state's embattlement vis-à-vis its Malay-Muslim neighbors

(Rahim 2010, 60–62): thus, "race categories were politically constructed to [constitute CMIO] 'multiracialism' as both a national character and a national ideology… [Other minority groups] played a critical symbolic and substantive role in rendering Singapore as a multiracial society. Without them Singapore's racial composition and politics would be one of the majority/dominant [Chinese] and the minority/subordinate Malays" (Chua 2017, 130).

The narrative of survival against long odds, of triumph in the face of adversity, and of meteoric socioeconomic and geopolitical rise is referred to in Singapore as the "Singapore Story." A key component of civic-education pedagogies (Baildon and Afandi 2017) and ritualized state rhetoric, the Singapore Story is designed to instill in Singaporeans a sense of pride in the place's meteoric, "unlikely" (J. C. Perry 2017; M. Perry, Kong, and Yeoh 1997; Liow 2015) rise from "Third World to First," as the title of a memoir by founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew would have it (Lee 2012; see also Holden 2001; 2017).

Rather than accepting such assertions that Singapore is forever vulnerable, yet steadily developing due to the foresight and meritocratic commitments of the People's Action Party (Thum 2017), the political party in power since the granting of self-rule in 1959, we instead follow critical scholarship in a range of fields that emphasizes these narratives' constructed, mythic status. In asserting that such narratives are myths, scholars in Singapore have followed Roland Barthes in explicating how interpretations made to seem natural or commonsense in Singapore are historically constructed, and are mobilized in the service of power (Loh, Thum, and Chia 2017). The authority of these myths derives from institutionalized, broadly recognizable ideologies operative at a range of sites. Ideology, in this view, is neither false consciousness, nor sets of beliefs that are – or must be – explicitly articulated as propositions. Rather, we follow linguistic anthropologists in treating ideology not as a product, but as a process – as something that people *do*, not something that people *have*. As a process, it is a "productive… part of people's creative interpretations of their situation and part of their consequent social action" (Gal and Irvine 2019, 14). Ideology is analytically recoverable through an attention to ideological work: events of interpretation that actively make social life in ways that could be otherwise. We analyze the construction of Singapore, both as a place, and as an imaginary constructed across local, regional, and global scales, in terms of the ideological work mobilized in service of its representation.

Crazy Rich Singapore?

As mentioned before, *Crazy Rich Asians* was lauded (largely by U.S. media and cultural producers) as an onscreen victory for Asian-American representation. Yet this critical acclaim was matched by backlash from a range of positions. For many in Singapore and throughout Asia, the film – like the book on which

it was based – was the latest instantiation of the Asian-American myth of the Model Minority, projected onto Singapore at a transnational scale (Hong 2018). Other commentators were quick to point out how *Crazy Rich Asians* "gets Singapore wrong," from featuring north-Chinese traditions that never actually took hold in Singapore to the fact that a great deal of footage was shot in Malaysia. Critics also pointed to the Sinification of Singapore in the film through the erasure of non-Chinese personae (K. Han 2018).[3] For many critics self-positioned as voicing a reflexively local, Asian or Singaporean stance,[4] *Crazy Rich Asians* is an American romantic-comedy mobilizing a familiar trope of (Asian) tradition versus (American) modernity, in which Singapore is subsumed in the production of a globalizing Western imaginary and (re)constructed as nothing more than what communications studies scholars have called a tourist utopia (Simpson 2017) – a space of exception available for global-cosmopolitan consumption-as-self-fashioning.

This kind of critique was explicitly responded to in promotional media circulated by the Singapore Tourism Board and mediatizing institutions like *Channel News Asia* as well as more implicitly, by the *Straits Times*, Singapore's state-owned journal of record:

> ***CNA*'s Genevieve Low (*GL*) interviews Jon Chu (*JC*) and Henry Golding (*HG*) on *Crazy Rich Asians* not being "Singaporean" enough (15 August 2018)**
> *GL*: But I have to say, though, there will be detractors who will tell you, this is not the Singapore we know, and this is not… So what would you say to them?
> *JC*: Yeah. I mean, I think that it would be like that Bruce Lee quote about pointing to the moon. Don't pay attention to the finger, cause you're gonna miss the moon… Movies [are] just one vehicle to get to a place where we all need to get to.
> *HG*: This is a movie, we can only highlight certain things, it's a story of exaggerated characters. It's *fiction*, it definitely isn't the Singaporean life that we all know and love, but again, this is meant to entertain (Channel News Asia 2018).

Unlike commentary by STB representatives on the power of films to shape perceptions and understandings of reality, such commentary instead insisted that film is selective, nonrealistic, and nonserious. Critics are thus positioned as taking the film too seriously or expecting too much.

The Straits Times, meanwhile, published several pieces showcasing the stories of real-life 'crazy rich Singaporeans' to suggest that *Crazy Rich Asians'* representations were less far-fetched than detractors claimed. An article titled, "How Real is Crazy Rich Asians' Portrayal of Singapore?" – subtitled "[e]ntrepreneur… says scenes of glamorous shopping… are accurate, while socialite describes opulent parties in the movie as spot on" – featured quotes from Singapore's ultra-rich on how personal shopping, lavish parties, and private jets are commonplace for them (Cheow 2018). The contextual divides among these critiques and their responses should be clear: for Asian Americans, in light of

histories of oppression and erasure of people of Asian descent, the film was touted as a representational victory. Meanwhile, in Asia, it was not considered Asian, and in Singapore, it was not viewed as Singapore(an) – that is, it was not deemed to be broadly representative of the immense variety of Singaporean identities and life experiences.

SINGAPORE'S MEDIA LANDSCAPES

Media's Golden Age and Discourses of Decline

Crazy Rich Asians' impact on filmic representations of Singapore as a destination must be considered in relation to the "Made-with-Singapore" media development strategy that grew through decades of attempts to build a robust Singaporean film industry. The failed 1963–1964 merger with Malaysia haunts constructions of self-identification in Singapore, a haunting that is especially overt in dominant narratives about Singapore's media industries, commonly described as doomed to forever remain an insular, local market. Before the failed merger, Singapore was in the heyday of what is referred to as a "Golden Age" of Malay-language cinema based in Singapore. Singapore's independence was followed by a dearth of new titles until the 1990s' renaissance of Singaporean-produced films. Government efforts to grow the media industries only became a policy priority in the late 1980s, with the production of several iterations of plans and strategies in the decades leading up to the current "Made-with-Singapore" strategy. Narratives of decline from a past golden age are thus discursively mobilized in Singapore government attempts at continually developing media industries through strategies like "Made-with-Singapore."

Media Developments: From "Made-in" to "Made-with"

"Made-with-Singapore" frames a new temporal direction from a previous developmental strategy, "Made-*in*-Singapore," which focused on Singaporean-made media products. Beginning in 2018, both S. Iswaran, Singapore's Minister of Communications and Information (MCI), and Joachim Ng, director of the Singapore Film Commission (SFC) began to publicly declare a shift in the Singaporean government's strategy for managing the local film industry. When explicitly asked in 2020 about a policy pivot from "Made-in" to "Made-with-Singapore," Ng affirmed: "You're correct. For 20 years it was about 'Made in Singapore'. We'd film in our [public-housing] flats and our hawker centers, telling our own stories, with our own talent. The idea of 'Made with Singapore' is more collaborative" (Sanders 2020). The framing of "our own stories" articulates the stories' local-ness as a feature of their settings, filmed in the Singaporean 'heartlands' and featuring 'heartlanders.' Both heartlands and heartlanders are local categories for representing average or everyday Singaporean personae and spaces in contrast with the

cosmopolitan (Lim 2018b, 24). It should be noted that such films' narratives tend to be Chinese-Singaporean middle-class dramas, even if other personae and spaces are sometimes featured (consider the recent film festival successes of *Ilo Ilo* and *Wet Season*/热带雨, dir. Anthony Chen, 2013 and 2020).[5]

Both the rhetorical shift and the emphasis on 20 years of a now-past "Made-in-Singapore" strategy were linked to the SFC's 20th anniversary celebrations in 2018, treated as an opportunity to reevaluate governmental media strategy. Across different documents and interviews, the supposed newness of "Made-with-Singapore" was articulated in its collaborative, global-cum-international or regional focus and its shift away from stories exclusively oriented toward a local Singaporean audience. Instead, films would tell regional and global stories for regional and global audiences. 'Regional,' in SFC and MCI documents and interviews, referred to both the Southeast Asian region – institutionalized through Southeast Asian co-production grants – but also to a broader notion of an Asian region, as seen in announcements focusing on 'Asian storytelling.' The category of 'global' was less clearly defined, but tended to refer to a generalized, wide reach. The locality of past media production was focalized and contrasted against the new globality of "Made-with- Singapore."

Though it is difficult in general to determine the national scope of many media productions, as critiques of the idea of a national cinema show (Lim 2018a), this is particularly the case in Singapore, where so-called national film industries have always been highly interconnected with other national film industries. During the Golden Age, most of the on-screen talent came from areas throughout British Malaya, most major studios were built and run by Chinese investors with bases in the mainland and Hong Kong, and many Indian and Filipino directors and writers were brought into Singapore. From 1965 until the 1990s, feature film production largely involved foreign film companies coming to Singapore to use it as a setting. Even during the 1990s, during the renaissance of Singaporean film production – which Ng characterized as an era focused on "Made-in-Singapore" – Italian and Chinese investors built two film sets cum amusement parks in Singapore in partnership with the Singaporean government to feed their collaborative filming needs (Uhde and Udhe 2009). Narratives about newness also led, in many cases, to the erasure of South Asian and South Asian-diasporic media. This occurs in multiple forms, such as the erasure of Bollywood (Yue 2009, 272-274) or Kollywood (Velayutham 2008, 175-176) films that feature Singapore as a setting, or the erasure of Tamil-language television and film (Sankaran and Pillai 2011, 280-281 ff) produced in and about Singapore for diasporic audiences.[6] In other words, narratives that focus on newness belie the fact that many of the supposedly new developments – collaborative productions made to circulate both within and beyond Singapore – had already been occurring.

Narratives of newness also belie the fact that government policy in the 1990s and early 2000s reflected similar strategies as "Made-with-Singapore." Besides 1990s emphases on partnership with

foreign firms and investors to build sets and studios, the first policy plans by the newly created Media Development Authority, *Media 21: Transforming Singapore into a Global Media City*, emphasized international co-production as part of the strategies to grow local industries (MDA 2003). Further policy emphasized the generation of Singapore as a new "media hub" for the region (T. Lee 2016), reinventing a classic narrative about Singapore as an ideal trading hub and intermediary, a key trope in the Singapore Story. "Made-with-Singapore" may bring agencies together in new ways, but the narrative on which it rests draws on longstanding narrative representations of Singapore. In the case of *Crazy Rich Asians*, "Made-with-Singapore" largely meant that government statutory boards collaborated with *Crazy Rich Asians* producers. This support was in part financial – Singaporean newspapers reported that government agencies gave financial assistance of an undisclosed amount to the *Crazy Rich Asians* production team – along with assistance in securing locations and connecting producers with Singaporean talent. A STB representative noted that governmental agencies were encouraged to assist in these ways because they saw that the film planned to highlight Singaporean "attractions… culture and diversity… [and] food," a checklist of items described by the spokesperson as necessary for presenting not only Singapore, but any destination. Overall, the assistance given to *Crazy Rich Asians* by STB and SFC was framed as a reasonable price to pay for the ability to promote the image of Singapore on a global stage.

IMAGE-MANAGEMENT AND *PASSION MADE POSSIBLE*

Branding Singapore as Place, Destination, and Professional Activity

As Singapore brand expert Koh Buck Song put it in a book widely accepted as the definitive (practitioner–theorist) account of Singapore's brand, "without nation branding, there would be no Singapore" (Koh 2011, 27). Like discourses of Singapore's rise to "unlikely" power, narratives of Singapore's brand trajectory champion the place's ability to shed its earlier image of sterility, lack of unique character, and authoritarian governance[7] and garner a new image as a "hip, sexy place of wealth" (Chan 2019) in just a few decades.

The Singapore *Passion Made Possible* brand is one point in an historical series of efforts at crafting representations of the place as desirable in various ways, whether as a site at which British gentlemen could build professional credentials pre-WWII as members of the Crown Colony's Malayan Civil Service (Thum 2017, 25–26); as a colonial-era holiday locale (M. L. Han 2003); or as a tourism utopia for hypermobile, global-cosmopolitan consumers in the present (Goh 2017; Simpson 2017). Historical and present efforts at managing the image of the place coincide with the hundreds of social-engineering campaigns (Seng 2013) designed to remake Singapore in ways that anticipated and responded to an imagined foreign (usually, but not always Western) gaze. These range from the Courtesy Campaign

designed to make Singaporeans friendlier, to language standardization and dialect-eradication campaigns (Rubdy 2001; Bokhorst-Heng 1999). Further, the "Garden City" campaign (later, "City in a Garden" and today, "City in Nature") is designed to enforce a sense of visual order through urban greenery (H. Han 2017) and convince foreigners that Singapore is a safe place for investment and business (K. Y. Lee 2012, 188). It bears noting that the top source countries for Singapore's tourist arrivals are Indonesia, China, and India, but destination hierarchies projected both in and outside Singapore mean that different strategies are entailed when the constructed audience is framed as internal versus external to an Asian region. That is, there is a greater perceived need to accommodate and entice non-Asian tourists to view Singapore as a desirable destination, and audiences constructed as Western have been the subject of a great deal of overt attention in public discourses since Singapore's independence (as well as before).

This longstanding concern over Singapore's image has come together with a global rise in place branding practice, which has driven, and been driven by, the formation of a new, transnational expert-professional elite (Aronczyk 2013, 38-40). As branding is increasingly seen as necessary for success in the global economy, states are called on to recognize and legitimate branding professionals' expertise, but their legitimacy is increasingly judged according to their ability to brand and market like a state (Nakassis 2013, 119; see also Woolard 2016; Mazzarella 2003). In Singapore, the rise of branding and the emergence of *Passion Made Possible* reflects this broader shift in statecraft and governance.

Making *Passion Made Possible*

The link between place branding and destination storytelling is not merely hypothetical or analogic. The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) presentation described in the introduction consistently deployed the *Passion Made Possible* "visual identity," an industry term of art referring to color palettes, typography, logotypes, layouts, and rhetorical strategies that emblematically materialize the brand. The visible presence of *Passion Made Possible* was not trivial, either: the presence of the brand's graphic-visual fractions implicitly framed the subject matter of the presentation as a token – or specific instance – of the brand type, linked in turn to a generalized brand ontology: "[T]he cultural and legal notion that things such as brands exist and… have [particular] properties as specified, and policed, by [the various] institutions" that govern them (Nakassis 2012, 628). The brand was a key structuring principle of the STB presentation's aesthetics and communicative strategies.

Launched in August 2017, *Passion Made Possible* was officially described as a "unified brand beyond tourism" managed by not only the STB but also the Economic Development Board (EDB) (Singapore Tourism Board 2017).[8] Like "Made-with-Singapore," *Passion Made Possible* also articulated a stage theory of historical development: as it was narrated by STB and EDB at the brand launch, the co-

management relationship between the two Statutory Boards itself signaled a growing recognition of the centrality of global tourism promotion to Singapore's economy. The year 2018 saw a record high of 18.5 million tourist arrivals – meaning that tourists outnumbered Singapore's approximately 6 million non-tourist residents by a factor of three to one – and SGD$27.8 billion (USD$20.3b) in tourism receipts, comprising just under 4% of total GDP (Singapore Tourism Board 2019). As described in a statement on "brand values," *Passion Made Possible* "is at its heart an articulation of the spirit of Singapore and its people. It celebrates the stories of the big local heroes, but also the everyday Singaporean's" (ibid). The STB and EDB's co-management relationship was also described in the statement as a new stage in branding, shifting away from tourism as such, and toward a newfound valorization of the local and ordinary.

Developed by a local boutique firm, The Secret Little Agency (TSLA), the brand's development involved extensive feedback from over 4,000 Singaporeans through surveys and focus groups. However, for many Singaporean and non-Singaporean commentators at the time of the brand launch, the brand's use of 'passion' was strange, even wrong. Of all the top-of-mind associations that people had with the place, passion was not one; in fact, passion was already strongly associated with many other places (a respondent working for a tour company asserted, for instance, that passion was obviously a more apt description for Latin American or Mediterranean locales). Such outcry has died down since 2017. For our purposes, what is important to note about the brand's launch and subsequent circulation is the fact that local and global constantly shift in response to perceived consumer expectations, even as they were treated as stable, scalar referents comprising a new stage in Singapore's image-management.

THE CONSTRUCTED GLOBAL AUDIENCE AND SINGAPORE AS STORYTELLING SETTING

Destination Storytelling Singapore

The category of 'destination storytelling Singapore' indexes a destination brand that operates within both a tourism-promotion framework and a generalized political economy of place-images; it also indexes a category of media-professional practice. In this way, both branding and media development both animate, and are animated by, destination storytelling. In the process, destination storytelling enacts a politics of difference, projecting both transnational and local value-hierarchies between Singapore and consumers of Singapore's image. The annual Destination Storytelling Conference and Film Awards 2020 was one of two such industry-focused events attended in-person by one of the authors (Babcock) prior to global COVID-19 lockdowns. The Destination Storytelling Conference and Film Awards, which launched this analysis, are a site at which media productions – both feature-length motion pictures by major studios, and industry driven productions in a range of genres (television

advertisements, digital video, mobile applications) – are recognized for their achievements in the field. As a formal event genre, the award show/conference format comprised panel discussions, trade shows, and events variously referred to as keynotes, master classes, or case study presentations. The January 2020 event in Bangkok hosted approximately 200 attendees, primarily industry professionals outside state tourism promotion boards.

Like other industry conferences, this event was both a form of tourism and a site of professional identity-formation (Getz 2008): professionals attend the conference both for business purposes and for the chance to travel to a city like Bangkok, Thailand. Though granting an award was framed in the event as indicating the quality of a media work itself, it also served as a performance of a professional self, indexing the evaluator as a legitimate judge of the quality of a work. Further, it was an opportunity for recognizing and elevating particular locales as deserving of recognition, which similarly indexes the persona of the legitimate evaluator as much as it indexes purported qualities of places and place-images. For this reason, our analysis of the event in this article has tacked back and forth between the broader frameworks that intersect with the event itself – first, the global emergence of place and destination branding as expert-professional practice; and second, media-industry development as national (or other) development.

Constructing the Mercurial Global (American) Audience

Despite critiques over the Sinification of Singapore in *Crazy Rich Asians* (in terms of both characters, language-use, settings, and narrative devices), STB's *Crazy Rich Asians*-citing promotional media was meticulous in its avoidance of references to China, at least at the level of denotational text, that is, at the level of the referential-and-predicational content of what is said or written (Silverstein and Urban 1996). While formal interviews and other adjacent promotional content involving the film's cast and creators insisted that *CRA* showcased Singapore to a global audience, reportage on media strategy in Singapore shows that a performed concern for global audiences indexes anxieties surrounding the Western – and more particularly American – gaze, a gaze nevertheless taken to be easily distracted or exhausted.

We return to the Destination Storytelling Awards Ceremony and Conference 2020 with which we opened this article, and the first *Crazy Rich Asians* scene discussed in the STB presentation:

> So, this is one of the scenes in the movie *Crazy Rich Asians* and immediately in those few seconds you know *where* Singapore is on the map. That is a very important thing for us as a tourism board, because people in the Western countries unfortunately are

> not so savvy on Asia, **some still think Singapore is part of China**… or somewhere else (Choo 2020a; boldface added).

Ignorance of Singapore's global location is framed in this statement as an intervention into ignorance about Asia generally. The scene's success, as described in the STB presentation, lay in its correcting the ignorance of people residing in "*Western* countries" (ibid).

The anxiety over Singapore's potential association with China can be further seen running through various other STB-produced media. Between late August 2018 and early January 2019, the STB released a series of videos named "Crazy Rich Experiences in Singapore," featuring *Crazy Rich Asians* Singaporean cast members Tan Kheng Hua (as Kerry Chu), Janice Koh (as Felicity Young), and Fiona Xie (as Kitty Pong). Running between two and three minutes in length, the videos were structured around actors' visits to businesses framed as exemplifying the passions and love – à la *Passion Made Possible* – in *Crazy Rich Asians'* plot. The videos are comprised of dialog between cast members and business owners, as well as narration and monolog by cast members. The imagined audience is recoverable from implicit cues throughout the promotional videos: first, the fact that various facets of life in Singapore – like Peranakan[9] cuisine, handicrafts, and aesthetics – are overtly explained (all are things with which Singaporeans would be presumed familiar); second, in that China and Chineseness are referenced only via references to local cultural mixing, or references to times and locations past.[10]

In the 20 August 2018 episode, "Crazy Rich Experiences in Singapore with Tan Kheng Hua," Peranakan furniture, cuisine, and clothing are described in terms of explicit temporal markers that locate China and Chineseness in a discursive past, both determinate – e.g. "Chinese traders *200 years ago*" – and indeterminate – e.g. "Chinese *back then*" and "Chinese *forefathers*." Chinese language and cultural forms are treated via their ostensible mixing with other Malay and European forms in the bodies and lifeways of the Singaporean Peranakan community, and distanced from associations with the present-day People's Republic. Similarly, in a 7 January 2019 episode, "Crazy Rich Experiences in Singapore with Janice Koh," Janice Koh interviews a Singaporean jewelry-maker Choo Yilin. Though the jewelry on display during the video is made of jade, and features design elements like clouds and peonies, Koh and the jewelry-maker repeatedly describe the jewelry as expressing "*Asian* heritage and motifs." This is despite the fact that, for many Singaporeans, the jewelry would be taken as an obvious embodiment of Chinese aesthetics. The fact that the video – whether through the careful management of the talk of its featured participants, or as a function of the editing and post-production process – deals with Chinese-linked phenomena in this way suggests that anxieties expressed in the STB presentation (that Westerners think Singapore is part of China, or somewhere else) also animated the production of the STB video series.

Framing in terms of global or Western audiences generally (counterposed to the local) belies the fact that, more often, the concern lies with a more specific imagined audience: Americans – whether those who think Singapore is in China, or those in need of 'fresh' media locales. Yet celebrations of Singapore's 'fresh, new and exciting' status entails a parallel recognition that such destination images can be exhausted. When acknowledged, such recognition focuses primarily on the opportunity dimension, not on images' exhaustibility vis-à-vis the mercurial character of the global audience. A 2019 article in the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* exemplifies this tendency. Titled "'A Hip Sexy Place of Wealth': Singapore's Appeal as Film and TV Location Growing in the Wake of Crazy Rich Asians," the article described both *Crazy Rich Asians* and the HBO sci-fi smash-hit *Westworld* Season 3 (2020) as examples of "Made-with-Singapore" media-strategy success. An executive at a Singaporean production house was quoted explaining why this success had been possible:

> The cityscapes of… Tokyo and Hong Kong have been filmed too often, leaving American film and television productions seeking new backdrops… The box-office success of *Crazy Rich Asians* definitely opened the eyes of the world to Singapore… Filmmakers are always looking for something fresh, new and enticing, and Singapore has not been featured much globally compared with [other] Asian cities. (Chan 2019)

The article toggles back and forth between two referents, framing them as parallel: "American film and television productions seeking new backdrops," in the first instance, and later, "the world." The article addresses the matter of Hollywood hegemony, but it does so only briefly. Similarly, in other reportage, various participants' and creators' overt acknowledgement of *Crazy Rich Asians'* American-centric focus is downplayed or disavowed, subsumed under the fact that an American audience is still global, since it is not local.

In a 15 August 2018 *Channel News Asia* interview with Genevieve Low, director Jon Chu described the film as being structured according to the character Rachel Chu's perspective:

> This is about a girl, Rachel Chu, going on her own personal journey, who's an Asian American going to Asia for the first time, and everything is through her perspective, which is different from the book. [Author Kevin Kwan is] from Singapore, so he had a very different perspective… [A]s a director you have to choose what your entrance is and what your audience is, and I knew what I wanted to share with people from *all* around the world, but it's particularly my friends and family from America, to take them into Singapore the way I experienced Singapore (Channel News Asia 2018).

While Chu (the director) acknowledged that his directorial choices structured the film around a particularly Asian-*American* perspective, he nevertheless hedged by insisting that this creates a point

of entry for viewers "*all* around the world." In spite of this, in both news reports and *CRA*-adjacent promotional media, the viewing habits and desires of an imagined American viewer – measured by searches on Google and travel websites after *Crazy Rich Asians'* release – are presented as evidence of the film's global success in destination storytelling.

During a later session at the Bangkok Destination Storytelling event, titled "Leveraging a Movie to Position a Hotel: Lebua at State Tower," Deepak Ohri, CEO of Lebua Hotels and Resorts – one of many locations featured in the film *The Hangover 2* (2011, dir. Todd Phillips) – addressed the exhaustibility of place images: "We are still riding the wave from… after we first amazed audiences with the view from Sky Bar. Now it's still a destination… but we can't exactly show the place in another film" (Ohri 2020). Yet places like New York City, Los Angeles, or London are not exhausted in the same way. However, destination storytelling practitioners often attributed this to the qualities of the cities themselves, rather than (for instance) to the structuring of Western-driven global media hierarchies and differential ascriptions of cultural capital. When asked about what comes next, after Americans cease to find Singapore fresh, new and enticing, participants at destination storytelling events often dismissed the question as still too early to say.

CONCLUSION

This article has analyzed destination storytelling as it is constituted at the intersection of place-/destination branding, tourism promotion, and media development in Singapore. Through our central subject – analyzing recognition of *CRA*'s success by destination storytelling professionals, state tourism boards, and media reportage – we have sought to explicate the discursive construction and multiple, competing viewpoints out of which Singapore's destination-storytelling success is made. As we have shown, this success is oriented toward an imagined American gaze and set of media-consumption habits, which are also sometimes broadened to stand for more generalized Western or global audiences. Such constructions – of both the terms of success, and the methods of its pursuit – constitute the image of Singapore as an exhaustible resource, as something that appeals to mercurial global (read: usually *American*) audiences by virtue of the fact that it is temporarily new and fresh. Crucially, destination storytelling success does not lie in convincing people to go to Singapore, but rather in making Singapore into a destination: a place that people can imagine themselves going to, and to which they desire to go.

The concern for novelty broadly articulates both the construction of media-development strategies of "Made-with-Singapore" and the *Passion Made Possible* brand: both ideologically narrate temporal trajectories that selectively characterize what exactly is new as part of a process of contextually constructing local and global in ever-shifting ways. We have argued that destination storytelling in

Crazy Rich Asians demonstrates that even seemingly foundational empirical matters and theoretical framings – what counts as a media industry, or what count as local, global, or something in-between – need to be considered not only quantitatively or abstractly, but also ethnographically, in terms of the situated connections, comparisons, and acts of differentiation people make within and across sites of ideological work.

NOTES

[1] Author Kevin Kwan was born in Singapore, yet it was broadly publicized that 1) he currently has a warrant out for his arrest for defaulting on his mandatory national military service obligation; 2) he has twice unsuccessfully applied to renounce his Singaporean citizenship; and 3) he has not lived in Singapore since age 11.

[2] In migration studies, destination is often a place with respect to which one plans, prepares, and calculates futures (Chu 2010), though it is also the target of forced migration which vary along gendered, racialized, and other lines (Indra 1999/2004). This has a moral dimension as well, which becomes especially clear when traditional 'source' locales instead become 'targets,' seen in anxieties over Asian tourists in Western locales (Pearce and Wu 2017), or racist-xenophobic responses to the European refugee crisis (Holmes and Castañeda 2016). The moral dimensions also become apparent in studies of guest-host roles in tourism encounters, where local residents play host to members of a mobile, elite global consumption class (Smith 2012).

[3] This is aside from the problematic exception of the silent Sikh guards outside a family mansion who terrify Constance Wu's and Akwafina's characters onscreen; Henry Golding's character can also be heard ordering food in Malay (*Bhasa Melayu*) during the hawker center scene shown during the STB case-study presentation.

[4] Emphasizing this as a voicing project avoids presuming authorial identities in the social worlds beyond various texts. As it is used by linguistic anthropologists, drawing inspiration in turn from literary criticism, *voices* are recognizable social personae that can be enacted linguistically and para-linguistically – a concept distinct from, yet overlapping with, notions of "character" or "individual" (Agha 2005; Silverstein 2003).

[5] *A Land Imagined* (2020, dir. Siew Hua Yeo), *Shirkers* (2018, dir. Sandi Tan), *Pop Aye* (2017, dir. Kirsten Tan), and *A Yellow Bird* (2016, dir. K. Rajagopal) are notable exceptions, however.

[6] The fact of Singapore's longstanding use as both a setting and site of production for South Asian and South Asian diasporic film is rhetorically downplayed in talk by destination storytelling professionals. Despite these industries' overall greater number of productions and higher box-office grosses, these professionals describe such media as "not mainstream," standing in overt contrast to the more desirable kind of success represented by Singapore's appearance in "mainstream" – that is, Hollywood

– films like *Hitman: Agent 47* (2015, dir. Aleksander Bach), *Independence Day: Resurgence* (2016, dir. Roland Emmerich), and Crazy Rich Asians.

[7] This perspective was made (in)famous through media like author William Gibson's 1993 *Wired* article "Disneyland with the Death Penalty," or the general fetishization of Singapore's supposed chewing gum ban.

[8] Previous STB campaigns focused more narrowly on touristic advertising campaigns and slogans, from *Instant Asia* in the 1970s, offering Singapore as an "exotic… melting pot of Asian cultures" (Chang and Yeoh 1999, 104), to *New Asia – Singapore* in the 1990s, promoting Singapore's "fusion between modernity and dynamism, on the one hand, and a traditional 'Asian soul' on the other" (105), to *Uniquely Singapore* in 2004 and *YourSingapore* from 2012 to 2017, which were similar to one another in that they promoted Singapore as affording endlessly reconfigurable, individually customizable experiences.

[9] Singaporean Peranakans are a group linked to migration histories and exogenous marriages between migrants from China and residents of the Malay Archipelago (Hardwick 2008).

[10] Promotional media produced to leverage the popularity of *Crazy Rich Asians* was primarily produced in English. Our searches of other STB-produced promotional media found only one Mandarin-language editorial piece making overt references to *Crazy Rich Asians*, which existed as a translation of an English-language piece on hawker centers and other dining establishments featured in the film (Singapore Tourism Board 2020). The piece made no reference to China/Chinese-ness (aside from describing some foods as Hainanese or Cantonese, for instance).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JOSHUA BABCOCK is a PhD Candidate in Sociocultural and Linguistic Anthropology at the University of Chicago, USA. Josh was a visiting researcher at the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities at the Singapore University of Technology and Design while conducting preliminary (2017) and long-term fieldwork research (2018–2020). His dissertation research explores the multimodal production of the image of Singapore across media representations, place/destination branding, language policy, and artistic production.

KENZELL HUGGINS is a PhD Candidate in Sociocultural and Linguistic Anthropology at the University of Chicago, USA. His principle research interests concern the role of screened media and entertainment industries in Singaporean society, investigating how media professionals have come to have an enhanced role in visions of Singapore's economic future. His other research interests concern the use of subtitles and dubbing on screen, histories of Singaporean media, art, and entertainment production, as well as the use of animation in media production.

✉: jdbabcock@uchicago.edu

✉: khuggins@uchicago.edu

Reading Filipino Remakes: Glocalization of Popular Culture in Filipino Remakes of 'Koreanovelas'

JANINE ABERIN
PATRICIA LUISA DEALCA
BENJAMIN GEORGE MEAMO III
ELLAINEMOR SAN PASCUAL
TAMARA JANE VENTANILLA
University of the Philippines Baguio

ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of television in the Philippines, the broadcast industry has broadcasted both international and local programs on a regular basis. With the popularity and hype of Koreanovelas at the turn of the 21st century, the trends of the TV shows, the content of the drama series, and the storyline are changing. The rising popularity of these Korean drama series prompted local TV channels to create remakes or adaptations. Taking this into consideration, this article investigates the creation processes of Filipino remakes, the elements of Filipino culture that were integrated, the motives of the television stations to produce glocalized content, and the prevalence of glocalization through the Filipino remake content. A semiotic framework is employed to explore how the glocalization of popular culture unfolds as a result of the collaboration between the South Korean and Philippine entertainment broadcast sectors. The study reveals how an ecosystem created by these countries fosters the development of a popular culture that is no longer restricted to a specific culture in any region but rather to a global community of consumers and producers.

Keywords: Filipino drama, globalization, Koreanovela, remakes, telenovela

THE BEGINNING OF *ASIANOVELAS*

The broadcast media industry is one of the most dynamic businesses and categories of mediated communication that showcases various cultures worldwide. The industry offers multimedia content distributed either via analog signals or digital transmission to receivers such as radio and television sets. Before transmission to receiving sets, broadcast stations are focused on research, programming, actual production, and sales and marketing. As integral parts of these broadcasting services, programming and production aim to target the general public through well-researched and creative content. Through this, broadcast network stations employ creative pools of people to produce content, from news and current affairs, entertainment, politics, health and fitness, to sports, among others. One of the services that broadcast stations provide to efficiently reach their target audience is the airing of canned, subtitled, or dubbed imported programs.

The Philippine broadcast media industry is characterized by a variety of distinct flavors of locally and internationally produced content. Since the 1950s, when television debuted in the Philippines, canned shows and programs from American television networks were among the earliest types of content watched by Filipinos. Some of these were *I Love Lucy,* featuring Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball, and *Candid Camera,* which spawned local series like *Wow Mali!* and *Highway Patrol*, a police adventure show starring Broderick Crawford (Del Mundo 2003, 6-7). Without a doubt, Filipinos were so taken with the comedic plots of American television series that they adopted their format and produced their own television series.

This includes Mexican Telenovelas – or *Mexicanovelas*, as they are more commonly known – which made their breakthrough on the Philippine broadcast landscape in the 1990s. Local networks such as RPN-9 obtained the rights to broadcast *Marimar,* which features Latina actress Thalia. The drama series was dubbed into Filipino, and "the telenovela became a massive success" among the larger audience (Del Mundo 2003, 30). This can be attributed to the complex character development and dramatic drama which enthralled Filipino audiences' hearts. Due to their popularity on local television, *Mexicanovelas* have become a staple in the majority of Filipino families around the country.

The popularity of Mexican telenovelas also demonstrates how local television stations were able to maximize viewership by exploiting the foreign programs. Janet Hope Camilo Tauro states in an article for the National Commission for Culture and the Arts:

> It is important to note, however, that aside from linguistic, politico-colonial, and sociopolitical factors, the production aspects have also contributed to the success of telenovelas. Dubbed telenovelas and anime proliferate because they generate a great deal of revenue but do not cost much to produce. Translators, some of whom

> are also dubbers, are not trained, and are therefore paid cheaply. TV networks prefer to spend more on promoting the telenovelas than on exerting efforts to improve the quality of the translation and dubbing of these shows (2003).

This is evident in the number of dubbed Mexican *telenovelas* that have been aired throughout the years.

Filipinos have consistently ranked imported media content as one of their major interests when it comes to what they would like to watch on their television screens at home. At the beginning of the 21st century, a new surge of broadcast media content has risen, displacing the Mexican telenovelas as the dominant force. Originated in Asian nations such as Taiwan and South Korea, the Asian *telenovelas*, also known as *Asianovelas*, quickly gained popularity among Filipino viewers, earning them the accolade of being the most viewed television programs in the country.

The Asian telenovela wave began with *Meteor Garden*, a 2001 Taiwanese coming-of-age series starring Jerry Yan and Barbie Hsu. It premiered in May 2003 on ABS-CBN Network's daily trimmed programming schedule. At its peak, the show received 63.8% of all recorded viewership (Starmometer, 2008), and its merchandise sales skyrocketed across the country as well. The popularity of the series opened the door for broadcast networks, including ABS-CBN and GMA Network, Inc., to secure further rights and licenses for the distribution and airing of international broadcast programs from other Asian television networks.

Following the phenomenal success of ABS-CBN's *Meteor Garden,* another leading broadcasting company, GMA Network Inc., secured the rights to a South Korean drama series called *Endless Love: Autumn in My Heart* in 2003, which was also a hit among Filipinos. Next, GMA broadcasted the series *Full House*, featuring Rain and actress Song Hye-kyo. Similar to its previous imported TV series, *Full House* drew a sizable audience, but with its biggest audience ever recorded, surpassed 50 percent. (Anarcon, 2020). *Full House* brought back the wave of South Korean drama series following the success of the broadcast of *Endless Love: Autumn in My Heart*, which established itself as the most popular television series ever aired and distributed.

Koreanovelas, as they are referred to in South Korea, have been infiltrating the two major television stations' primetime day-parting schedule in the Philippines for more than a year by the end of 2010. The *Korea Times* (2014) posted an article written by Jonathan Hicap in which he stated that "top Korean drama series like Lovers in Paris, Full House, My Name is Sam Soon, Stairway to Heaven, and Coffee Prince were imported and dubbed in Filipino, (which) instantly became (coming) hits," granting them a time slot exclusively reserved for them. The primary reason that these South Korean drama series are dubbed in Filipino language is to ensure that their fans and other viewers understand the plotline on a profound level. Furthermore, the formula of mainstream media content from South Korea is deeply

rooted around familial ties, stories of hope, encouragement, and rewards of sacrificial love, and this makes it easier for Filipinos to empathize with the narratives. As a response to the enthusiasm and value reinforcement, local broadcast companies drew inspiration to embark on a more challenging move: the adaptation and remake of top-rated Korean television drama series. The impact of this Korean television series wave has resulted in the emergence of Korean popular culture mostly on the local entertainment scene, and the influence of Korean popular culture has eventually shaped the trend of local popular culture in the Philippines.

GLOBAL FAME AND CONSUMPTION OF KOREAN DRAMA

The rapid growth of the Internet and the advancement of new video-sharing technology make it no surprise that the popularity of South Korean dramas has continued to rise in recent years. Earlier, the majority of the fans of Korean popular culture, particularly Korean dramas, used to rely on their local broadcast stations to watch dubbed versions of the Korean dramas and to purchase CDs or DVDs in order to enjoy their favorites (Jin 2020). Following the advent of the Internet and Web 2.0, fan-based video-on-demand services (SVOD) such as mysoju.tv, DramaCrazy.net, and allkpop.com (Ju 2020) have garnered popularity among K-drama fans as the most reliable sources for downloading and watching their favorite Korean series. Yet, not all Korean dramas are available on these websites and some Korean series take a longer time to be uploaded, especially those with English subtitles. These days, with the advancement of digital platforms and subscription video-on-demand services like Netflix and Viu, watching any Korean drama has become rather convenient. With over 35 percent of the market share, Netflix has become the most popular streaming service widely accessible in the Philippines. It is then followed by Prime Video at 16 percent and iFlix at 15 percent (Chua 2021).

A wide range of Korean dramas from diverse genres, ranging from romantic comedy to action and horror, are now readily available on digital platforms, making it easy for K-drama fans to choose their favorites. This underlines the fact that South Korean dramas are no longer confined to be broadcasted merely in certain locations but are now broadly available digitally to audiences that subscribe to video streaming services. These digital platforms have significantly altered the process by which media content is consumed and they have "fundamentally modified the circulation of local cultural content to reach a broader audience" (Jin 2020). Korean dramas such as *The King: Eternal Monarch, Kingdom Season 2, Start Up, Record of Youth,* and *It's Okay to Not Be Okay* are among the most-watched Korean drama series in 2020 (Nitura 2020). This is demonstrated by the fact that these shows have been widely and consistently discussed, particularly on social media news feeds. The growing demand for SVOD platforms and social media feeds dedicated to South Korean dramas is undoubtedly helping them in their efforts to gain popularity among Filipino fans. This is similar to how Mexicanovelas became a

staple part of Filipinos' daily lives in the early 2000s. For this reason, Korean dramas have become the most favorite pastime among the majority of Filipinos today.

With this ever-growing popularity, it is clear that South Korea is one of the few countries committed to becoming the world's leading exporter of popular culture (Roll 2020). Additionally, the *Hallyu* effect has been enormous, with the Korean economy benefiting by USD 12.3 billion in 2019 (Roll 2020). More than that, Korean popular culture items are readily accessible for purchase, much in the same way as K-Pop and K-Dramas have established themselves as a reliable topic of conversation among individuals on social media from all over the world. Most local broadcast and production companies have also resorted to acquiring the rights to the most popular series and producing an adaptation or local version featuring local actors and storylines that are fitted to the local perspective, as the series' popularity continues to grow.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The popularity of Koreanovelas prompted the researchers to explore Korean drama and television series with Filipino-adapted content. The researchers picked four specific Korean television series that were localized by Filipino broadcast companies featuring Philippine's local cast and crew. The selected TV series used for this research include *My Girl*, *49 Days (Pure Love)*, *Full House*, and *My Name is Kim Sam Soon*.

The research aims to answer the following questions: 1.) What are the changes and enhancements made to the Filipino remakes of the aforementioned drama series? 2.) What attempts were made by local television network stations to integrate Filipino culture into the reboots without completely losing its identity? 3.) Why does the Philippine broadcast media industry remake Korean television dramas? 4.) How is popular culture glocalized through Filipino spinoffs of popular Korean drama series?

These inquiries are necessary to extrapolate pieces of evidence that would help in evaluating the following objectives, namely 1.) to exemplify how Philippine broadcast companies incorporate various aspects of Filipino culture into the remakes of Korean television series; 2.) to analyze any changes made to the stories or elements in the remakes when situated within the Philippine cultural context; 3) to assess the explanation for the production of remakes within the Philippine broadcast media industry; and 4) to evaluate the glocalization of popular culture through Filipino spin-offs of popular Korean television programs.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Denotation and Connotation

Semiotics is the "study of the social production of meaning from sign systems; the analysis of anything that can stand for something else" (Griffin 2006, 327). In particular, Roland Barthes emphasizes how denotation and connotation are created based on the interpretation of an object's visual representation and the meaning attached to it.

According to the 8th edition of Griffin's (2012) monograph titled *A First Look at Communication*, there are two core principles in understanding Barthes' theory. The first principle says that a sign is a combination of the signifier and the signified. The signifier is defined as the visual representation of a sign, while the signified is the underlying meaning associated with the signifier. The first principle means that neither the signifier nor the signified can stand alone to become the sign. The signifier and the signified must work together in bringing about the sign. The second principle of Barthes' theory is that a sign "does not stand on its own," but rather, that it is part of a system (Griffin 2006). Hence, following this principle, a single sign is connected to a system of signs to which it is associated.

Roland Barthes coined the terms "Denotation" and "Connotation" to illustrate the signification system of a sign that is used to explicate the meanings behind signs that could be found in everyday life (Griffin 2012, 336-337). Denotation, also known as the denotative sign system, is a descriptive sign that bears the literal meaning which can be traced to its etymology, physical attributes, and dictionary meaning (Griffin 2012, 336). On the other hand, the connotative sign system, commonly known as connotation, is a "mythic sign that has lost its historical referent" which bears an ideology (Griffin 2006, 332). These two are further elaborated through an understanding of the relationship between the signifier and the signified. For instance, Lacey (1998) explores the relationship between media content with representation as well as Roland Barthes' germinal contribution in unmasking the underlying meanings in signs or elements of various texts. He stated that the signifier is not a sign of the signified. Instead, they work together in an inseparable bond to form a unified sign that can bear the literal meaning and the connotative meaning attached to an ideology (Griffin 2012).

Chandler states that "every text is a system of signs organized according to codes and subcodes which reflect certain values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and practices" (2002, 157). It is asserted in this claim that semiotics play a role in decoding meanings and interpretations from signs and symbols found in a wide variety of texts and contents. It demonstrates how semiotics could be used as an effective lens for deciphering the meanings hidden behind parts of media content, whether it be literature, advertisement, or a television show. As a matter of fact, a sign is closely related to other signs to construct a system that allows people to perceive the underlying meanings of certain aspects

of culture. This is supported by Barthes' study which discovered that all semiotic systems work in the same way, based on the multiple systems of symbols in diverse cultural aspects such as Japanese gift-giving and French gastronomy, among others (Griffin 2012).

The concepts of denotation and connotation were used to critically read the signs present on both the original South Korean drama and its Filipino counterpart versions. The connotative meanings were fleshed out in terms of how they relate to socio-cultural aspects of some Filipino traditions, cultural practices, values, and norms.

Glocalization

Roland Roberston et al. refer to glocalization as both a global and local phenomenon. He states that this term stems from the Japanese business strategy for "global localization" (1995, 29) in order to reach a wider market. He also argues that globalization assists in conceiving "global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century" (1998, 8) that occurs through glocalization. The concern sparked questions on how glocalization continues to exist when cultural diversity becomes an institutionalized feature of a globally active community. Thus, local television networks produce and air globally available foreign content in order to appeal to their local target audience. This contextualizes a new set of popular culture that is shared not just within a single country but within a global community as well.

This research is guided by both Roland Robertson and Jeconiah Dreisbach's definition of glocalization in order to systematically flesh out the important points that lead to the analysis. According to Dreisbach (2018), glocalization is "a wordplay of the terms global and local that means the accommodation of foreign cultural sensibilities by local actors." Local popular culture becomes enmeshed with that of the global community which then makes changes in how people view and consume content. A change in attitude towards foreign content, specifically Korean drama content, is also manifested by how local actors and the production teams project the series in such a manner that is relevant, familiar, and comprehensive for the local audience to appreciate. Furthermore, the intent to produce remakes as a glocalized content occurs both as a business strategy and an accommodation of a foreign culture into local settings and actors.

In order to further deeply explore how local broadcast networks manage to glocalize globally popular Korean dramas, it is necessary to refer to Wayne Gabardi's arguments that Glocalization is marked by the:

> development of diverse, overlapping fields of global-local linkages... [creating] a condition of globalized panlocality... what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai calls

> deterritorialized, global spatial 'scapes' (ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes)... This condition of glocalization… represents a shift from a more territorialized learning process bound up with the nation-state society to one more fluid and translocal. Culture has become a much more mobile, human software employed to mix elements from diverse contexts. With cultural forms and practices more separate from geographic, institutional, and ascriptive embeddedness, we are witnessing what Jan Nederveen Pieterse refers to as postmodern 'hybridization.' (2000, 33-34).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study has looked at four Koreanovelas and their respective remakes in the Philippines and has analyzed the details that reflected the media content's similarities and differences. Characters, elements, and objects necessary in character development and its narrative, plots and storylines, major plot twists, nonverbal communication elements, and verbal nuances are among the elements investigated.

My Girl

Korean	**Filipino**
Seol Gong Chan	Julian Abueva
Joo Yoo Rin	Jasmine Estocapio
Kim Sae Hyun	Anika Ramirez
Seo Jung Woo	Nico Legazpi

Table 1. The main characters of *My Girl*

Korean	**Filipino**
orange fruit	mango fruit
small villa	big villa
Korean costume (Yoo Rin)	Chinese costume (Jasmine)
tennis player (Sae Hyun)	beauty queen (Anika)
curly hair (Yoo Rin)	straight hair (Jasmine)
necklace (Sae Hyun's Key Necklace)	engagement ring
The death of Gong Chan's Parents occurs two years prior to the actual setting of the story.	The death of Julian's parents occurs when he is approximately 7-9 years old.

Sae Hyun's departure: She leaves Gong Chan without bidding goodbye.	Anika's departure: Julian knows that she has left.
Gong Chan's secretary notices the resemblance of Yoo Rin and his deceased aunt.	Julian notices the resemblance of Jasmine and his deceased aunt.
Gong Chan and Sae Hyun are careful when it comes to revealing their relationship; they had Yoo Rin disguised as Sae Hyun in order to confuse the reporters about Sae Hyun's whereabouts.	Anika is very vocal about her relationship with Julian; when she arrives at the Amana Resorts and Hotel, she kisses Julian in front of the reporters.
Gong Chan's aunt does not need a DNA test because she believes Gong Chan when he says that Yoo Rin is his long lost cousin.	Julian has to fake the DNA test in order for his aunt to believe and warm up to Jasmine.
Yoo Rin's birthday is celebrated every time it snows.	Jasmine's birthday is celebrated every time it rains.

Table 2. Summary and comparison of elements, storyline highlights, and setting in *My Girl*.

The narratives of the adaptation have been altered in a variety of ways, both minor and major. For instance, in the Filipino adaptation, the oranges plucked by Yoo Rin in the Korean version were substituted with mangoes. Given that mangoes are a widely harvested fruit in the Philippines, this is a more fitting component for *Filipinizing* the narrative.

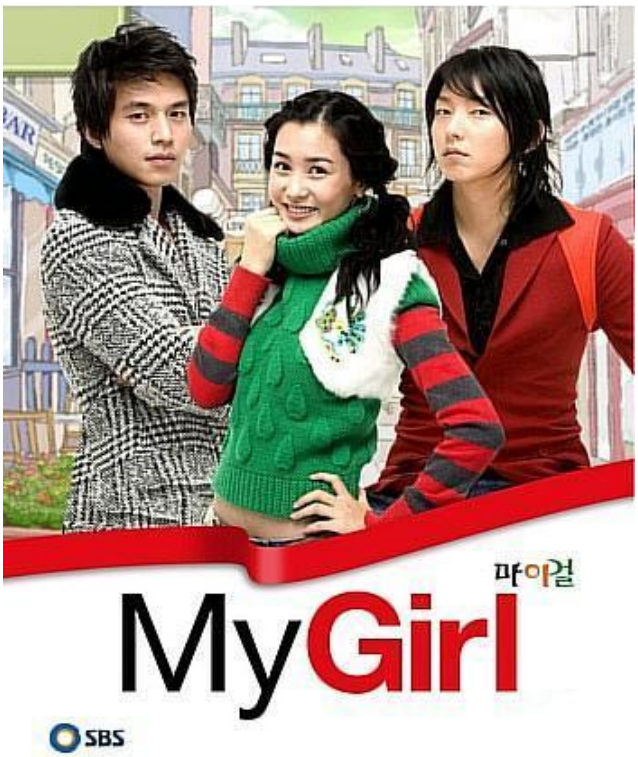

Figure 1. Promotional poster for *My Girl* in South Korea. Source: "My Girl." 2008.

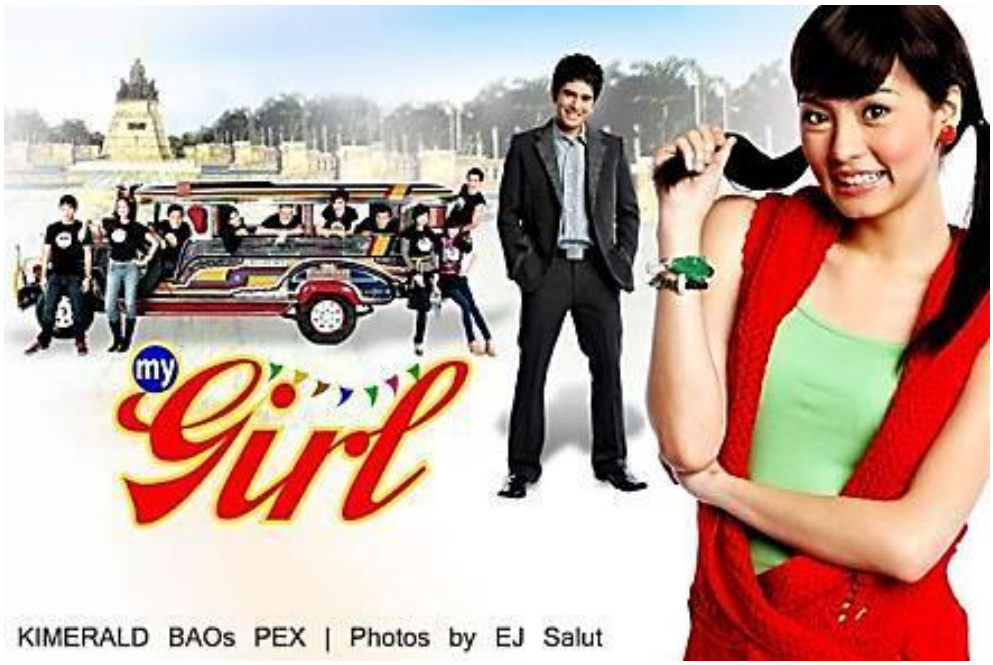

Figure 2. Promotional poster for *My Girl* in the Philippines. Source: "My Girl." n.d.

In the Filipino adaptation, Sae Hyun, or Anika, Julian's former girlfriend, is not a tennis player as she is characterized in the Korean series, but a beauty pageant queen. The possible explanation for this is that tennis is not as popular with Filipinos as beauty pageant contests. Filipinos place a higher value on beauty queens who compete in prominent international pageants. This is why Anika's character in the adaptation must be more appealing and relatable as an idol to a wider Filipino audience.

In the Korean version, Sae Hyun breaks up with Gong Chan abruptly, as she decides to pursue her career in professional tennis. Gong Chan's parents are also killed in a car collision, and his grandfather are terminally ill at the same time. This explains why Gong Chan behaves in such harsh ways against Sae Hyun after she returns to South Korea. Meanwhile, in the Filipino version, Julian's parents' death takes place when he was younger, and Anika bids farewell to him, as she prioritizes her passion for beauty pageant contests over her relationship with Julian.

Since Yoo Rin does not know the exact date of her birthday, together with her father, they assume that she was born during the winter, as she was said to be born when it snowed. Since snow and the winter season are both not applicable in the Philippines, it is replaced by rain, saying that Jasmine's birthday was on a rainy day.

Most of Jasmine's wardrobe is composed of clothes in red, green, yellow or orange colors (see Figure 2). The colors red and orange stand for energy, joy and happiness (Parker, n.d.). These qualities are also present in Jasmine's character. The color yellow represents happiness and joy and at the same time it

stands for food, which is something that Jasmine loves. Her qualities and characteristics are reflected in the clothes she wears throughout the Filipino remake series.

The opening billboard (OBB) of *My Girl* includes Luneta Park and a dirty ice cream cart filled with colorful *banderitas*. This gives the viewers a sense of familiarity, relation, and connection with the characters.

49 Days / Pure Love

Korean	**Filipino**
Shin Ji Hyun	Diane Santos
Song Yi Kyung	Ysabel Espiritu / Danica Santos
Han Kang	Dave Martinez Jr.
Kang Min Ho	Raymond Dela Cruz / Ramon Esguerra
Shin In Jung	Kayla Santos
Scheduler / Song Yi Sung	Jake Espiritu

Table 3. The main characters of *49 Days* and the Filipino remake *Pure Love*.

Korean	**Filipino**
Title: *49 Days*	Title: *Pure Love*
Ji Hyun was given 49 days for her journey.	Diane was given 40 days for her journey.
The series started with Ji Hyun and Minho's engagement party, with her death established by the first episode.	Diane's character background was established first, opening the series with her surprise birthday party.
Yi Kyung's rose was dried and wilted.	Ysabel's rose was fresh.
The series ended with Yi Kyung dying a week after coming back to life, while her father got better and survived brain cancer.	The remake ended with Diane living after coming back to life while her father died because of his heart ailment.
Ji Hyun's bracelet is made out of metal/silver	Diane's bracelet is made out of beads
Ji Hyun's favorite food: Pasta without basil leaves and extra garlic	Diane's favorite food: Pasta without parsley
Young Yi Kyung was asked to stay in the bus station for their mother to find Ji Hyun	Ysabel was asked to stay put in the playground in order for their mother to find Diane.
Jihyun's version of doing magic involves mostly playing with cards, tissues, or bottle caps.	Diane's version of doing magic includes making coins or chocolate coins appear on the sides of a person's head.

Table 4. Summary of elements, storyline highlights, and settings of *49 Days* and *Pure Love*.

49 Days is a South Korean television drama series about Ji Hyun's quest to collect three tears of pure love from people other than her family within 49 days in order for her spirit to return to her body after being involved in a car collision. The series premiered on SBS on March 16, 2011 and ran for three weeks (asiae.co.kr 2011). *Pure Love* is the Philippine adaptation of the aforementioned series, which aired on ABS-CBN from July 7 to October 21, 2014 (Alarcon 2019).

Religion and belief played a part in the adaptation series between the South Korean original and the Philippine adaptation. According to the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), in 2015, Buddhism was one of the most widely observed religions in the country, with over seven million adherents. Buddhists in South Korea believed that the transitional phase between death and rebirth lasted 49 days (Holmes, 1997), which later inspired the title of the Korean television series, *49 Days*. Meanwhile, in the Philippines where the majority of the population is catholic, people believe that it takes 40 days for the souls of the deceased to ascend to heaven. Hence, in the Philippines version, the character Diane has 40 days for her quest.

Interestingly, the Philippine remake did not follow the pattern of the previous remakes of using the title of the original show. The remakes of *My Girl, My Name Is Kim Sam Soon, and Full House* in the Philippines all retained the original title. This particular series was titled *Pure Love*, which was adapted from the lead character's mission to collect three tears of pure love. This appealed more to the audience, leading the show to gain a nationwide average rating of 23.6% (ABS-CBN News, 2014).

Another difference between the original and the remake of the TV series is the establishment of the storyline in the pilot episode. In the South Korean version, the story is introduced in a linear manner by starting with the present, the engagement party of Ji Hyun, followed by her untimely 'death'. In the Filipino version, however, the setting is Diane's surprise birthday party where Raymond proposes to her, with scenes of Diane and her family getting along well. A plausible reason for this change can be that engagement parties are not a usual tradition for soon-to-be-married couples in the Philippines. Rather, the tradition of *pamamanhikan*, i.e. the formal invitation of the groom and his family to ask the bride's family for her hand in marriage, is the norm in the country (Leaño 2017).

Figure 3. A promotional material for the Korean original version of *49 Days*.
Source: Hotshotlover30. 2011.

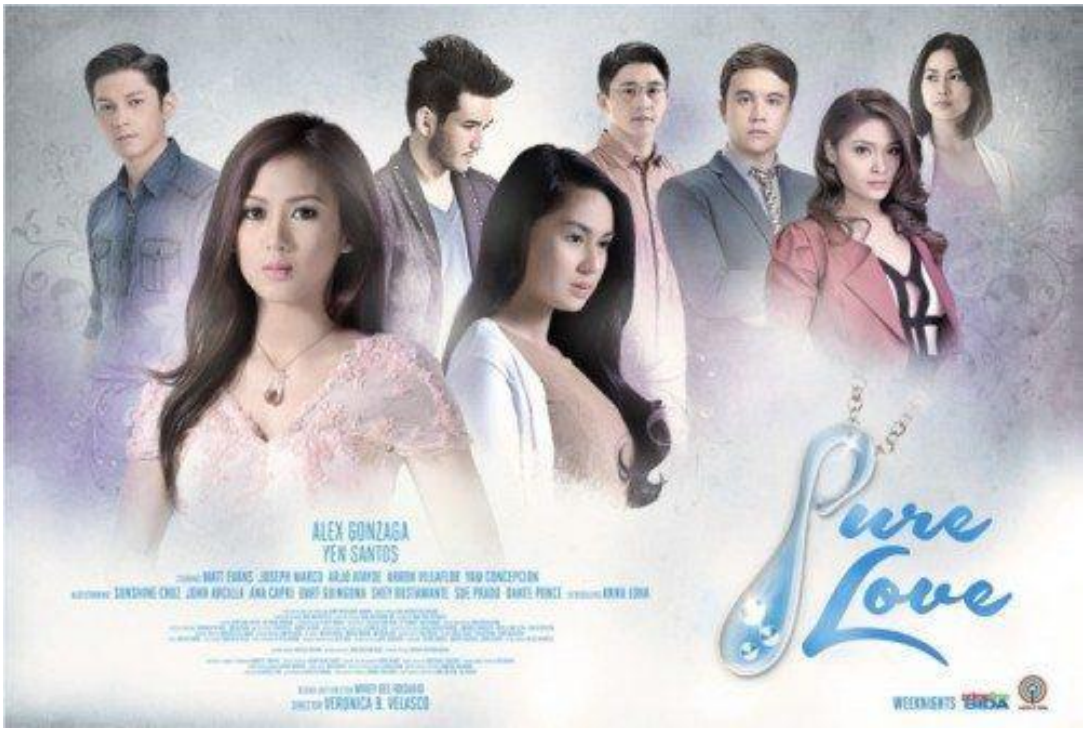

Figure 4. A promotional material for *Pure Love.* Source: Villanueva 2014.

It is no surprise that Filipinos favor happy endings, as seen by the plots that most production companies present and utilize in their productions. And this could be proven by the plot most media companies portray and use in their shows. This might also be the cause of the significant plot change in the Filipino adaptation of *49 Days*. In the South Korean version, Ji Hyun dies a week after earning the three tears

of pure love she needed to live, and her father's condition improved after the brain surgery. Meanwhile, in the Filipino remake, Diane is able to live after forty days but her father dies of a heart condition. This is reflected by Dalisay (2002) who stated, "most popular love stories have happy endings, which sell well because they offer hope on fairy wings, even and especially for muddy-footed gnomes like us." This demonstrates that people perceive TV shows like this as forms of escapism from grim realities.

Next in line among the most prominent differences between the two series are the lead characters' roses. In the original version, Yi Kyung's rose is dry and withered, in contrast to Ysabel's rose, which is fresh and new. Song Yi Soo/Scheduler is said to have given the rose to Yi Kyung before he died. Because they are both orphans, Yi Kyung and Yi Soo see each other as family, something they have both been missed. Yi Kyung feels herself sinking when Yi Soo dies, because she has relied on him for emotional stability. The rose, it may be argued, is a metaphor for her, as it is alive but gradually fading away as the years pass. It can also be seen as foreshadowing Yi Kyung's death at the end of the series. This is in contrast with the remake, in which Diane's rose remains fresh, signifying that she is still alive at the end of the series.

These are just a few of the most obvious differences between the original and the remake version of the series *49 Days* and *Pure Love*. Some of the other differences between these two series are small in comparison and do not offer any substantial cultural change.

Full House

Korean	**Filipino**
Lee Young Jae	Justin Lazatin
Han Ji Eun	Maria Jesusa 'Jessie' Asuncion
Kang Hye Won	Ellaine Villavicencio
Yoo Min Hyuk	Luigi Mondragon

Table 5. The main characters of *Full House*

Korean	**Filipino**
Do Han: Ji Eun's best friend	Donald: Jessie's brother
Ji Eun: Trip to China	Jessie: Trip to Prague
Young Jae's family is only shown for quite some time in three of its episodes.	Justin has a close relationship with his grandmother
Young Jae and Ji Eun get married in a hotel.	Justin and Jessie are married in a Catholic church, the same place where Justin's grandparents and parents were married

Ji Eun: more on non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures)	Jessie: more on verbal communication
Ji Eun gets a divorce with Young Jae, then dates Min Hyuk. Min Hyuk proposes to Ji Eun but she refuses. Young Jae proposes to her as well but she merely says that she would consider it.	Jessie and Luigi are already engaged. Justin makes a speech at the awards ceremony about his love for Jessie; Jessie then ends her engagement with Luigi. Ellaine picks a fight with Jessie, pulls out a gun and shoots Justin. Justin is hospitalized and reconciles with Jessie.
Last Episode: Young Jae tells Ji Eun that he loves her and they kiss; a flashback of their story from the beginning is played. The series ends with Young Jae and Ji Eun hugging each other outside the full house.	Last episode: Justin and Jessie get married and travel to Prague for their honeymoon.

Table 6. Summary of the elements, storyline highlights, and setting in *Full House*

The remake of *Full House* incorporates much of the subject of family, because Filipinos value close family ties. In the Korean version, Do Han (Donald) is Ji Eun's only best friend, but in the adaptation, Donald portrays Jessie's younger brother to make it more believable that she entrusts her house to him when she leaves for Prague. In South Korea, even though family is highly valued, it is still important for Koreans to establish independence, especially when they become adults. It is also common for the oldest child to suppor the family (Sorenson, n.d.). The concept of close family ties is also shown in Justin's relationship with his grandmother who he calls *Mamita.*

Since the majority of the population in the Philippines are Catholic, most remakes incorporate Catholic beliefs into the plot (Miller, n.d.). In the Filipino version of *Full House*, Jessie and Justin are married at a Catholic church, while in the Korean drama they are married at a hotel.

Spectacle and exaggerated plot twists are also apparent in most Filipino drama series and the remake of *Full House* is not an exception to this. The brawl scenes with Ellaine, Justin, and Jessie demonstrate the lengths to which one may go for someone they love. In the case of Ellaine, she shoots Justin, which causes his injury and hospitalization.

Figure 5. Promotional poster for the original series, *Full House*. Source: Liu 2019.

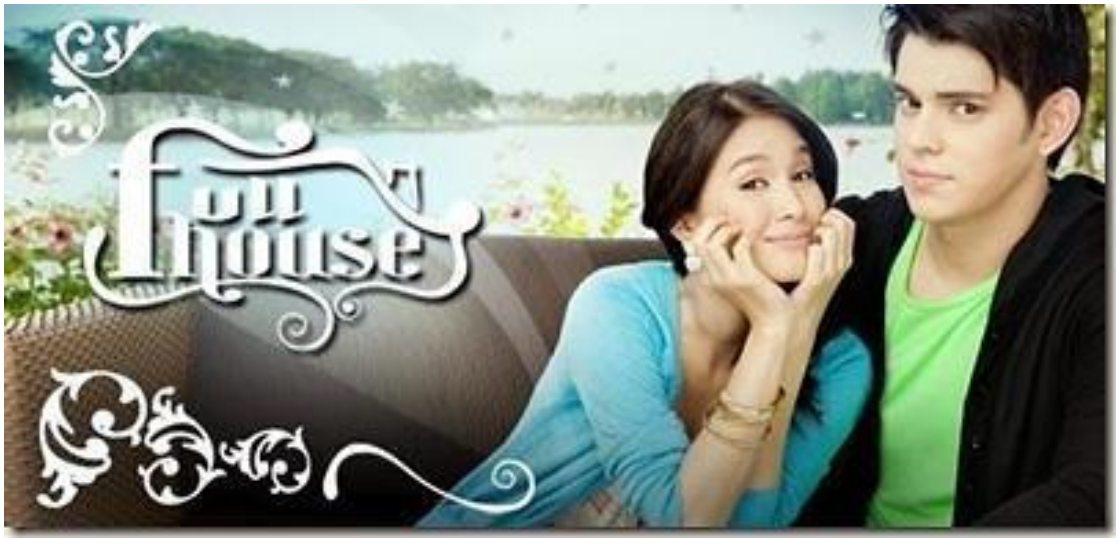

Figure 6. A promotional poster material for the Filipino remake of *Full House*.
Source: "The title card for Full House." 2018.

My Name is Kim Sam Soon

In the first episode of the original Korean version, Sam Soon is sobbing after a breakup. Meanwhile, in the Filipino remake version, Samsoon is sobbing because she is unemployed and has been turned down for a job at her dream restaurant. Adding to Samsoon's sufferings is the burning down of their bakery and the pawning of their house. The character of Sam Soon in the Filipino version has a more devastating scenario with that of her financial challenges and shunned goals. Samsoon's background appeals to Filipinos because his character is hopeful, resilient, and industrious.

Korean	**Filipino**
Kim Sam Soon	Kim Samsoon Buot
Hyun Jin Heon	Cyrus Ruiz
Yoo Hee Jin	Hannah Villanueva
Henry Kim	Harvey De Guzman

Table 7. The main characters in the Korean drama series *My Name is Kim Sam Soon* and its Filipino remake, *Ako si Kim Samsoon.*

Korean	**Filipino**
When Sam Soon goes to the men's restroom, she is crying over the break up.	When Samsoon goes to the men's restroom, she is crying because she did not get the job at the restaurant.
Sam Soon studied in Paris, France.	Samsoon attended a pastry workshop in Baguio City, Philippines.
The two cultures have the same and rather western-centric standard of beauty. Sam Soon is often compared to her sister who is perceived as more successful and more lively in character since she passes the Korean standard of beauty and is married.	

Table 8. Summary of the elements, storyline highlights, and setting *My Name is Kim Sam Soon* and *Ako si Kim Samsoon.*

In the original Korean version, Sam Soon is insecure and labels herself by those surrounding her. Perhaps, it is because Koreans usually associate their personality collectively. "People are not themselves," stated Zhang (1998). Zhang asserted in his *Korean Ideas and Values* that "they [people] must live with the community and have excellent connections with others. Everyone should learn to respect their fathers, rulers, and elders, as well as how to genuinely engage their friends." This is proven in one particular example, when Sam Soon from the Korean series finally realizes that she needs a partner or husband to somehow be socially accepted by society.

The filming of the set location has changed in the Korean version, with Sam Soon attending a pastry school in Paris, France (see Figure 8), while in the Filipino adaptation, Samsoon attends a pastry

workshop in Baguio City. Baguio City and Paris offer vibrant cultural spots and thriving art scenes. Korean students study in countries such as the United States or France, but Filipino students consider Baguio to be a place of leisure, escape from the hustle and bustle, and discovery of the arts and cultures of the Philippines. This is demonstrated by the city's number of art-related institutions, including notably Tam-awan Village and BenCab Museum. Moreover, UNESCO declared Baguio City a Creative City (Agoot 2017).

As established in the drama series, Sam Soon is not conventionally attractive in comparison to her sister, who is physically opposite and is shown to be more successful. According to Holliday and Elfving-Hwang (2012) in *Gender, Globalization and Aesthetic Surgery in South Korea*, Koreans view the Western physical traits as attractive: "The Korean is one of the world's tallest races. The Korean's posture is straight and tall due to better development of the physique and muscular structure ... the Korean resembles the well-proportioned stature of Europeans and Americans ..." Because physical fitness is equated with attractiveness, it is challenging for Sam Soon to find a companion and adapt to the social system and hierarchy.

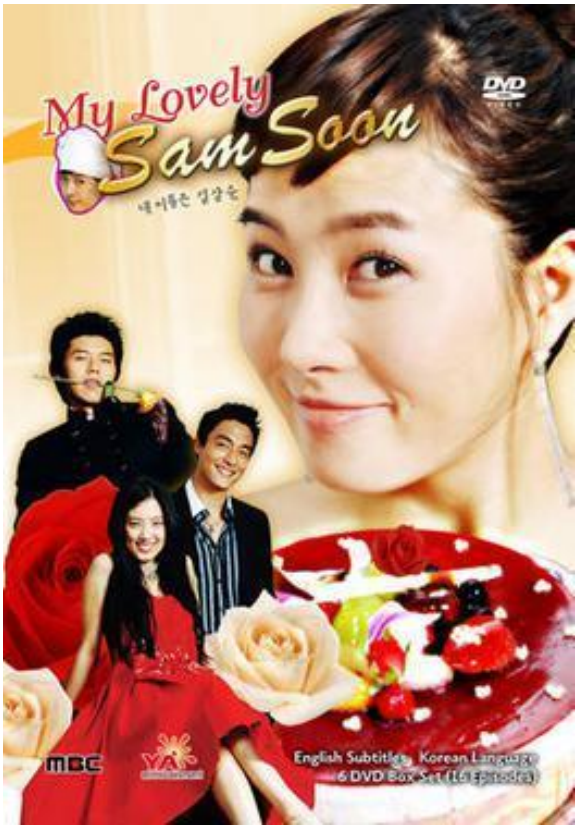

Figure 7. Promotional poster material for *My Name is Kim Sam Soon*.
Source: "My Lovely Sam Soon." n.d.

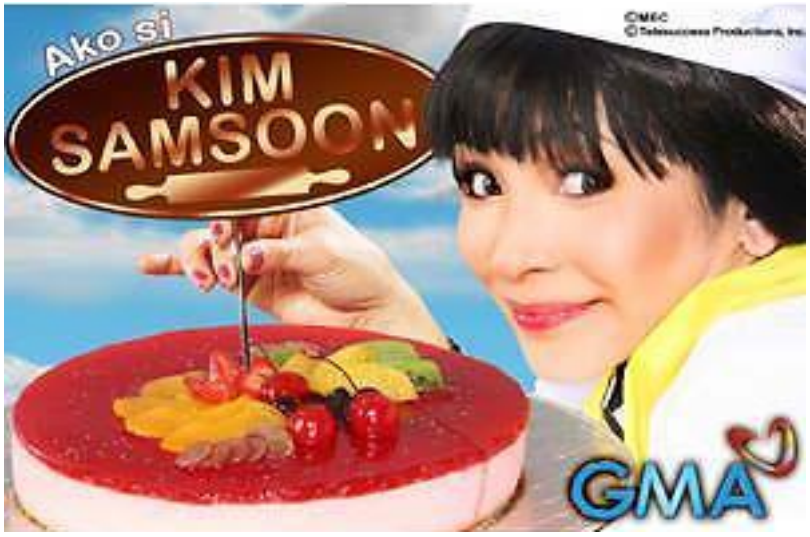

Figure 8. Promotional poster material for the Filipino remake, *Ako si Kim Samsoon*. Source: Dimaculangan 2008.

Both the Filipino and South Korean conceptions and standards of beauty are heavily affected by Western colonialism. There is a social hierarchy that values people with lighter skin and sharper features (Rondilla 2012). In the Filipino version, Samson's sister is portrayed as the more favorable one.

Motives for Recreating *Koreanovelas*

The fact that Koreanovelas have established themselves as a significant part of the country's popular culture prompts the question: Why are they replicated in the first place? What drives local producers and broadcast companies to recreate a local version from the popular Korean drama series? An interview with Ceres Barrios (2021), the chief writer for the Philippine version of the South Korean drama *Encounter*, disclosed that one of the reasons is to make the local audience feel closer to the drama's overall storyline. The popularity of Koreanovelas in South Korea and the Philippines is a determining factor when they are televised nationwide. According to Barrios, when choosing a Koreanovela for recreation, it is important to consider how relatable the storyline is because the adaptation process must also take into account the accuracy of the original story in the context of Filipino cultures, traditions, and history. Most adaptation series from South Korea use drama as the main genre, such as romantic and family dramas, but the historical genre is challenging to adapt because it includes a historical setting different from that of the Philippines.

The process of recreating a Korean drama into a local adaptation could be tricky. It is deemed as uncomplicated because the premise and plot are clearly ready and available but it can also be challenging because the premise and storyline must be translated into the local culture and tradition.

According to Barrios (2021), even if there are huge variations of cultural context, most Korean dramas and local TV series revolve around a master plot or "basic plots that are repeated based on the type of storyline being told" (White 2018).

A master plot typically revolves around a basic premise with a storyline and narrative such as the upside-down plots of the protagonist versus antagonist, a love-triangle story, and a transformation of a protagonist, for instance, from a poor to a wealthy person. Nonetheless, adopting foreign content into a local version could be challenging because there are parts of the storyline that are specific to certain cultures and norms. The production team, specifically the writers, should be able to tweak the storyline so that it best matches the plot of the original series while retaining the basic premise and the essence of the story.

Barrios (2021) reported that Filipino producers stayed in contact with the original producers of the South Korean drama titled *Encounter* throughout the process of writing the local adaptation. In another interview, Paolo Valconcha (2021), one of the panel writers of the adapted drama, revealed that they were required to pitch any major plot changes to the producer of the original Korean drama prior to the start of filming and that filming can only begin once they have received full approval. On the other hand, any small tweak is permitted as long as it does not affect the overall plot. Numerous discussions and pitching sessions were held between the Filipino and the South Korean production teams to ensure that all critical aspects of the adaptation process, such as the settings, characters, conflicts, and other details, were deliberated accordingly. This process has ensured that the audience's interest is upheld while preserving the originality of the drama's storyline, especially to the Filipino audience.

Given the fact that the Filipino audience grows an emotional attachment to Korean dramas, the production team appears to believe that there are certain elements and parts of the adaptation version that do not appeal to the younger audience. One way to deal with this concern is by inserting various colors from high and low moments in the storyline that could help captivate and sustain the younger Filipino audiences' interest. Valconcha (2021) asserts that selecting and deselecting scenes from both the original drama and the adapted versions – while articulating the primary premise – is critical. The storyline is infused with Filipino culture, sensibilities, and values to make it more relatable to the audience only after the overall plot has been established.

Much like the Filipino drama series, Korean drama remakes could be a matter of hit and miss. There is also an audience for the original South Korean version that is familiar with the nuances of the plot and is prepared to compare it critically to the new version of the drama. If there are many changes in a storyline, it could alienate viewers who anticipated a plot with a slight difference. These remakes are creative in their own ways. In order for the adaptation series to be appealing to audiences from various cultural backgrounds, the production crew must put up the extra effort, skills, and creativity. Stories

must be researched, including different socio-cultural aspects, characterizations, and location settings, to ensure that they do not disappoint the supporters of the original drama while also impressing new audience members.

Glocalization of Popular Korean Dramas

The fact that there is such a large market for Korean drama due to its widespread popularity has prompted local television corporations to compete in producing Korean drama adaptations. A number of popular Korean dramas such as *My Girl, Descendants of the Sun, Endless Love, Encounter, Stairway to Heaven, My Name is Kim Sam Soon*, and *Pure Love* are among the localized content for the Filipino audiences. However, some features of South Korean cultural background cannot be adapted directly into a local setting, regardless of the fact that both South Korea and the Philippines share Asian cultural values and backgrounds. Nonetheless, these findings contribute to a better understanding of how Korean dramas are being localized while retaining the essential element of the original plot.

In a discussion on the cinema of the Philippines, Patrick Campos wrote that

> the economies of particular developing nations in Asia have experienced tremendous growth through industrialization, trade and financial liberalization, and the continuous flow and exchange of private capital and docile labor across more porous national borders. These worldwide political and economic transformations have been facilitated by the lowering cost and widening reach of cross-border travel and the intricate networking of trans-social spaces through new media and communication channels (2016, 11).

It is a fusion of global popular culture with local value systems that keeps Southeast Asian countries connected both inside and outside the region. According to Robertson et al. (1995), this phenomenon could be viewed as a manifestation of glocalization, while Gabardi claimed that the formation of "multiple, overlapping domains of global-linkages [...] creates a condition of globalized panlocality" (2000, 33-34). Given the current scenario, this is perhaps more apparent than ever in the foreign adaptation content which has entailed the glocalization of the contents of Korean dramas without compromising the local custom, tradition, and belief. For instance, with the adaptation of the *Encounter* drama series, Valconcha and Barrios (2021) attempted to retain at least 50 percent of the original content, with the remaining 50 percent being adjusted to accommodate Filipino culture.

Local production and broadcast station companies strive to meet the demands of both the South Korean content producer and the local Filipino audience. Factors such as familiarity, relatability, a

gripping storyline, and well-known local casts are taken into consideration throughout the process of adapting a foreign drama. Glocalization happens as nothing more than a business strategy that coincides with a creative outline of adaptation of global content to a local context. With creative pools and a marketing team on board, the local production has continued and is conforming to the strategy in order to capitalize on the long-term potential of this sort of content production. Barrios (2021) further concludes that this is purely commercial: "It's business kasi. So if merong sikat or if there's a market for it, especially if it's Kdrama 'di ba, so producers will jump in on that." [It is business. If it is popular or if there is a market for it, especially if it is Kdrama, producers will definitely jump in on that.] It is almost certain that producers will join a project if the South Korean drama series is popular among the locals or if there is a great demand. Moreover, the growing trend of featuring K-Pop celebrities as central characters – especially those celebrities with a huge fan base – has helped Korean dramas to garner wider audiences (Capistrano, as cited by ABS-CBN News, 2020). As a consequence, the drama series can reach a far wider audience than would be possible if it were merely watched by common audiences.

The reboot version of the South Korean series is not the only manifestation of glocalization. This has also resulted from the confluence of marketing decisions by the executive management of the broadcast companies as part of their business strategy and from the ambition to keep up with the demands of the station, its broadcast network producers, and the demand from the targeted local audiences.

CONCLUSION

Local broadcast media networks need to integrate bits and pieces of the culture familiar and relevant to their audience to make remakes successful. This demonstrates the influence of the audience on producers and production companies when they create any adaptation series or remake from other countries. Glocalization happens when any content from a foreign series or shows is not just dubbed and subtitled into the local language but is manifested more visibly in the intention and execution of a local version of the show. Cultural fusion and the shift to that creativity are creating waves in the Philippines and throughout Southeast Asia. Familiarity and relevance are indicators of the glocalized content's efficacy with their local target audience. Nevertheless, this also raises concerns about how linear plots, which are prevalent in the Philippine broadcast industry, are used to spoon-feed the audience with subtleties and scenarios that they consider more appealing.

The process of glocalizing Filipino remakes of Koreanovelas involves the acquisition of an idea-content strategy and the translation of well-researched, and highly visualized material inspired by the culture of the intended audience. The shift of the Philippine broadcast media industry towards risks in the

content distribution business is not only a creative reinvention but also a business strategy for traversing the complexities of a heavily commercialized media and broadcast industry landscape. Exploiting content that incorporates elements of typical Filipino values and cultural symbols is a superficial representation of what local networks truly desire. This is the implicit intention to continue gaining financial advantage and capital accumulation from the audience's engagement, as well as the reinforcement of their role in the local market as a refuge for locally produced world-class content. The remake of a drama or series continues to be a challenge of creativity since the production is time-consuming. The idea of a projected *Filipinization* of the content, on the other hand, is nothing more than a deviated version of the content aimed at maintaining a continuous connection with the primary consumers.

Public opinion plays an important role in directing the next steps of the broadcast industry. While public opinion shapes the future of the television and broadcast industry, most television broadcast companies and production are still juggling between commercial and profit-making interests, especially with creative and aesthetic value. This demonstrates how they operate within the broadcast industry's ecosystem. Given this point, the public's involvement can also help to shape future series' structure, schedule, and creative conception. The goal then becomes that of a more open Philippine broadcast industry, which results in an open broadcast sector that is nibbling away at the possibilities of production both within and outside of the region. Indeed, the confluence of global and local elements creates popular culture. The unified cultures breed on a broad mix of traditions, practices, and identities, which shifts the original content to a different cultural background. The transformation and emergence of popular culture latched on both the original South Korean version and the Filipino remakes of the drama series justify that glocalization continues to be a strong wave that engulfs the landscape of the broadcast industry in the Philippines and across Southeast Asia.

Future research should examine an adaptation series of a popular foreign drama from the television and broadcast companies' commercial and business motives. It is also helpful to analyze the latest popular Korean dramas as samples since the industry is always growing due to technological advances and the changing behavior among the audiences. It has evolved ever since, but the pattern of different television shows in the Philippines has been using the same formula for quite a long time. It is high time that Korean drama remakes be more than mere remakes. The broadcast industry is a profit-oriented business and a platform to cultivate creative works and to address social concerns. Therefore, the local producers and broadcasters should seek novel ways to integrate more Filipino culture into the adaptation of foreign drama series.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JANINE ABERIN graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of the Philippines Baguio, with a major in Journalism and a minor in Broadcast Communication. Her thesis focused on power as portrayed in the performance of female strippers in Baguio City. In 2017, she served as head of the Publications and Publicity committee of the university-based cultural organization KEEP UP, which introduces Korean culture to the UP Baguio community. At present, she is a marketing officer in a renewable energy company, focusing on online media marketing.

PATRICIA LUISA DEALCA graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of the Philippines Baguio. She majored in Journalism and took a minor in Broadcast Communication. For her co-written undergraduate thesis, she did a study on the reportages of national dailies about the 2016 presidentiables and vice presidentiables. Dealca was a production designer for the university-based multimedia organization UPB Obra. Her interests include advertising and marketing. Currently, she is practicing digital marketing for Cebu Pacific Air with the main focus on media planning and buying for major digital platforms.

BENJAMIN GEORGE MEAMO III is an instructor in Communication at the Department of Communication, College of Arts and Communication, University of the Philippines Baguio. He graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication, with a major in Speech Communication and a minor in Broadcast Communication. He is currently an MA Media Studies (Broadcast) student at the University of the Philippines Diliman. He has published a media review in the Asian Politics & Policy journal and literary pieces in *Kimata: Journal of Contemporary Literary and Visual Art*.

ELLAINEMOR SAN PASCUAL graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of the Philippines Baguio. She majored in Journalism and minored in Broadcast Communication. During her undergraduate studies she wrote for the University's official student publication named *Outcrop* and became Associate Editor in her junior year. In 2016 she interned with the Philippine Star and CNN Philippines. She is currently performing her duties as a Legislative Staff Officer in the Senate of the Philippines.

TAMARA JANE VENTANILLA graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of the Philippines Baguio. She majored in Speech Communication and minored in Broadcast Communication. Her undergraduate thesis engages with the portrayal of women in digital illustrations. After teaching ESL at 51Talk Philippines, she has been working as a college instructor at WCC Aeronautical and Technological College in Pangasinan, teaching Communication English. She is now pursuing her MA in Education. Her main research interests are gender studies and cultural studies.

✉: janineaberin199609@gmail.com
✉: patriciadealca@gmail.com
✉: bpmeamo@up.edu.ph
✉: eqsanpascual@up.edu.ph
✉: tbventanilla@up.edu.ph

The Logic of Affective Economics in Philippine Fans' Discursive Articulations in Response to a *League of Legends* Skin Sale

MANUEL ENVERGA III
Ateneo de Manila University

ABSTRACT

This study has employed a single case study approach to examine how Filipino *League of Legends* (LoL) fans reacted to sale of a skin, or character cosmetic, to raise awareness for the Taal Volcano eruption in 2020. The promotion was posted on Facebook and received over 9,000 reactions. It also received over 1,000 comments, which served as the data source for this study. Following a discourse analysis of relevant comments, the researcher has found that commenters' articulations were underpinned by the logic of affective economics. Responses to the skin promotion either exemplified brand loyalty towards *League of Legends* or expressed the possibility that the game's producers ran a promotion to endear themselves to fans and simultaneously generate profits. As a study that has brought together discourse, fandoms, and affective economics, this article demonstrates how the assumptions of affective economics can inform the discursive articulations that fans make towards media producers. This article hopes to expand scholarly understandings of affective economics, which have hitherto been somewhat neglected in the field of fan studies.

Keywords: affective economics, discourse, fan studies, *League of Legends*

INTRODUCTION

On 12 January 2020, Taal Volcano, located 66 kilometers from the Philippine capital of Manila, erupted. The blast blanketed neighboring regions in volcanic ash, and triggered a mass evacuation of 70,000 people (Reuters Staff 2020). Tremors and explosions continued until 16 January, and authorities only lowered alert levels on 26 January, two weeks after the volcanic activity had started (Colcol 2020). Non-governmental organizations, private citizens, and businesses responded to the calamity by initiating donation drives for those who lost their livelihoods, homes, and loved ones. Moreover, public awareness campaigns to inform other Filipinos about the devastation caused by the eruption and the measures they could take to protect themselves from volcanic ashes (Cabico 2020).

Two days after the eruption, the following image was posted on a Philippine League of Legends (LoL) Facebook page (see Figure 1):

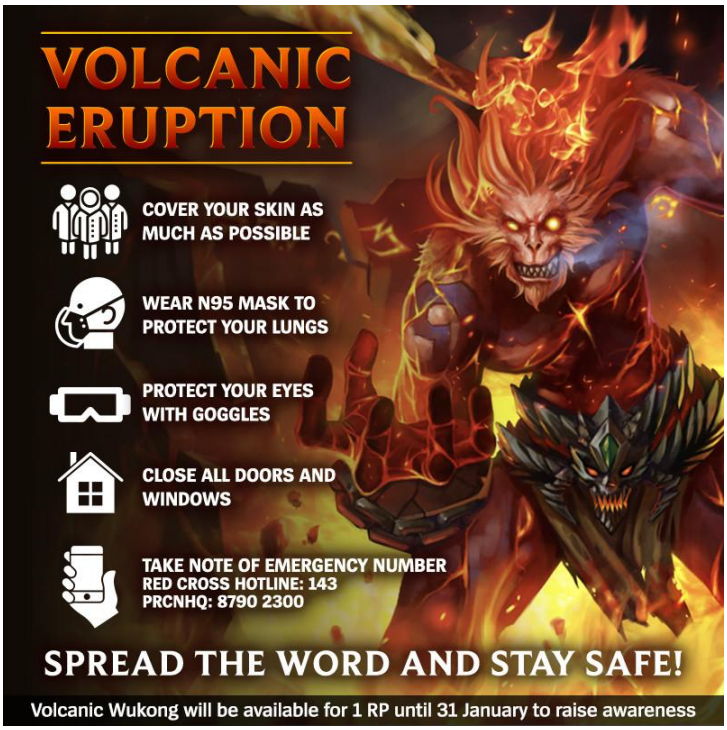

Figure 1: The image accompanying the Facebook post.
Source: Screenshot by the author.

The words "VOLCANIC ERUPTION" are prominently displayed, followed by a list of precautions for protecting oneself from hazardous airborne particles. These include donning an anti-dust mask and goggles, sealing any holes in the home, protecting entire skin with outerwear, and being aware of emergency service contact information.

On the right side is an image of Wukong, one of the *League of Legends*' playable characters, called "Champions." He appears in an alternative appearance or "skin," called "Volcanic Wukong," which is advertised as "available for 1 RP [Riot Points] until 31 January." Normally, *League of Legends* allows players to spend actual currency to purchase Riot Points, which they can then use to buy cosmetic modifications or skins for their champions. The Volcanic Wukong skin was practically given free by League of Legends' creators, since that it typically costs between 60 and 900 RP.

The post went viral, gaining almost 9,000 reactions, with 83% of them being either "Likes" or "Loves," signifying a broadly positive response. The content also received over 10,000 comments, which served as the data source for this article. The articulations are varied, with some commenters simply tagging friends, while others made irrelevant statements, such as advertising a business. This study specifically analyzed comments that responded to *League of Legends*' skin sale to raise awareness of the volcanic eruption. A discourse analysis of this subset of articulations revealed that they were underpinned by the logic of "affective economics" (Jenkins 2006, Hills 2015). The framework refers to media producers' emotional labor to build fan loyalty, which can then be translated into material or financial gains.

The comments analyzed represented two aspects of affective economics. On the one hand, some articulations praised *League of Legends*' producers for initiating a skin sale to raise awareness of the natural calamity. On the other hand, some commenters suggested that the Volcanic Wukong promotion exemplified the leveraging of fans' emotions for profit. Following the prescriptions of van Dijk (2008) and Wodak (2009), the researcher analyzed the comments by examining their connection to their intra and extra-discursive contexts. As such, commenters' articulations were understood in reference to the international nature of *League of Legends*' corporate ownership structure and its previous efforts at emotional labor.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

This study draws on and contributes to the academic literature on (1) discourse and (2) effective economics by investigating the ways in which emotional economics underpins Filipino League of Legends fans' comments in reaction to the Volcanic Wukong skin sale in 2020.

Discourse

This study applies an approach similar to that found in McGeehan, James, and Burke (2020) and Shirazi (2012). Their studies viewed social media comments as being discursive. As such, the comments examined in this study can be viewed as representing 'ideas, concepts, and categories through which

meaning is given to social and physical phenomena' (Hajer and Versteeg 2005, 175). Discourses' articulations are significant because they shape how individuals interpret reality, influencing how they behave.

Scholars in discourse studies have pointed out that understanding articulations, whether spoken or written, requires a knowledge of the context (Duranti and Goodwin 1992; Flowerdew 2017). According to Blommaert (2015), context refers to the "totality of conditions under which discourse is produced, circulated, and interpreted" (Blommaert 2015, 251). Wodak (2009) identified different levels of context, dividing them into the intra-textual and extratextual. Van Dijk (2008) emphasized that there is a dialectical relationship between context and discourse. On the one hand, individuals' statements are informed by existing linguistic, political, social, economic, and cultural factors. On the other hand, utterances can shape how reality is perceived and acted upon (Dryzek 2006).

Also significant in the academic literature on discourse is its relationship to power. Dominant discourses are used to maintain existing power relations because they reinforce ideas of normality (Cohen 1993; Phillips and Jørgensen 2002). Foucault (1977) demonstrates this through its differentiation of disciplinary mechanisms in pre-Modern and Modern France. In the pre-modern period, a criminal's body was ~~simply~~ punished. However, the modern period saw the rise of a new discourse on criminality in which convicted offenders were kept secluded in a prison until their sentence expired, or they were deemed sufficiently rehabilitated. As a result of the shifts in discourse, correctional facilities such as prisons were established, and the pre-modern executioner was replaced by modern specialists like wardens, doctors, and psychologists mandated with the duty of rehabilitating the convicts. A new discourse on criminality gained dominance, and this resulted in changes in penal institutions and processes.

Foucault (1977) also emphasizes the dynamic character of discourses, arguing that they might hold dominating positions in one context but not in another. Nevertheless, they are not static, and individuals can include, modify, or eliminate discourses in their regular conversation. For this reason, Foucault (1972) stated that discourses are "fragments of history" (117) since their meanings and significance can shift with each individual articulation.

There are a number of aspects of discourse theory that have had an influence on the underpinnings of the current investigation. First, it was underpinned by the assumption that discourse represents an understanding of reality. While analyzing the comments, the researcher sought discourses that underpinned the articulations and found that the logic of affective economics was significant. Second, as with all manners of discursive articulation, there is a dynamism with individuals highlighting different aspects of discourse in their statements. The findings have demonstrated that although some comments showed the brand loyalty part of effective economics, others emphasized the relationship

between emotional labor and profit development. Finally, the context was relevant in this study, since articulations were interpreted in the environments in which utterances were made. Of particular significance to this study was the international nature of *League of Legends*' corporate operations, and its producers' previous efforts at emotional labor.

Affective Economics and Producer-Fan Relations

This study makes the argument that the articulations in response to the Volcanic Wukong promotion were underpinned by the logic of affective economics. The concept was first discussed by Jenkins (2006), who referred to it as a marketing theory that focuses on the "emotional underpinnings of decision-making as a driving force behind viewing and purchasing decisions" (61-62). The framework emphasizes how the media can take advantage of consumers' loyalty to build support for and generate profits from their products. Hills (2015) addressed how fans' emotional attachment to the Veronica Mars television series was mobilized during a crowdfunding effort to generate money for the series' feature film, which was based on the notion of affective economics.

Affective economics emphasizes that media producers need to consider their fandoms' emotional reactions to their actions. Scholars in the field of fan studies have described fandoms as groups of enthusiastic customers. Their enthusiasm stimulates them to engage with one another and even create products related to their product of interest (Fiske 1992; Bacon-Smith 1992; Jenkins 1992). As Jenkins (1992) put it, fans are engaged in "a rich and complex participatory culture" (Jenkins 1992, 23). The work of Hills (2002), for its part, defined *fandoms* as "communities of imagination" that performed for imaginary audiences online. Fans would express their enthusiasm for media, such as television shows, films, celebrities, or video games through the creation of artwork or films that would be featured online through Twitter, YouTube, 8Tracks, DeviantArt, and Tumblr (Busker 2008; Crawford and Rutter 2007; Hemphill et al. 2017; Stein 2017; Zubernis and Larsen 2012).

Fandoms have also been portrayed as united through language. Swales (1990) refers to them as discourse communities. Fans have been described as having their language, sometimes termed "fan talk" (Fiske 1992), which they use when discussing topics relevant to their fandoms. Scholarly works, such as Hobson (1989) and Seiter et al. (1989), remarked that soap opera fans had common reference points that they used when discussing their favorite shows and characters with one another. The discourse of fan communities could also be observed in the intra-fandom debates that occur. For example, Denison (2011) discussed how fans of Japanese anime argued about whether or not it should be acceptable behavior to continue downloading a series online, even if a local television company had already obtained a license to distribute it. Hemphill, Kocurek, and Rao (2017), discussed how video game players would write about their experiences on forums or social media. In so doing, they were

able to engage with fandoms discursively. These interactions were found to augment fans' sense of enjoyment about the cultural product they consumed (Brown 1987).

In terms of affective economics, fans' high levels of engagement with one another make them a powerful force. Media producers need to consider the emotional impacts that their actions may have. Hills (2015) asserted that this has resulted in a compulsion among media producers to engage in emotional labor for their fans, to strengthen their loyalty. Their ultimate goal would be for their products to become what Roberts (2005) refers to as "Lovemarks." The brands that achieve the status of a lovemark are beloved, developing such deep affective bonds that ordinary consumers become fans. Consequently, they gain a productive community of enthusiastic consumers that are emotionally invested in their products.

According to researchers' views on affective economics, media producers' emotional labor might have two distinct but interrelated implications. First, is the building of intense consumer loyalty, which will transform their followers into fans who think highly of them and their products. Corollary to that is the building of an emotional connection that will transform their brands into lovemarks. The second effect is that media producers can leverage their lovemark status into material returns, whether in the form of a more extensive consumer base, mobilizing their fans to contribute to a crowdsourcing campaign, or convincing them to purchase more of their products.

The price reduction of the Volcanic Wukong skin certainly reflects the imperatives of affective economics. *League of Legends*' producers initiated a promotion that exemplified emotional labor, using it to ingratiate themselves and build loyalty among Philippine League fans. The articulations examined in this study reflect ideas from affective economics and represent how emotional labor can be translated into brand loyalty, profits, or both.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a discourse analysis approach in examining the comments responding to the Volcanic Wukong promotion on the *League of Legends* Philippines Facebook fan page. It is crucial to analyze the text of the conversation to see what was really written and what context was utilized to influence what individuals said. Scholars have demonstrated different ways to connect discourse and context (Foucault 1977; van Dijk 2001, 2005). However, this study followed the analytical method of Wodak (2009), who proposed that researchers examine discursive articulations on four levels: 1) the intertextual and interdiscursive, 2) extralinguistic social variables, 3) institutional frames, and 4) broader socio-political and historical environments. The first two levels are discursive focusing on the text itself or related ones. The other two are extra-textual and relate to articulations' broader

environment. As such, the comments in this article are understood based on broader contextual factors.

The data was drawn from the approximately 1,300 comments written in response to the Volcanic Wukong skin promotion. Among them, the researcher had access to only 773 comments, because Facebook users can set their privacy settings so that their comments on public posts cannot be viewed. Data collection occurred on 25 January 2020, one week after the skin sale was published on Facebook. In analyzing the collected qualitative data, the researcher followed the inductive thematic analysis model proposed by Frith and Gleeson (2004). Data was not categorized into a predetermined coding scheme. Instead, categories emerged from existing patterns in the data (Braun and Clarke 2006). This approach allowed the discourse analysis to be more authentic, reflecting the ideas underpinning commenters' articulations.

The first step entailed organizing the data from Facebook in tabular form, and identifying comments that had similar content. This made it more convenient for the data to be scrutinized for patterns. Of the 773 comments available to the researcher to view, only 86 were categorized as responses to the emotional labor inherent in the skin sale. The vast majority of articulations were unusable because they exemplified themes and categories not relevant to this study. Examples include commenters who were tagging their friends, asking technical support questions, sharing their in-game names (IGNs) to find available players to join them, or sharing unrelated content. The relatively low proportion of relevant comments indicates that only a minority of commenters responded on Facebook to the emotional labor done by *League of Legends*' producers. However, the relevant comments were found to represent the logic of affective economics.

This study employed data from classified databases or online restricted groups that met the ethical criteria for social science research and adhered to the ethics of informed consent. During the data collection process, the researcher adopted the position of a professional lurker or active viewer, following the prescription of Litchfield et al. (2018). The purpose here was to avoid interacting with other commenters in order to avoid interference with their views. The researcher was aware that the method applied had ethical implications (Kozinets 2013; Beaulieu 2004; Wellman et al. 2001). Even if the comments were publicly available, there are still issues related to obtaining informed consent, ensuring statements are not attributable to avoid reputational harm to them (Franze et al. 2020). To comply with the ethical norms of conducting social science research online, the researcher paraphrased comments rather than directly quoting them in the manuscript, and did not make references that would make the statements traceable. In order to further minimize identification, the researcher did not provide the name of the Facebook page from which the remarks originated.

RELEVANT CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Before examining how comments reflect the logic of affective economics, it is helpful, to begin with, a discussion of the context in which the statements are articulated. A similar study has been made by Wodak (2009), who advises discourse analysts to study the social and institutional contexts in which discourses are entrenched. This study postulates that to clearly understand the responses to the Volcanic Wukong skin auction, one should consider: First, League of Legends' worldwide ownership and distribution, and second, its emotional labor.

League of Legends' International Ownership and Distribution

League of Legends was developed by Riot Games, a small independent American developer, and released in October 2009. It has become one of the world's most popular games (Crecente 2019), with around 100 million unique viewers online at the 2018 World Championships (Pei 2019). Players also refer to the game as "League" or "LoL." It was based on *Defense of the Ancients* (DOTA), a modified game type for *Warcraft III*, developed by Blizzard Entertainment. There are two teams of five players each commanding powerful heroes who are trying to reach the main structure of their opponent's base (Donaldson 2017). *League of Legends* belongs to a relatively new video game category called Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA), and it is currently one of the genre's most prominent titles. In 2019, it had an average of eight million active players competing with one another on any given day (Crecente 2019).

League of Legends' original game development team envisioned a DOTA-type game that was made outside the auspices of Blizzard Entertainment and would follow a free-to-play (F2P) model (Nutt 2014). Unlike other commercial game companies, Riot never asked players to spend money to play *League of Legends*, nor have they followed the pay-to-win model (P2W), where players gain advantages through in-game purchases (Jarrett 2021). According to Crecente (2019), this was one of the keys to *League of Legends*' success. At the time of its release, League of Legends was up against stiff competition from Heroes of Newerth and Dota 2, both of which had comparable concepts and were published by well-known studios. However, League of Legends dominated the market because of its free-to-play model, which made it appealing to players who did not want to spend on new games.

Seeing as how Riot Games cannot benefit from game sales, the company's monetization strategy relies on in-game microtransactions, that are purchases that can be made while playing the game. *League of Legends* entices players to purchase cosmetic modifications, such as skins or player icons. To obtain these, they have to spend Riot Points, which can be purchased using actual currency. This mode of profitmaking allowed Riot's revenue to grow from $1.29 million in 2009 to $1.7 billion in 2018.

Riot's financial success was significant enough to attract the interest of Tencent Holdings, a major Chinese internet and gaming company, which purchased 97% of the company in 2011. Tencent Holdings owns the majority ownership in Riot Games, that is based in the United States, and yet this arrangement has remained to this day. *League of Legends*' corporate structure can thus be described as international, involving companies from different countries. The statement becomes even more valid when one considers that Riot has a partnership with Garena, a Singapore-based digital services corporation, to publish and distribute *League of Legends* in Southeast Asia, where the Philippines is located (Lai 2019). The international nature of the game's ownership, production, and distribution are one of the reasons why this article uses the umbrella term 'LoL producers' to refer to the corporate structure behind its operations.

Instead of Riot, the League of Legends distributor in Southeast Asia, Garena has the exclusive right to launch the Volcanic Wukong offer for its Filipino fans. The skin sale was a form of emotional labor intended to build affective capital among *League of Legends* fans in the country. Comments in response to the promotion indicated that the Singaporean company received positive responses from commenters, who expressed gratitude towards Garena directly, rather than to Riot Games. Some even went as far as to try to correct other commenters, who credited Riot for the skin sale rather than Garena. However, Riot was applauded for the skin sale. Its inclusion may have resulted from its reputation for implementing skin sales for various charitable causes in the past. The producers of League of Legends have always deeply engaged in emotional labor, which has garnered them the respect of their fan base.

League of Legends Producers' Previous Emotional Labor

Jarrett (2021) explained that *League of Legends*' freemium model, i.e. the free-to-play model, has been a significant aspect of its emotional labor. His study explored *League of Legends* players' motivations to engage in microtransactions to purchase skins for their characters, and he found an emotive component to their reasoning. The participants in the study expressed that having skins enhances the game experience, however, they also discussed feeling obliged to purchase skins as a form of support or donation to Riot, which was offering *League of Legends* to them for free. Among the takeaways from Jarrett's findings is the centrality of affective economics in the *League of Legends* business model. By not charging for their game, Riot builds loyalty among their players, who feel obliged to reciprocate them for the service they offer. As a result, players are more eager to buy in-game purchases, which translates into revenue for Riot games.

Another relevant point gleaned from Jarrett's (2021) work is that League players are aware of Riot's reliance on microtransactions for generating profits. Consequently, they would also recognize that

League of Legends skin sales provide no immediate financial benefit to Riot or its affiliates, like Garena. It has been claimed that League of Legends' producers has been using skin campaigns to increase awareness despite the possible income loss that may result from doing so. One of the commenters who responded to the Volcanic Wukong promotion posted the following image to indicate their awareness of such activities:

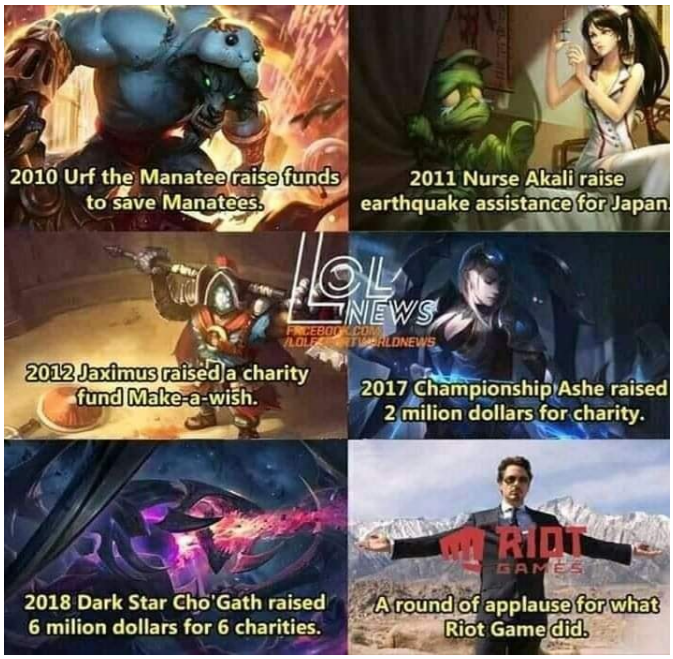

Figure 2: An image responding to the skin sale indicating a trend in Riot's activities.
Source: Screenshot by the Author

The image enumerates five of the altruistic activities that *League of Legends* had been associated with in the past. They included raising money to save manatees from extinction in 2010, providing assistance for the victims of the earthquakes and tsunami that hit Fukushima 2011, and generating funds for charities, such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation, an American organization. All of the cases referenced in the image featured a skin that was put on sale to promote a particular cause. Although they may not have necessarily translated to profits for Riot Games or Garena, skin sales endeared the companies to their fans, as exemplified in the image on the bottom right of Figure 2, calling for "A round of applause for what Riot Game *(sic)* did."

By foregoing potential profits and using their products for good causes, *League of Legends*' producers exemplified another way in affective labor. This reinforced their emotional bond with fans, providing them with justifications to maintain their loyalty to the game. The Volcanic Wukong promotion arguably had a similar effect on Filipino fans, who were aware that the skin sale represented potential financial losses for Riot or Garena.

Not only did the promotion endear *League of Legends* to their fan base in the Philippines, it also became a basis for distinguishing themselves from another fandom. Among the comments analyzed for this study, the researcher found references to the game *Mobile Legends: Bang* (MLBB), and Moonton, the company that developed and published it. Although both *League of Legends* and *Mobile Legends: Bang* are games categorized under the Multiplayer Online Battle Arena genre, their fandoms in the Philippines differentiate themselves from one another.

In comparison to Moonton's public service notice, commenters said that the Volcanic Wukong skin sale posting was far more generous than the latter because it effectively gave away the skin in order to raise awareness about the volcanic eruption. *Mobile Legends: Bang*, for its part, did not have a promotion. Instead, it only provided information on safety precautions. *League of Legends* fans advanced the idea that their game's initiative was more legitimate than *Mobile Legends: Bang*. An example of one of these comments contained a screenshot of Moonton's notice about the tragedy, which stated:

> "Hi MLBB players. We're sorry to hear the eruption of the Taal Volcano is affecting a lot of you. We're praying for your safety and if you're (*sic),* please claim the gifts so we shall know. Here are some to-dos after volcano eruption from Moonton, do be safe and help each other out –
> Listen to your local radio stations for civil defense advice and follow instructions.
> Stay indoors and away from volcanic ashfall areas as much as possible.
> When it is safe to go outside, keep your gutters and roof clear of ash as heavy ash deposits can collapse your roof.
> If there is a lot of ash in the water supply, do not use your dishwasher or washing…"
> (Source: Screenshot by Author)

This comment elicited responses from other *League of Legends* fans who accused Moonton of being stingy while a natural disaster was taking place. Another commenter added to this exchange, saying that *League of Legends* had one-upped *Mobile Legends: Bang* in that instance. *League of Legends* fans asserted the superiority of their preferred game over its rival MOBA by implying that its developers were more altruistic. The "boundary work" (Gieryn 1983, 1999) was based on comparisons drawn between *League of Legends* and *Mobile Legends: Bang*. Filipino League fans' responses to the Volcanic Wukong sale exemplified the impacts that emotional labor can have. The skin sale endeared Riot and Garena to their fans, which not only resulted in an increase in brand loyalty, it also gave *League of Legends* players a basis for criticizing *Mobile Legends: Bang* fans, and the game that they play.

They are not the only part of the League fandom to feel this way, in any case. As this part of the article has indicated, the Volcanic Wukong promotion was one among numerous skin sales implemented by

League of Legends' producers. As a free-to-play game, affective economics is central to the *League of Legends*' business model. As a result, players feel obliged to spend on microtransactions as a way to support the game. At the same time, Riot and its affiliates used skin sales to associate their brand with charitable causes. The result of these promotions is a greater sense of brand loyalty among *League of Legends*' players and fans, which could potentially be leveraged for financial returns later on.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both *League of Legends*' international corporate structure and its producers' previous history of emotional labor are significant aspects of the context that clarify the 86 comments written in response to the Volcanic Wukong promotion. The findings revealed that the logic of emotional economics was underpinning commenters' articulations, but that they highlighted various aspects of the framework. On the one hand, commenters exemplified brand loyalty through their expressions of support towards the skin sale. In addition, they praised League of Legends and its producers for their expression of concern for victims of the volcanic eruption. On the other hand, some comments viewed the promotion as a business strategy, which would build fan support, and immediately translate it into financial returns.

Comments Exemplifying Brand Loyalty for *League of Legends*

Based on the data, the researcher found numerous examples of positive comments to the post publicizing the skin sale. The result was expected, since the post obtained approximately 5,100 "Love" reactions and 2,400 "Like" reactions out of 9,000. Commenters expressed their approval that *League of Legends*' producers had chosen to raise awareness through the Volcanic Wukong promotion. Most of those comments highlighted the international aspect of League of Legends' business structure, with some supporting both Riot and Garena, while others just naming one of the two companies. There was one exchange where three commenters debated about which company should get the credit. The discussion ended without a satisfactory resolution. However, for this study, such articulations are understood as loyalty to *League of Legends* in general.

Another aspect of the articulations expressing support for *League of Legends* and its producers is the awareness that the Volcanic Wukong promotion was not unique but part of a long series of charitable actions associated with the game. For example, one commenter recalled that a skin sale was also implemented when the highly destructive Typhoon Haiyan, locally referred to as Yolanda, devastated parts of the Philippines (BBC). Another commenter wrote that Dark Star Cho'Gath, Jaximus, Championship Ashe, and Dawnbringer Karma were among the other skins that were used to promote

charitable causes in the past. The image in Figure 2, which emphasized previous skin sales that were undertaken to address environmental degradation or offer help after natural tragedies, belongs into this category of comments.

Almost three-quarters of the 86 comments exemplified articulations of support for *League of Legends* and its producers. They provide evidence for the building of brand loyalty that could emerge from media producers' emotional labor by connecting their claims to the framework of affective economics. Not only did Riot and Garena gain praise and recognition from their Philippine fans, but their product also became associated with charitable causes. Such activities, coupled with the knowledge that *League of Legends* is a free-to-play game, are a source of pride for *League of Legends* fans, who continue to provide emotional and financial support to the game. The comments exemplifying the discourse of support indicate the strengthening of brand loyalty, which shows one of the possible results of media producers' emotional labor within the framework of affective economics.

Comments Suggesting the Skin Sale Generated Loyalty and Financial Returns

A quarter of the comments responding to the skin sale suggested that it was part of a business strategy that *League of Legends*' producers were using to endear themselves to Philippine fans, so that their loyalty could be translated into financial gains. Although these comments are numerically few, they are worth considering in this qualitative study because they represent another view of the Volcanic Wukong skin sale and another aspect of affective economics.

One such articulation remarked that the promotion was a sound business strategy to use the volcanic eruption to make money, albeit at a reduced price. Commenters rebutted the remark and others like it by bringing up League of Legends' prior skin sales, which were used for charitable purposes. They took offense at the implication that Riot or Garena were taking advantage of the volcanic eruption to generate profits. Several commenters highlighted that 1 Riot Point for a skin was not lucrative, and that it made no sense for Riot or Garena to have a skin sale for financial gain. Furthermore, they brought up how the proceeds of similar promotions in the past had been donated, rather than kept. However, another commenter pointed out that, *League of Legends*' producers ultimately benefited from the skin sale. They obtained two advantages: the income from the skin purchases, and good public relations.

The exchanges described in the previous paragraph indicate that Philippine *League of Legends* fans were loyal to the game, and willing to defend its producers against negative insinuations. At the same time, a few commenters recognized that the skin sale was a form of emotional labor. Although they labeled it as a business strategy, their articulations align with scholars of affective economics who observed that emotional labor could result in fan loyalty and potential monetary returns.

This study found that comments were underpinned by the logic of affective economics, but they represented two aspects of the framework. On the one hand, some commenters exemplified the strengthening of brand loyalty in their praise for *League of Legends*' producers. On the other hand, there were comments that suggested that the promotion was part of a business strategy to generate loyalty and profits from players. The study also considered the context of articulations, noting the international nature of *League of Legends*' ownership, production, and distribution, and its history of engaging in emotional labor.

Hills (2015) and Jenkins (2006) emphasized that media producers' efforts yielded fan loyalty, which would later be translated into financial returns. Most relevant comments praised Garena and Riot for the skin sale, which was the latest in a long series of *League of Legends* promotions geared towards charitable causes. As this article has indicated, fan loyalty was manifested in various ways, including the criticizing of MLBB players, and defending the game producers against accusations of profiting from the natural disaster. On the other hand, there were a small number of comments suggesting that the skin sale was a method for generating both fan loyalty and profits. Although their articulations attracted defensive reactions from other fans, these commenters inadvertently resonated with affective economic assumption that media companies could translate their emotional labor into brand devotion and monetary returns.

The comments are written in response to the Volcanic Wukong promotion, thus, resonate with the logic of emotive economics. While some commenters may not have been informed of the framework, their arguments were undoubtedly bolstered by it. The support and praise expressed by the majority of relevant comments indicate that the skin sale was a contributor to the success of strengthening fan loyalty. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss whether or not brand dedication resulted in financial gains. Nevertheless, a portion of the respondents stated that Riot and Garena's business strategies were acceptable and that their emotive work could be turned into monetary benefit.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined fan reactions to the Volcanic Wukong skin sale implemented after the Taal Volcano eruption in the Philippines. As a study that brought together discourse, fandom, and affective economics, this study has demonstrated how the assumptions of affective economics can inform the discursive articulations that fans make towards media producers. It is hoped that the study has expanded scholarly understandings of affective economics, which have hitherto been understudied in the field of fan studies.

Part of the intention behind this study is to serve as a springboard for further research about the nature and dynamics of fan-producer relations. There are many instances in which companies and fan communities interact with one another, and it is argued that scholars and media producers would consider fan discourses as valuable sources of information for either research or policymaking. Both may find it worthwhile to consider fandoms' perceptions of their emotional labor, paying particular attention to their sense of brand loyalty or expressions of suspicion about the financial motivations behind media producers' actions.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MANUEL ENVERGA III is Director and Assistant Professor at the European Studies Program of Ateneo de Manila University, where he also serves as Jean Monnet Coordinator. He teaches and does research on a diverse set of topics, including popular culture, EU and ASEAN integration, as well as digital and cultural diplomacy. Outside of his academic work, he hosts *The Eurospeak Podcast*, where he invites guests to talk about European influences on contemporary popular culture.

✉: menverga@ateneo.edu

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Scholarly articles should follow either the social scientific, humanistic, or any other disciplinary approaches in media research. They should be original and not duplications of previously published articles. They should be solely submitted to the journal and are not being considered for publication elsewhere, and they must be free from abusive, libelous, defamatory, fraudulent, illegal, or obscene content.

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CONTACT THE EDITOR

eic.seamsj@gmail.com

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