



Choe, Youngmin, Tourist Distractions: Traveling and Feeling in Transnational Hallyu Cinema.

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Published in:
Histoire Sociale/Social History

Publication date:
2017

Document version
Other version

Citation for published version (APA):
Wall, B. (2017). Choe, Youngmin, Tourist Distractions: Traveling and Feeling in Transnational Hallyu Cinema. *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 50(101), 192-194.

Although during the First World War women were enrolled as “farmerettes” in Ontario and the Women’s Land Army in England, the Canadian West resisted involving women in agriculture. Following the war, it was aggressively argued that returning soldiers had the primary claim to homesteads. When non-Native women were finally granted homesteading rights in Alberta in 1930, they were faced with disastrous conditions for farming during the Depression, when many were forced to abandon their farms.

Thus, as this important book shows, decades of advocacy for women’s homesteads, both in Canada and overseas, was all for naught. In titling this book *Imperial Plots*, Carter evokes a cleverly multi-layered meaning of the term. First was the imposition of the surveyor’s grid on the Prairie landscape, creating tidy square settlement plots that pushed out the indigenous population. Then came the devious plots of politicians and bureaucrats who worked to push this settlement process onward by granting homesteads, excluding not only Natives, but also other non-whites and never-married women, to establish a white masculine imperial space. Finally, we have the plots, or storied visions, of the women who wanted to challenge this gender divide, to prove that women could farm for themselves and be important contributors to the imperial mission. The fact that they struggled against such strong resistance, and that some even managed to succeed on the land against great odds, is an important narrative that challenges our understanding of the history of the Canadian West.

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CHOE, Youngmin – *Tourist Distractions: Traveling and Feeling in Transnational Hallyu Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. Pp. 252.

“Hallyu-lujah!” (p. 8) is what departments of Korean studies around the globe might want to shout, given the huge numbers of students who have recently decided to devote four of their best years in life to the study of Korean language and culture thanks to their interest in *hallyu*. *Hallyu*, or the Korean Wave(s), first broke in the late 1990s, with additional surges in 2003 and 2012. *Hallyu* is generally associated with globally distributed South Korean television series and pop music, but can be broadly considered to include all exported South Korean cultural products. Korean cinema is not generally considered to be a driving force behind any Korean Wave, and it played a relatively minor role in this cultural phenomenon compared to the overwhelming impact of K-Drama and K-Pop. Besides Kyung Hyun Kim’s *Virtual Hallyu: Korean Cinema of the Global Era* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), *Tourist Distractions* is one of the first monographs exclusively dedicated to *hallyu* cinema.

Given the vagueness of its definition, Choe intends to transform the catch-all term *hallyu* into a “bona fide critical term” (p. 7) by proclaiming travel as a central

characteristic of *hallyu* cinema. “Travel” in this study does not only refer to the representation of travel in the films, but also to the travel caused by the films, or screen tourism. Choe emphasizes that travel in *hallyu* cinema functions not to attract, but to distract the spectator from the familiar. In so doing, it invites self-reflection. She invites the reader on an affective journey through *hallyu* cinema arranged according to three categories, which she confusingly calls “emotions” or “affects” (p. 26): first, “intimacy” between Korea and Japan; second, “amity” between Korea and China; and third, “remembrance” in relations between South and North Korea. Each of the three parts is again divided into two chapters. The even-numbered chapters mirror the “emotions” stirred by the films of the early Korean Wave, while the uneven-numbered chapters reflect how these “emotions” are fleshed out in later films.

The first part introduces transnational “intimacy” in *hallyu* cinema as a means for reconciliation between Japan and Korea. The first chapter posits pornography as a kind of transnational “virtual tourism” (p. 43) in Park Chul-soo’s *Family Cinema* (*Kazoku Cinema*, 1998) and E. J-yong’s *Asako in Ruby Shoes* (*Sunaebo*, 2000), two of the earliest sanctioned film collaborations between Japan and South Korea. The second chapter foregrounds “affective tourism” and explores how films like Hur Jin-ho’s *April Snow* (*Oech’ul*, 2005) and *One Fine Spring Day* (*Pomnal-ŭnkanda*, 2001) self-consciously move people “emotionally to tears” and “geographically to travel” (p. 84). If pornography in the earlier films reflects how political reconciliation in the late 1990s tended to be misunderstood as economic liberalization based on mutual consumption, “affective tourism” in Hur Jin-ho’s films demonstrates how the “spectator-cum-tourists” (p. 72) feel invited not just by the denationalized locations of the film itself, but also by the feelings associated with them.

The second part revolves around “amity,” especially regarding the relations between China and Korea. Choe first introduces Kim Sung-su’s martial arts epic *Musa* (2001), a Korea-China coproduction shot in China, and its accompanying “making of” documentary (MOD) as an allegory for the increasing cultural and economic exchange between China and Korea. She demonstrates how the film’s diegetic travel paralleled the film crew’s travel as depicted in the documentary and concludes that the hardships of travel resulted in provisional denationalized feelings of compassion for each other. These temporary feelings of solidarity gain more permanence in a later filmic adaptation of Hwang Sun-wŏn’s “A Shower” (“Sonagi, 1953), a Korean short story about a girl and a boy who are surprised by a rain shower and seek shelter, which ultimately ends with the death of the girl. *Daisy* (*Teiji*, 2006), written by the Korean *hallyu* filmmaker Kwak Jae-yong, directed by the Hong Kong neo-noir director Andrew Lau, and set in Europe, adapts “A Shower” to a new transnational context. Considering the many layers of aesthetic styles and cultural sensibilities on which *Daisy* is built, Choe’s categorization of the film as transnational “affective palimpsest” is convincing. I nevertheless doubt that it is appropriate to call the trope of the rain shower in Hwang’s story itself “nationalist Korean” (p. 126) or “nationalist rain” (p.140). To refer to the affect elicited by this trope as “a formerly nationalist emotion” (p. 136) also seems to be

problematic. Is everything that is not transnational necessarily nationalist? In the conclusion the author herself calls the trope “traditional Korean” (p. 202), which might be a better option.

The affective journey of *Tourist Distractions* reaches its climax in the third part, where it turns to remembrance and its meaning for the relations between North and South Korea. Chapter 5 focuses on the reconstruction of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between the two Koreas as post-memorial site in Park Chan-wook’s *Joint Security Area* (*Kongdongkyöngbikuyök*, 2000), Chong Yun-su’s *Yesterday* (*Yesüt’ödei*, 2002), and Lee Si-myung’s *2009: Lost Memories* (*2009: Rosüt’ümemorijü*, 2002). In the last chapter Choe explores Kang Jey-gyu’s *Taegukgi: Brotherhood of War* (*T’aegükkiHwinallimyö*, 2004) in relation to various exhibits associated with the film. If the film’s transformation of the DMZ into a figurative border functions “as a comparative lens through which Korea can imagine other relationships” (p. 163) and also opens new possibilities for a “cooperative Asia at the heart of Asianization” (p. 160), *Taegukgi*, and especially the tourism caused by the film, illustrates how *hallyu* cinema aims to repair historical traumas with the help of transnational economic cooperation at the expense of historical specificity.

Some repetitions creep into the story here and there, but they do not burden the reader too much. What might bother the nitpicker in Korean studies are the constant errors regarding the romanization of Korean words. Despite these negligible, mostly formal errors, Choe’s work is highly readable, inspiring, and absorbing. *Tourist Distractions* also promises to be productive in the classroom. It will attract and distract *hallyu* fans in Korean studies and researchers with interests in tourism studies, visual and cultural anthropology, cultural studies, and film studies.

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DZIEMBOWSKI, Edmond – *La guerre de Sept Ans, 1756-1763*. Québec: Septentrion, 2015. Pp. 670.

Between 1754 and 1763, the Seven Years’ War spread around the world. Fighting raged across Europe, the Americas, and India, redrawing borders and shattering empires as the French and British vied for dominance. However important the battles of Rossbach, Minden, Plassey, and the Plains of Abraham may have been, Edmond Dziembowski draws attention to a parallel, cultural war between the European contenders. The historic campaigns prompted an outpouring of patriotic literature and art on both sides of the English Channel as the public sphere itself became a battleground. Away from the front lines, radical ideologies, some of which had been germinating for decades, had found an outlet. For Dziembowski,