East Asian Pop Culture
Analysing the Korean Wave

Edited by Chua Beng Huat and Koichi Iwabuchi
Rap(p)ing Korean Wave: National Identity in Question

Fang-chih Irene Yang

The recent popularity of Korean dramas in East Asia in recent years has been described by the media as the “Korean wave,” and in Taiwan as “the invasion of the Korean wave” (hanliu laixi). This chapter unpacks the meanings of “the invasion of the Korean wave” by examining three genres of public discourses on the Korean wave. Public discourses presume different addressees and adhere to different cultural, rhetorical, and stylistic conventions to evoke affect and assemble different publics. In this chapter, I point out that the most dominant genre of the public discourse on the Korean wave articulates globalization with economic nationalism, which derives its legitimacy from disembodiment, rationality, calculation, and competition for self-interests. The second discourse on the Korean wave is articulated as cultural nationalism, with the Korean drama and the Korean man as the other. This discourse operates through body and affect, using scatology to assemble national citizens. The articulation of scatology to cultural nationalism, and later, economic nationalism, elevates the powerless male public from disgrace to serious, esteemed academic conferences and (elite) cultural circles. These two discourses, despite their hierarchically structured publics as a result of their bodily (in)visibility, are predicated on a masculine conception of the nation, with women as the other, prone to invasion and manipulation. Contrary to these masculine discourses of the nation, the third discourse on the Korean wave takes on a feminine form, addressing to female readers/consumers how women consume affectively Korean dramas, and particularly, that of the body of male stars. Though the three discourses co-exist in the same public space,
they are ordered according to gender hierarchy, with the first two "citizen" or "nation" discourses excluding women from participation and the third fan/women discourse functioning as a "mode of containment" which marginalizes women's speech to "female complaint" (Berlant, 1988). But as the "complaint" itself is both resistant and containment, self-expressive and self-confining, this chapter ends with a re-reading of the fan discourse through Heidegger's notion of "technology" in the hope of transforming the existing public sphere which leaves women no place to speak.

Text-based Publics

Warner (2002) proposes a theory of text-based public in response to the much criticized masculinist, bourgeois rational public sphere that Habermas idealizes. In Warner's formulation, publics are self-organizing through their encounter with texts, that is, the assembling of publics is necessarily mediated through cultural forms. The bourgeois public sphere denies the mediation of cultural forms and misrecognizes discussions, information, and will formation as such rather than the effect of particular cultural forms — the rhetorical dimension of a public context which regulates individual's relation to the public (1992: 379; 2002). This misrecognition is what Warner calls "ideologizing," and it is the ideology of print that informs, conditions, and constitutes the rational, abstract (from body) bourgeois public sphere (1992; 2002).

In denying the mediation of cultural form as its founding ideology, bourgeois publicness denies its own historicity and specificity. This "dehistoricized self-understanding guarantees at every step that difference will be enunciated as mere positivity, an ineluctable limit imposed by the particularities of the body" (1992: 384). Coding itself as universal allows the bourgeois public sphere to minoritize difference by marginalizing or excluding those who are constrained by bodily particularities. This minorizing strategy becomes a tool of domination. Hence, claims Warner, that the public sphere is inherently contradictory: on the one hand, it delivers promises (for universal good); on the other hand, it cannot fulfill its promise as bodily differences (race, gender, sexuality, class) are minoritized. For the minoritized bodies, consumption becomes one of the venues to engage with their publics as consumption offers promises of difference and promises unfulfilled by the bourgeois public sphere (Warner, 1992).

The bourgeois public sphere's minoritizing strategy is a strategy of ordering. As Foucault makes it clear that "in any society the production of discourse is simultaneously controlled, selected, organized and redistributed
by a certain number of procedures, the role of which is to ward off the powers and dangers of discourse, master its chance events, evade its weighty, fearsome materiality" (1981: 52). The ordering of discourse in the bourgeois public sphere minorizes women's public speech to a marginalized, cramped space (Morris 1988; Berlant 1988; Deem, 1996), which "makes speaking difficult or impossible for women" (Morris, 1988: 7). Warner (2002) and Berlant (1988) contend that it is through the (ab)uses of cultural forms that women's speech is ordered to the lower rung of the cultural hierarchy. For Warner, the bourgeois cultural form allows it to operate through abstraction, rationality, neutrality, and universality through the denial of body; while a mass cultural form for mass subjects (mostly and especially women) offered through consumption operates through bodily difference and effect. For Berlant, women's genre (such as melodrama, soap opera) functions as a "mode of containment" which contains women's speech as "female complaint" — a mode of speech which addresses to the public of the complainer's suppressed injuries while circumscribing that expression to a failure for transformation (1988: 243).

As such, Warner calls for the necessity of understanding the rhetorical dimension of public discourses for it is through style, language, mode of address, and poetics — the particularities of cultural form — that publics are led to imagine themselves as belonging to a particular public. Any cultural form, though called public, is contradicted by "both its material limits — the means of production and distribution, the physical textual objects themselves, the social conditions of access to them — and by internal ones, including the need to suppose forms of intelligibility already in place as well as the social closure entailed by any selection of genre, idiolect, style, address, and so forth" (2002: 53). That is, for a particular text to function as public, to assemble and call upon its own constituents, it must be available to the public. Availability includes two dimensions — materiality and stylistics/poetics. The cultural form in question needs to be available to its subject only when the subject can afford it, has access to it, and through his/her cultural capital, can understand it and be saturated into its subject position. The material aspect is a matter of political economy, the stylistics/poetics, is a matter of culture. It is about the cultural capital of the addressee, the shared knowledge of the addressee's community, and the style of language used within that community. The style of the cultural form performs an affective function, calling into community its own addressees.

If the production of any cultural form presumes preexisting knowledge of certain communities, that preexisting knowledge should be seen as "dialogic imagination," "a context of interaction" (Warner, 2002: 62) — as responses
to and encounters of many discourses from the "multigeneric lifeworld" and as the infinite encountering of citations and characterizations. The public space is a space of ongoing encounters of discourses, it is intertextual, but is always conditioned and constrained by the members' access to it. The dialogic aspect of the public space is most compelling for it enables us to analyze cultural texts as composed of multiple voices, and the combination of which allows the formation of a particular kind of community of belonging.

Warner's proposal of a text-based public has several advantages in understanding the formation of publics: it avoids the pitfalls of the bourgeois public sphere which evokes its own cultural/historical/bodily particularity. As such, it particularizes the bourgeois, rational public as one of the publics, rather than the Public, and allows for the theorization of subaltern or counter publics. By paying attention to the particularities of cultural form in the formation of public subjectivity, it allows us to take into account both the material and the cultural/linguistic aspects of communication. Moreover, it enables us to analyze not only the communicative but also the affective function of language in shaping human belonging, as well as the complexity of subject formation as overdetermined by different discourses and affectivities.

One way to start with analyzing cultural forms is through genres, as genres are negotiations of forces among institutions, texts, and audiences. Here, I analyze three genres of public discourse that articulate the meanings of the Korean wave — the discourse of economic nationalism, cultural nationalism, and fan discourse. In analyzing these genres, I will pay particular attention to these aspects: intended addressee, institution of production, textual "poetics" (including the performative and affective dimension of the texts), and the multiple discourses that are adopted to characterize the world. However, as discourses are ordered hierarchically in the service of mostly the male elite, it is significant to call attention to the gender dimension of the discourse which "leaves a woman no place from which to speak, or nothing to say." As feminist intervention, this piece takes it that "to write, to read, or to speak is first of all to turn other texts into discursive material, displacing the enunciative position from which those materials have been propounded" (Freadman, quoted in Morris, 1988: 3) in the best hope of creating and expanding the cramped female space of public speech.

Korean/Cold Wave in a Competitive Economy

The first discourse on the Korean wave is an economic discourse. Most of this discourse is produced by magazines or journals centered on economics
and finance, such as Commonwealth, Cheers, Digital Weekly, Wealth Magazine and the politics and economics pages in newspapers. This discourse addresses itself to the elite of the society, namely, the professional managerial class, the corporate leaders, and the upper-middle and middle class (“About Commonwealth”). As Commonwealth states, its goal is, “together [with the Taiwanese to] create sustainable development for a fair, harmonious, livable and good society” (“Declaration for A Beautiful Vision of Taiwan in 2020”). It appeals to “gentleness and rationality” as the basis for “adopting caring and practical action, in the hope of lifting the quality of its people, solidifying social consensus, and progressing forward together with Taiwan” (“About Commonwealth”). On the one hand, the target readers are to be informed of worldly affairs so that they become cosmopolitan citizens; on the other hand, this worldly knowledge in turn positions the readers as the elite who are then endowed with the responsibility in shaping the future of society. Positioned as both global and national citizen, this reader identity is mainly defined through its relationship with the economy. Issues that are repeatedly addressed include “what is going on globally?” “How does this global process affect our nation?” “What should we do as a nation to survive in the global world?”

Informed by middle-class morality and decorum, the economic/citizen discourse produced and circulated for this class emphasizes rationality and places itself in the sphere of “civil society” whose position is to regulate the state of its economic and political policies, as in “During the past, we have played a significant role in shaping the government’s decision-making process” (“About Commonwealth”). The role of the “civil society” should be marked as it is only through the use of the rhetoric of civil society — that is, the rhetoric of social responsibility as citizenship — that allows the (economic) speaking subject to mask himself as national citizen/subject. The rhetoric of social responsibility — such as “create a ... livable and quality society” and “lifting the quality of its people” — functions as a veneer, masking the hidden abode of production/exploitation. As Stabile comments, “the marketing of social responsibility works mainly for those more distant from economic necessity — those more likely to buy into the ideology of the corporation as global citizen” (Stabile, 2000: 199). The “consumerist caste” being addressed here — the managerial professional class — uses this self-presentation as socially responsible, as gentle and rational, to legitimize the superiority of their position not only in the realm of politics and economy, but in the domain of culture. As such, this economic discourse has become the most legitimate and respected discourse — a discourse of and about national progress and national future, hence, national identity.
A typical example of this economic discourse on the Korean wave can be found in the conclusion of “Because of Qing, We Can Step Forward,” originally published in the Economic Times and Commonwealth Magazine:

Qing refers to amicable relationships and ethical relationships. It includes relationships among family members, friends, teachers-students, and even love for the nation and humankind in general. It is qing... that gives new strength to Korean dramas and films and gives birth to the “Korean Wave” in the world. It also gives Koreans “dreams and hope[s],” enabling them to challenge the world...

Looking into the Korean experience necessarily leads us to reflect on our own. The conditions for us to achieve success is not as appalling if we possess a little more qing and tolerance, develop a little more cultural depth and courage for participation in the world as well as a strong will to achieve the best. Among the four little dragons in Asia, Taiwan’s GDP ranks the third, and Korea, the fourth. At the present moment, it’s a tie, but who will win out in the future? (Preface to Rising Korea, 2005: 14)

This text on the Korean wave employs existing discourses in order for it to make sense to its middle-class readers. However, despite its uses of various discourses, all of them narrate Taiwan as a nation in crisis because of its economic situation, and that mode of address, as I will demonstrate later, is masculine and militaristic.

First of all, there is a shared assumption among its addressees that Taiwan and South Korea occupy the same temporality in the global march toward modernization. This “coevalness” (in Fabian’s terms) comes from the addressees’ understanding of their shared historical background with Korea, which refers to both nations’ past histories as influenced by China (Confucianism) and colonized by Japan. Most significantly, the sense of simultaneous temporality is recognized in economic terms, that is, both nations are known as members of the four little dragons, namely, the NICs (Newly Industrialized Countries). This particular way of understanding national history through economic modernization reflects these two nations’ postwar nation-building projects: both use economic development to define the essence of their national identity, thereby legitimizing and masking undemocratic practices. This economic understanding dictates popular thinking about their relations with other nations, with the U.S. and Japan as more advanced, and South Korea as standing in a “tie.” If Japan is the “mother” who gives birth to Taiwan’s modernization project, South Korea becomes a sibling, but this sibling relationship is based, not on mutual care and help, but sibling rivalry, competing for GDP ranking. Hence, the last
sentence. "at the present moment, it's a tie, but who will win out in the future?"

The second discourse adopted here is the discourse of globalization — that the sibling rivalry between Taiwan and Korean has intensified as a result of the recent processes of globalization. The discourse of globalization deserves a whole chapter; here, I will briefly map out how and what globalization discourses get localized as popular memory and how it is articulated through the Korean wave to warn the Taiwanese public of the urgency to join the globalization march. Globalization is a transnational discourse which travels through multi-channels for its dispersal and effective performance. In addition to establishing management firms and workshops which translates Western, capitalist ethos to discipline local subjects and subjectivities (Ong, 2006), there is a proliferation of translation of books written by Western economists. In this type of discourse, globalization is endowed with an agency of its own — it moves by itself and is inevitable and irreversible:

Like [unstopable] water flowing through natural geographies, corporations and capital also flow with natural trends in the global economy. The government's responsibility is to create a good environment for corporate investments. If you stop the corporations from leaving [the nation], everybody will eventually die on this boat. If you help the corporations to invest abroad, maybe they will come back and save the economy (Wu, 2001a:61).

Here, globalization is metaphorized as a natural process — as "flowing water," "sea wave" (Wu, 2001a:54), or even as "the invasion of the third wave of the tsunami" (Song, 2005: 107) — beyond human control. What humans can do is to follow wherever capital flows, to go against "nature" is to look for death. The flow of capital as a product and process of human labor, as a man-made flow sustaining unequal relationships between the rich and the poor is constructed as a natural process which cannot be changed or stopped. It is "not a choice, but a reality" (Chu, 2005: 148).

While the globalization discourse travels cross national boundaries like a "wave," globalization as an economic process also "flattens out" the world (Chu, 2005:142). It deterritorializes and reterritorializes, namely, it breaks down all national boundaries and reconstitutes new boundaries along monetary lines. Globalization flattens the world into a space of equal competition, with the result of dividing the world into winners and losers. "Flatness" characterizes the recent globalization trend. It allows people in every corner of the world to cooperate or compete at a new level. Technological, economic, and political revolutions are breaking down all
kinds of barriers and boundaries, a flattened world is a world of equal competition" (ibid: 142). In this competitive world, successful businessmen become the heroes of this age — their wealth and power can surpass that of a nation (Wu, 2001b: 59). This individualizing rhetoric works on two levels — on one level, it makes business a site of spectacle; it makes ordinary, boring business activities and tradings an exciting space where major action takes place (Grace, 1993); on another level, it demands that individuals be solely responsible for their success or failure in the global economy. Thus hundreds of articles are about how to manage and produce a self that is conducive to the use of the economy. To survive the global economy, one must compete with others. Military metaphors are used to describe the business world as a "battlefield" (Wu, 2001b: 61) and the end result is only a matter of "winning and losing" (Wu, 2001b: 62). Military terms such as “deployment,” “control,” “management,” “new strategic thinking,” “invasion,” “bravery,” “mobility,” “monopolize resources”, “competition,” “competitive power,” and “risk-taking” (Wu, 2001: 48–49) are often invoked to describe the business world, making it a spectacle of warfare where heroes win out with honor and enemies die hard. The use of military metaphors intensifies the urgency for competition and turns it into a matter of survival: “The globalization wave makes a stranger thousands of miles away a competitor, vying for the same rice-bowl [job]” (Lu, 2005).

While winners are singled out as the exemplars of the new age, ordinary people constantly walk on the fine line between success and failure. Many articles discuss the dim future of ordinary people as a kind of cautionary tale to warn them to ameliorate themselves with new technical know-how and to engineer themselves into a new kind of corporate individual. These cautionary tales include objective and subjective survey of the economic reality in Taiwan, such as “The Rise or Disappearance of Your Jobs?” (Wu Wangu, 2005), “How Do Your Jobs Disappear?” (Lu, 2005), “There is No Future for the People” (Li: 72), and “Globalization: Emptification?” (Wu, 2001a). In these articles, the downside of globalization as experienced by the majority of the middle class is depicted: “Our economy is declining and life becomes more and more difficult, the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing, as well as the intensifying ethnic conflicts and the worsening of life quality. Moreover, Taiwan is being isolated from the world, it is disappearing from the world map” (Li, 2005: 72–74). This grim “reality” of Taiwan’s economy is likened to “a swordsman without Kung-fu [another military metaphor] in the chilly winter.” “Its competitive power deteriorates in the blink of an eye … Faced with the competition from around the world, what kind of strategic deployment can Taiwan’s corporations use?” (Wu, 2001a: 52)
The globalization discourse circulated in Taiwan creates a new kind of belonging centered on corporations and corporate leaders, transforming the previous state-centered national belonging. The story presented here makes corporations and corporate leaders the agents of history, rescuing the Taiwanese from the sinking boat/nation and leading them to the next century. As such, ordinary individuals are responsible for making themselves useful for corporations in a competitive world, as in "increase in one's lifetime employability" (Song, 2005: 113) — one has to actively make oneself wanted by the corporations so that one can participate in the corporate war to save the nation. However, this organization of new belonging does not work through eliminating the nation-state, but laterally through transforming the nation-state to the service of corporations. This new corporate belonging as national belonging does not meet much resistance from the nation-state or the people as Taiwan's national identity has been built upon its economic development as a way to suppress political dissidents during the KMT ruling. As such, economic nationalism lives on, now via the heroic lives of those corporate leaders.

One way to find the global niche to save the economy is through developing cultural creative industries. The development of the creative industry, or the use of culture as a resource for the development of the economy is not specific to Taiwan's economic strategy in the global economy, but as part of, albeit a significant part of the transnational globalization discourse. In this discourse, "culture is invested in, distributed in the most inclusive ways, used as an attraction for capital development and tourism, as the prime motor of the culture industries and as an inexhaustible kindling for new industries dependent on intellectual property" (Yudice, 2003: 3-4). One special feature of contemporary globalization is its transformation of the meanings of culture as uplift, tradition, distinction, or a whole way of life to culture as resource for profit-making (Yudice, 2003). Following capital flow, this concept of culture travels speedily to many countries, changing their cultural policies, including Taiwan and South Korea.

In the context of Taiwan, the turn toward the cultural economy marks the shift in the state's direction of cultural policy from the Cultural Production Industry (Wenhu Chuyi) in 1995 which views culture as central to identity politics to the Cultural Creative Industry (Wenhu Chuangyi Chuyi) in 2000 which treats culture as an economic resource. The former defines culture as rooted in the local community and the traditional way of life, and thus is seen as central to the formation of Taiwanese consciousness. This view of culture coincides with, and is part of the Ben-tu-hua (Nativization) movement in the early to mid-1990s. However, as the velocity of globalization intensifies,
culture is emptied of its original meaning, and replaced by the sign economy — any sign that can be traded with surplus value is defined now as culture (Wang, 2005). The Korean wave takes place in Taiwan at a time when the meaning of culture is in the process of shifting toward an economic-based definition in framing new cultural policies. Hence, many of the discussions used the Korean wave as a reference point to think about the cultural policies in Taiwan.

In this discourse, the popularity of Korean dramas and movies is not only seen as the successful product of the government’s cultural policy but also as Koreans’ use of traditional culture to sell. Cho points out that around 1994, the Korean government and businesses began to engage in a process of “understanding” Korean culture through new narratives of “Korean-ness” as a response to globalization. These narratives include the revival of Confucianism and the revival of popular folk culture through the concept of “han” (Cho, 1999). These two narratives have also informed how media narrate Korean-ness in Taiwan. In general, the Confucian tradition is constructed as a part of Korea’s roots, a root that Koreans carry into the future. The rediscovery of Confucian tradition is seen as a “consumer need” in a lost, modernized world where tradition and filial piety have lost their values. Hence, “qing” and “filial piety” are seen as Korea’s traditional philosophies which give Korean dramas an edge in the global economy: “Koreans have a lot of qing and they are not afraid to express it, they are willing to sacrifice for love and family without regret” (Li and Sun: 193). “Han” — a product of colonization — has also shaped Koreans’ persevering, tenacious, aggressive, and competitive personality (Li: 140): “when you are determined to do something, you will always do everything you can to achieve the best result ... This is the Korean spirit — never give up easily, never stop in the middle, always persevere and be optimistic (Di, Li, and Lyu: 74–75).

These two narratives about Korean-ness — Confucian tradition and Han — are constructed as the key ingredients of Korean culture which lead to the economic success of the Korean wave. These discourses of Korean-ness are employed in the quote above not only to inform Taiwanese middle-class readers about the reasons of Korean’s success, but also to situate them within the frame of economic globalization where competition is the rule of the game. By combining these three discourses in the quoted text above — Korea as a rival sibling nation, Korea as a competitor/enemy in the global economy, Korean-ness as competitive, persevering, and tough — a new sense about self and (Korean) other is created. Through the creation of a picture of the global economy as a place for winners only and Koreans as tough competitors
with the knowledge of soft sell, we, the Taiwanese, facing our own economic decline, need to unite as a nation (with corporate leaders as the guiding light) so that our national/economic place in the world map won’t be replaced by Korea.

In theorizing about the emotion of belonging (to a community, a nation), Ahmed points out that any form of belonging requires, first, the creation of an imagined other who threatens the lives of ordinary subjects (hate); second, the creation of a community through the mobilization of hate via a process of difference and displacement — a process of expressing love for the community. Such emotions of love and hate, dis-identification and belonging are economic — “they circulate between signifiers in a relationship of difference and displacement” (Ahmed, 2001: 11). The creation of a sense of a nation in crisis poses the ordinary subjects, the middle-class readers, as under threat. Their jobs are in danger of being restructured and replaced as in “There Is No Future for the People” (Li, 2005). With the use of military metaphors in creating an enemy as anybody outside the boundary of the nation, and Koreans as tough competitors in the battlefield, the sense of masculine competition becomes intensified. Further colored by a historical understanding of sibling rivalry, the Korean wave is now being marked as a threatening other, endangering the future livelihood of the nation, as in “Taiwan Drowned by Korean Wave” (Lin, 2001: 98). Hence, the adoption of the term “the invasion of the Korean wave” in popular use, which also puns with “the invasion of the cold wave” — a cold front threatening the security of Taiwan’s economic position in the world. These notions of “cultural invasion” (Lin, 2001: 100) inspire many articles to encourage a “fighting back” attitude: “If Koreans Can Do It. Why Can’t the Taiwanese?” (Li, 2004: 116); “The War to Fight Back Korea [against economic deficit] Awaits Our Effort” (Wang Chun-rui, 2004).

Despite the rhetoric to interpellate national citizens with global vision, the citizens who are being addressed are gendered and class-based. The mode of address — “gentleness and rationality” — is abstract(ed) (elite) male speech which denies bodies and emotions. Its rhetoric, though “rational” and “moral,” often employs military metaphors to legitimize a competitive way of life in the global age. This masculine discourse, through middle-class decorum and social responsibility, constitutes the majoritarian discourse in the elite, male-centered public sphere, with national citizens as its addressees. Coexisting with this discourse, but situated in the less privileged public sphere is another masculine discourse which articulates the Korean wave as cultural nationalism. But this cultural nationalism is soon subsumed under the economy. I will use the rap song “The Invasion of the Korean Wave”
performed at Tai-ke Rock Concert to mark Bae Yong-jun's visit to Taiwan as the primary text of my analysis.

Rap(p)ing Korean Wave

Tai-ke (Taiwanese Guest) Rock Concert made their debut performance on the day Bae Yong-jun came to Taiwan to promote his new movie, *April Snow*. While the media entertainment pages were filled with Bae's fans welcoming him at the airport and wildly following him everywhere he went, another headline, though much smaller, hit Taiwan's intellectual circle: “Tai-ke Rocker Chang Zhen-yue Swears at Bae Yong-jun” (Liberty Times, 20 Aug 2005); “Tai-ke Pissed by the Korean Wave, Singing Out Bae Yong-jun as the Target of Foul Language” (China Times, 20 Aug 2005). These headlines immediately triggered a cultural debate on the meanings of Tai-ke and Taiwanese-ness. As such, the discussions soon moved from the entertainment pages to newspaper forums, editorials, literary supplements, and literary/intellectual magazines such as *Elite Book Reviews*. Workshops and academic conferences were also organized to discuss this Tai-ke phenomenon. These debates are articulated into two domains — economic nationalism and cultural nationalism, though both of them converge at the end under the logic of economy. In elevating itself to a debate about economic, cultural, national identity in the public sphere, vulgar bodies and languages that were central to this phenomenon were erased from discussion. I will start with the lyrics of the rap which triggered the event.

The Invasion of the Korean/Cold Wave

When I come to Taiwan, I ask myself whether there is hip-hop made in Taiwan for export, the answer is no. Why? When I turn on television, there is various hip-hop music which looks like Chinese but sounds like an-ya-ha-sa-ya [the incomprehensible sound of Korean language]. Strange! Why do you buy Korean music when it is just incomprehensible

Recently, I get colds easily with running noses because of the frequent invasion of the cold/Korean wave. Taiwanese are fools. Korean singers in Taiwan earn easy money. Pop idol singers only need to have sunny smiles and charms like the boys from next door. Their lyrics are like farts. Tell me why you like them. Bae Yong-jun is not even half as handsome as Wu Bai ["the king of Tai-ke"]

F*** your mother's c***, F*** your mother's c***, F*** Bae Yong-jun, F*** Bae Yong-jun! Yuki, A-mei, Coco Lee, s***, s***, s*** ... s*** my d***
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Refrain

The beautiful faces on the screen are killers, easy rhythm and superficial lyrics putrefy the heart. Painting peace as a veneer of the world, indulging in romantic love, the lyrics can't mask the world's injustices. The so-called great love is nothing but whining which makes me a rapper angry with you (Korean singers) like an enemy. Listening to you [Korean singers] sing provokes me to kick you. Your presence/faces cross me just like mine crosses you. Underneath your glamorous appearance, there is no depth. Audiences rush to you without any sense of integrity and distinction. They blindly take whatever you offer just like eating s**t. Are you [Taiwanese audience] willing to be a foolish grandson/scum? ...

F*** f*** f*** f*** f*** f*** ...

What you see on television is only superficial, are you pretending to be a fool or are you a real fool? It's all about love, it's all too fake. Can't stand it. So I have to come forward and swear ... you eat guava/trash everyday, surely someday you'll be fed up with it, you must s**t, your excrement should be from your s**, but for the singers, s**t from the mouth

F*** your mother' c***, f*** your mother's c***, f*** Bae Yong-jun, f*** Bae Yong-jun
Yuki, A-mei, Coco Lee, s*** s*** s*** ... s*** my d***
Refrain

A series of binaries, with the subordination of the first term to the second term, are employed here as the underlying structure which allows the audiences to make sense of the song: Korean vs. Taiwanese, pop vs. rock/rap, love vs. politics, surface vs. depth, and women vs. men. Korean music is love/pop music without substance/depth and Korean singers only have beautiful faces. But Taiwanese women are fools who fall for appearance and love. Taiwanese rappers, on the contrary, use music to reveal social injustices, but their space as true and serious music is invaded by these superficial, sappy Korean singers. To take back their territory, they assert their masculine authority by f***ing the feminized Korean pop stars: Bae, Clon, and H.O.T. and demanding Taiwanese female pop singers to “s*** my d***” as a proclamation of female pop's submission to male rap/rock, of love to politics.

Through existing gender hierarchy, the Korean wave here is framed as a cold front invading foolish Taiwanese women, employing the weapon of love, smiles, and good looks, and causing Taiwanese men to sneeze with running noses. The addressees of this song are obviously those discriminating male audiences (mostly young men) who know the differences between good rap and bad pop. Scatology (the use of obscene words) is intentionally
employed to convey rap’s masculine power over feminine pop. The employment of scatology, however, can be read as the weapon of the powerless to speak against bourgeois norms of rationality. Kipnis (1992) and Stallybrass and White (1986) point out that there is a “transcoding between bodily and social topography, a transcoding which sets up a homology between the lower bodily stratum and the lower social classes.” “The transcoding between the body and the social sets up the mechanisms through which the body is a privileged political trope of the lower social classes, and through which bodily grossness operates as a critique of dominant ideology.” If the power of disgust is “predicated on its opposition from and to high discourses, themselves prophylactic against the debasement of the low (the lower classes, vernacular discourse, low culture, s**t ...)” (Kipnis: 376), then the transgressional power of this rap needs to be situated in its opposition to and from the “gentle and rational” mode of address (including gender civility) that the middle and professional managerial class set up as the norm.

To understand the transgression of this song as powerless against bourgeois rationality, I will route through the context of the alternative music scene in Taiwan. Alternative music in Taiwan emerged in the late 1980s with the hit compilation “Song of Madness” by Blacklisted Workshop. “Song of Madness” was seen as the product of the “golden ten-year social movements” in Taiwan — the burgeoning of women’s movements, environmental movements, and democratic movements in 1980s Taiwan. Directly attacking the KMT government for erasing Taiwan’s history and language, the compilation used Taiwanese, the forbidden language before the lift of martial law, rather than the official Mandarin, and adopted the genre of rap, to explicitly criticize local politics and address the concerns of the lower class (Lin, 2003).

The critical spirit caught the attention of the intellectual circle and soon was expanding its market to the young generation. In the early 1990s, Lin Chiang’s hit song, “Marching Forward,” marked the mainstreaming of songs in the Taiwanese language. However, unlike the previous alternative scene which emphasized its critical spirit toward politics, this song expressed the young generation’s spirit of marching forward. Wu Bai followed Lin Chiang and became the next popular singer by incorporating rock to his music. Wu Bai’s Taiwanese accent and his masculine stage performance, as opposed to the gentle, sappy, Mandarin pop performance, marked him “the king of Tai-ke.” However, as songs in the Taiwanese language have gone into the mainstream, their alteritness — using the Taiwanese language as a tool of political critique — which is central to this genre has also changed. Instead, alterativity is characterized by its anti-mainstream, that is, anti-pop, ideology. The “alternative mainstream” music expresses disdain for Mandarin
pop through rocking, rapping, and celebrating “individuality” or “self-expression” (ziwe zhuzhand).

The recent singers, such as M.C. Hot Dog and Chang Chen-yue (the singers who rapped “The Invasion of the Korean Wave” at the Tai-ke concert), belong to this alternative mainstream scene. Tailored for the younger generation, these singers mix languages — English, Mandarin and Taiwanese (Holo) — to sing about the life experiences of urban male teenagers, such as taking on part-time jobs, the pressure of entrance exams, the desire and fun of “getting chicks” (ba mei), male bonding, street life, and so on. Unlike their counterpart rappers in the U.S. who address the poverty and crime of the underclass, these bands emphasize the spirit of “individuality” — in particular, teenage rebellion against conformity to parental and school authority, but keeping the misogynist attitude intact. In the case of M.C. Hot Dog and Chang Zhen-yue, they intentionally take on the Eminem-style in-your-face confrontation as their expression of individuality (Li Shan, 1998). They swear at pop singers and anything that is considered “mainstream” commercial success, including bourgeois ideal beauties such as Lin Chi-ling and Peggy Chen.

If the employment of scatology is read as transgression, its transgression is mostly about middle-class youths’ rebellion against parental and school authority. However, that transgression has also to be framed within the previous discourse of globalization and economic nationalism which sets up Korea as a rival in the global economy, taking up resources and thus, threatening Taiwan’s future. With the circulation of the discourse of the nation in crisis, teenagers are uncertain about where their future lies. Rather than taking the advice of studying hard and equipping themselves with the ability of “lifetime employability” as middle-class adults inform them, they use their only resources — their bodies and penises — to assert their symbolic power through f***ing the Korean stars and those women who fall for them. And the f***ing intentionally takes on a form of noise — as opposed to the genteel and rational mode of address that requires the abstraction of the body — shouting, screaming, sweating, wild dancing, rowdy clapping. Instead of “reasoning,” f***ing (Koreans) becomes an affective mode of collective bodily movement, an affective mode of collective belonging.

However, as part of the Tai-ke concert, with Wu Bai as the organizer, this low discourse on the lower body stratum with much excrement and fluid gets eliminated and recontextualized within a high discourse of national identity. Because of the historical roots of alternative music which is associated with the rediscovery of Taiwanese consciousness and the political critique of the KMT ideology, the cultural debate triggered by the f***ing of the
Korean wave gets articulated to a discussion on the meaning of Tai-ke — what it means to be Taiwanese and what Taiwanese culture is — within domestic ethnic/class conflicts. The North Club (Bei She) points out that Tai-ke is a debased term for the Taiwanese because it carries the historical trauma of denigration that the mainlanders (wai shenren) had imposed on the Taiwanese in subordinating them through culture (W.C Yang, 2003; C.Z. Yang, 2005). Wu Bai and many other critics, on the other hand, argue that with the commercial success, Tai-ke’s negative meaning is subverted and is now given a positive touch to mean “coolness” and confidence (Wu, 2003). The two opposing groups represent two kinds of national imagination, with Wu Bai’s economic nationalism taking center stage.

Scatology here, in particular, the rhetorical employment of male sexual organs, is constructed — through the eradication of vulgar language in public forums and the use of rational, analytical language — to symbolize the lowliness of the Taiwanese (guest) as opposed to the highness of the mainlander (host), and that lowliness is considered as the product of the KMT ruling which privileges mainlanders through the exploitation, politically, culturally, and economically, of the Hoklo and Hakka groups. As such, scatology is established as the essence of Taiwanese culture — something that needs to be redeemed through the subversion of its historically associated humiliation. The redemption of scatology as a form of national culture is made through its articulation as economic nationalism — the dominant discourse of the bourgeoisie. I will use the definition made by “the king of Tai-ke,” Wu Bai, to explain the process of “subversion” (a term used by many critics in Taiwan) or “redemption”:

I have always hoped to dance my soul on the world stage, and the soul here refers to the Tai-ke spirit. Its essence is to stand on our land and ground ourselves in what our land supplies us. [This is like] doing stretching exercises. On the one hand, my feet stand tightly on the ground; on the other hand, I let my hands stretch upward and try to transcend my own limitations. ... The Tai-ke concert is trying to create, discover ... the special characteristic and essence of our own culture ... We hope to transform it into a new Cultural Revival Movement. ... (Wu Bai, China Times, 17 Aug 2003)

This quote characterizes Tai-ke music as the direct expression of national culture which is grounded on land and tradition while stretching out to incorporate new elements. This definition reflects the discourse of cultural nationalism since the 1970s which uses “land” to locate Taiwanese
consciousness (as opposed to Chinese consciousness). This land-centered discourse allowed the DPP to develop a new discourse of cultural nationalism — "community of fate" in the late 1980s and early 1990s to incorporate all ethnicities into the nation in order to deflake ethnic conflicts. Since then, this discourse has become the dominant discourse of cultural nationalism — a discourse of multiculturalism, of the fusion of different cultures, grounded in the land of Taiwan (Hsiau, 1999; Hsiau, 2000). However, the attempt to find one’s own culture, as Wu states, is a "pure market concern" to find one’s own niche within the current music market (Wu Bai, *Elite Review*). Liu’s analysis of the Tai-ke phenomenon, which gains much support among the public, also frames it within the discourse of globalization discussed in the previous section:

The emergence of the concept of Tai-ke ... is a brand-name promoted by the market forces ... Multiple media participated in defining this brand-name ... it is the product of their promotion ... What we need to face is competition from Korea, Japan, and India’s culture industries in the Chinese market. The critical winning point is not about the definition of Tai-ke or Taiwaneseess, but about the creation and maintenance of more capital, distribution and promotion ... (Liu, *China Times* 22 Aug 2005).

Here, scatology and Taiwaneseess are articulated — scatology as the essence of *ben-tui* (local) culture — as such, it becomes an asset to be used as a surviving strategy in the global economy. Consequently, the original ethnic/class conflicts are subsumed under this economic urgency as the editorial on “Tai-ke and Korean Wave” advocates: “Tai-ke should avoid ethnic conflicts and learn from Bae Yong-jun, a symbol of qing, which transcends all ethnic conflicts and transforms it into economic advantage” (Editorial, *China Times*, 20 Aug 2005). The potential use of scatology in the rap. “The Invasion of the Korean Wave,” as transgressive of bourgeois public speech, of parental authority, of ethnic/class boundaries gets subsumed under the logic of the economy in the name of national culture. As Yudice observes, “the turn to creative economy evidently favors the professional-managerial class, even as it trades on the rhetoric of multicultural inclusion. Subordinate or minoritized groups have a place in this scheme as low-level service workers and as providers of ‘life-giving’ ethnic and other cultural experiences” (2003: 20). In other words, it is through the buying and selling of minoritized groups’ life experiences in the name of multiculturalism that the creative industry thrives, to the benefit of a few.
Not only is Tai-ke’s experience as a powerless group in the society being traded in the cultural economy, women’s powerless experiences as unhappy housewives are also managed and channeled into profit — the cause of the popularity of the Korean wave. However, before I delve into the third discourse on women as the consumers and participants of the Korean wave, I would like to emphasize the gender politics of these discourses of economic and cultural nationalism. The elite discourse uses a rational and gentle mode of address as its norm, a masculine mode of address that abstracts itself from the lower body stratum (which leaves the brain as the only part allowed in the public sphere) and universalizes itself as the voice of truth. Under the guise of rationality and gentleness, military metaphors are employed to construct a nation in crisis, hence, the urgency for the reformation of national heroes and national citizens. And this urgency is made through constructing Korea as the other — a tough enemy competing for limited global resources.

The second discourse on the Korean wave operates within this framework but deliberately uses the lower body stratum — Taiwanese men’s masculine power to fight the Koreans — as its mode of address. However, the use of bodily excrements and fluids as a mode of speech can only circulate in a sub-public sphere, subordinated to the rational public sphere (hence, its appearance on entertainment pages). However, this mode of address gets elevated to the rational public sphere when rappers, rockers and critics articulate this event to cultural nationalism and economic nationalism, making invisible the use of misogynist language which constitutes the core of this “low” genre. This “low” genre, however, depends upon its subordination of women/pop/love to position its high-ness in the consumption/entertainment space. This means that, both these nationalistic discourses in the rational public sphere and the consumption space leave women with no legitimate place to speak as higher beings.

But it is women who, through their participation in the consumption of Korean dramas, create the Korean wave. How are they positioned in the (sub-) public sphere? How are they spoken about? And how do they speak as subjects? In the next section, I will analyze the third discourse on the Korean wave, mainly, the fan discourse. I will first analyze how they are spoken about in the entertainment pages in the public sphere and then, discuss their own form of address within fans themselves. I argue that this feminine fan discourse is contained to the genre of complaint in the public sphere, disturbing but at the same time affirming the dominance of the masculine rational public sphere.
Warner (1992) points out the inherent contradiction within the bourgeois public sphere — that with its minoritizing strategy through the abstraction of the bourgeois body, the bourgeois public sphere always fails to keep its promises, leaving minoritized bodies to seek consumption for the fulfillment of these promises. However, in the case of Taiwan, as discussed in the first section, the rational public sphere itself speaks the language of the economy; that is, there is a conflation of the public sphere with the economic sector. **Within this context, the commercial sector actually plays a double role** — on the one hand, through the rational mode of address, it constructs Korean drama fans as a spectacle — a surface, a carnivalesque image — to be watched and consumed by the rational public; on the other hand, it provides fantasies and dreams for those Korean drama fans whose frustration comes mostly from the failed promises of the rational public sphere. Debord discusses the spectacle as a "social relationship among people mediated by images," which provides legitimation for the domination of the ruling classes over the masses (Debord, 1994:12). What Debord proposes is that images are ideological tools which play a double function — on the one hand, as pure surface, they mask their mode of production which produces unequal social divisions; on the other hand, they channel proletariats' real interests into the consumption of images and commodities. Taking this double notion theorized by Warner and Debord, but re-reading it through Mulvey's (1992) women-as-spectacle (which emphasizes woman as the object and man as the subject of gaze), I want to emphasize the gendered dimension of spectacle which, on the one hand, constructs Korean drama fans as the other — a spectacle for the consumption of the general public; on the other hand, a spectacle that serves as an ideological tool that channels women's gendered harm into consumption.

I will first provide an account of the Korean drama fans being spoken about in the public space as spectacle of the Other to be consumed by the general public. I will use the media coverage of Bae’s visit to Taiwan to promote *April Snow* as an example to illustrate this point. On 20, 21, and 22 August in 2005, all the major newspapers in Taiwan, including *Apple Daily, China Times, United Daily*, and *Liberty Times*, used the bulk of their entertainment page to cover this event. The coverage was image-centered. Different sized brightly colored pictures were arranged disorderly to create a sense of uncontrollability and excitement, like a noise disrupting the banality of everyday life. Even the headlines were colored bright red, blue, green, and yellow (as a contrast to the sobriety of the serious economics and politics
pages). These noisy pictures, which are about and of the body, can be divided into two categories. The first category contains the bodies of the irrational and overjoyed fans crowding and squeezing, even stepping on each other, competing for Bae’s attention, or better yet, his physical touch. Headlines such as “Fans Thrilled Out of Control to Have Handsome Bae’s Hugs” (Liberty Times, 22 Aug 2005), “Crossing the Ocean to Pursue Bae Yong-jun, Fans Offer Loads of Gifts” (Liberty Times, 20 Aug 2005), “People Wall Crumbled Down with the Arrival of Handsome Bae: 66 Year-old Grandma Tripped in the Crowds at the Bottom of Human Pyramid but Still Insisted on Chasing after Bae” (China Times, 20 Aug 2005), “Come and Take a Picture with the Water Cup that Bae Just Drank From” (China Times, 20 Aug 2005). “Hard to Say Good-bye to Handsome Bae, the Airport Is Wild and Chaotic” (Liberty Times, 22 Aug 2005). These headlines, with the use of different colors, while describing the popularity of Bae, convey the craziness and childishness of these Korean drama fans. Both the headlines and pictures make these fans and their behavior into a spectacle for the consumption and entertainment of the general public. However, with the spectacularization of these images as out of control, these female Korean drama fans are also constructed as the Other of bourgeois rationality—a bunch of brainless bodies driven by desires, fantasies, and illusions.

The second category of pictures are mostly of Bae’s body—his close-ups, his clothes, his handshakes with fans, his every gesture and movement, and most important of all, his smiles. Captions which facilitate the anchoring of the meanings of images emphasize fans’ carnivorous desires for Bae’s body. A few examples will suffice. The first example is a series of pictures and corresponding captions demonstrating the fans’ ecstasy in gazing at Bae’s body. The first picture is a close-up of Bae pouting: “God! Handsome Bae’s small pouting mouth.” This is followed by another close-up of his legs and ankles: “Look, without wearing socks, Bae is still very cute.” The third picture of the series is a close-up of his torso, with a bit of his belly exposed: “Wow! Wow! Wow! Handsome Bae exposes his small belly” (Liberty Times, 20 Aug 2005). The second example also comprises of a series of pictures: the first one is a full-length photo of Bae, with an inset featuring Bae’s calves and shoes, with the caption reading: “Oh, oh, the shoelace is loose! Wish I could tie it for him.” Following this picture is a close-up of Bae drinking water, with the caption: “His pose for drinking water is ‘super-elegant’!” This is followed by a picture of him eating: “Look at him eating, it’s / he’s delicious.” The final picture in this series is also a close-up of him, making with a V sign: “Handsome Bae reveals his secret code!” (Liberty Times 22 Aug 2005).
Here we have to pay attention to the addressee of these images as these images play the double function of subordination and satisfaction. While these entertainment pages circulate along with the serious pages among the general public, they are also pitched toward women. Hence, the chaos the first category of images creates — through the descriptive modes of address, coupled with frivolous visual and verbal languages — produces the effect of this page as subordinate to the seriousness of political and economic affairs, and women as subordinate to men because of their irrationality and their concern about triviality. The second category of images speaks of intimacy among women. It draws from the genre of female fan speech — confessions of bodily sensations in encountering their idols. In this type of speech, bodily touch and sensations are emphasized such as body contact, hand-shakes, exchanges of eye contact, throbbing and pumping heart ("my heart pumps from putang putang to hang bang hang," as one fan confesses), or the feeling that the brain is blank, or that things are out of control. Through their direct mode of address (confession) and their emphasis on bodily sensations, these images speak directly to the desires of female Korean drama fans — particularly their sexual desires for men — like women’s pajama party talk. This private speech, while satisfying women’s private desires, is also relegated to the space of the low in the public sphere because of its violation of the convention of female respectability/morality — the only mode of address allotted to women in the rational public sphere.

However, rather than the "$\text{f}***\text{ing experience}" that the minoritized men invoke as the expression of their transgression through their masculine power, the female fans, on the other hand, frame these bodily talks within heterosexual romantic longings, as in "He [Bae] smiles at me, just like Joon-sang [the male protagonist] in Winter Sonata." This particular framing emphasizes that women’s emotional needs have to be attentively looked after, to be cared for with love and gentleness by men — a desire that emerges out of men’s "$\text{f}***\text{ing}" carelessness. A female complaint channeled into escape through the vicarious living of a Korean dramatic fantasy.

In fact, unlike the rational economic discourse on the Korean wave which uses qing (interpreted through the frame of Confucian ethics) to explain the popularity of Korean dramas, many popular discourses (including television news which is the exemplar of Taiwan’s lowness) and fan discourses acknowledge that it is gender injury that triggers the Korean wave. However, this gender harm is used as a form of economic resource for capital gain — a point echoing Yudice’s observation on how minority’s experiences of subordination get used for capital gain as a way of managing populations. I will use one example to illustrate how gender injury is contained to a form of female complaint through women’s genre of romance.
ET Mall (the largest television shopping channel in Taiwan) recently shot a commercial, “The Blissful Smile” (xingshujingshao), inviting Bae to be their channel’s spokesman. This commercial, a co-production between Korea and Taiwan, claims ET Mall, demonstrates Bae’s “brand-name smile and amorous gaze” (shengjing yanshen). “Combining all the elements of Korean dramas that Taiwanese women desire, this is a mini-Korean drama which transforms Bae into a persistent lover who silently and quietly cares about his first love. As long as he sees his girl friend smile, he feels contented” (ET Mall, “The Blissful Smile Blog”). Starting with Bae’s smile, followed by daisy fields and then sunlight shining through tree leaves onto his face, the commercial sets its tranquil and romantic tone while at the same time fulfilling its promise of giving “warmth” to their audience through their delivery of Bae’s sunny smile. Accompanied by Michael Jackson’s “Too Young” as its theme music (sang by a female vocalist), the commercial uses a man’s voice — Bae’s monologue of his interior desire — to narrate a love story. The story emphasizes loving and caring at a distance. Through the secret delivery of daisies to his first love every week (who is now married and has one little girl), Bae is contented, from a distance, to see his first love’s smile, and because of her smile, his love persists as well as his delivery of flowers. The commercial ends with Bae’s narration: “For the past four years, as long as I can see her happy smile, I feel blissful. I don’t need any reason, for the promise of her smile, I will see you again next week, for the next ten years, with determination and persistence. Just like we are determined, with all our heart, to see your smile — ET Mall.”

That “love at a distance” — of being cared for from a distance — is the safest kind of love that women can afford without disrupting their marriage or the normality of their lives — taking care of children, cooking, cleaning, working, and shopping. Moreover, this family space which is safe-guarded by the distance of love is also a national space — with a Korean man’s love at a distance, the sanctity of male domination within the “domestic” space is also preserved. This commercial, reflective of the “essence” of Korean dramas, transforms women’s unhappiness with their husbands in the space of the family — the foundation of a nation — to an imaginary world of love — which, of course, can be obtained through consumption (of ET Mall commodities). Berlant (1988) calls this the mode of containment which transforms women’s speech about their rage into the genre of complaint. The female complaint exemplifies the social contradictions that women face in a phallocentric culture — that culture channels women’s sexual and emotional desire and allegiance to men (especially about the promise/lie that marriage is the end and means to women’s happiness) while at the same time denies women power and privilege in the public sphere. The female complaint serves as a mediation of
this contradiction — that women use this cultural form to speak out their rage against the patriarchal lie in the public sphere while at the same time this rage gets circumscribed as a speech not to be taken seriously. This female complaint is an "aesthetic witnessing to women’s injury":

To the extent that women employ the complaint as a mode of self-expression, it is an admission and a recognition both of privilege and powerlessness: it is a powerful record of patriarchal oppression, circumscribed by a knowledge of women’s inevitable delegitimation within the patriarchal public sphere. The a priori marking of female discourse as less serious is paradoxically the only condition under which the complaint mode can operate as an effective political tool: the female complaint allows the woman who wants to maintain her alignment with men to speak oppositionally but without fear for her position within the heterosexual economy — because the mode of her discourse concedes the intractability of the (phallocentric) conditions of the complaint’s production. (Berlant 1988: 243)

The Korean drama fans, when spoken about in the public sphere, are represented as wild and irrational for the consumption of the general public. At the same time, their private talk in the bedroom — with an emphasis on the language of bodily sensations and sexual desires — is also spectacularized, with the effect of reinforcing the myth of women being controlled by bodies — a brainless being. With this antinomy between women and rationality, women’s outrage against gender injury gets channeled and translated, through the genre of romance, into female complaint which at the end, safeguards patriarchal order.

**Conclusion: Creating a Space for Women in the Public Sphere**

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate the gendered nature of the public sphere which leaves women no place to speak as authorities. Through deconstructing the meanings of the Korean wave articulated in Taiwan, I point out that, the most dominant discourse of the Korean wave is the discourse of economic nationalism which uses a rational and gentle mode of address to legitimize its domination through the rhetoric of the nation. However, this national space belongs to a few elite men only. The second discourse of the Korean wave, despite its employment of scatology, is elevated to the debate about cultural nationalism and circulated within the respected cultural space for (male) intellectuals. Male vulgarity is redeemed through its articulation
as the essence of Taiwanese identity and is subsumed under the logic of the
economy when articulated to the discourse of economic nationalism.

These two discourses on the Korean wave, articulated through the logics
of the nation, the economy, and their convergence, leaves women no place
to speak. The third discourse, a discourse about women spoken about and
speaking out, unfortunately, relegates women's speech to a genre of complaint.
Unlike male vulgarity in the public space which uses the nation as its
redemption (either cultural nationalism or economic nationalism), women's
injury gets circumscribed within the national space of the heteronormative
family, which excludes them as active participants of the nation. Hence, they are
deprived of the hope of redemption as national citizens, except through
consumption.

But if feminists' work is to "transform discursive material that, in its
untransformed state, leaves a woman no place from which to speak, or nothing
to say" (Freedman, quoted in Moris 1988: 3), what can be done here? Moris
speaks of this transformation of existing masculine discursive material as a
problem of "rhetoric," of thinking about "the production of a speaking-
position as a matter of strategies of reference" (1988: 7). If so, what speaking
positions or references can feminists offer on the Korean wave for
transformation?

Heidegger's reading of technology might be a starting point to think
about the strategies of transformation. Heidegger defines technology as
"enframing" (Ge-stell) which embodies two paradoxical meanings. The first
essence of technology refers to a kind of instrumentality which orders every
way we live, driving out any other possible way of living, thinking, and
revealing. "Enframing means the gathering of that setting-upon which sets
upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real in the mode of
ordering, as standing reserve" (1977: 20). At the same time, Heidegger also
reminds us of the other essence of technology as located in the realm of poiesis
which "lets what presences come forth into unconcealment" (1977: 21). That
is, through the second essence of technology — of bringing forth that which
is already ordered into appearance/unconcealment — that the instrumental
nature of the first essence of technology can be undermined. He situates that
space of transcendence in the realm of art. Yudice uses the first notion of
technology to describe the way culture is made into "standing reserve," always
available for ordering, for instrumental use. He argues that "culture as a
resource" has become the episteme for the postmodern times, even art itself
has become a resource for economic ordering. As such, there is no
transcendental space to speak against such ordering. Given technology's
double meaning, rather than look for a transcendental space for its subversion,
that space should be immanent within technology itself. Hence, Berlant, though coming from a different perspective, argues for a kind of critique within technological space: "Rather, feminist populism will be [sic] emerge from the engagement of the female culture industry with the patriarchal public sphere, the place where significant or momentous exchanges of power are perceived to take place" (1988: 240).

I argue that female complaint should be the space for us to think about transforming existing discursive material in order to open up speaking positions for women. In my analysis, it is the logic of the economy — the space of technology, of instrumentality — that dictates what the public sphere should be while at the same time providing a safety valve for its failed promises. As such, this is the space that we need to work with to bring forth into unconcealment what has been ordered. The logic of the economy plays two hands. On the one hand, it constructs a hierarchy among different discourses circulated and addressed to different publics. Through the rhetoric of the nation, the logic of the economy, in the name of the bourgeois public sphere, elevates itself to the national space, designating itself as the guiding light of the nation. This self-designation is made through the employment of a particular mode of address — rationality and gentleness — which it also constructs as the superior speech mode in the public sphere. Male/masculine vulgarity, as such, is excluded from this mode of speech. However, as a form of private locker room talk made public, male bodily vulgarity is elevated to the rhetoric of transgression in the national space of conflicting ethnic/class interests. The logic of the economy exploits this male scatology as transgression for commercial gains while at the same time elevating its status to the space of the national — it turns the debate into a debate about cultural nationalism while using economic nationalism to circumscribe this space of cultural nationalism. Female intimacy/vulgarity, however, takes a very different route. The logic of economy, through the adoption of rationality as the standard public speech, subordinates female vulgarity into irrationality which cannot be redeemed in the national space; at the same time, it exploits women's gender injury as a result of subordination (which the masculine national space fails to address) and circumscribes it into the genre of female complaint.

But as I demonstrate, via Berlant, that female complaint is female outrage and injury made public. Women's resistance potential lies in this outrage. However, if feminist's work is to create speaking positions for women, female complaint as it is cannot be the form to operate through. Rather, it is through the demonstration of the logic of the economy — the ordering of culture into hierarchy and the ordering of minority culture into standing reserve — via different rhetorical modes that subordinates women's speech to triviality.
While minority culture, in this case, women's culture gets technologized into standing reserve, it is this technologization of minority into minority that exposes rationality's façade.

At the same time, feminists need to rewrite women's genre, to open up women's injury to a space exceeding its current enframing within the national space of heteronormativity. The genre of complaint, exemplified by the ET Mall commercial, incorporates women's gender injury into the national space of family — a space of phallocentrism, with the Korean man as a savior only looking and caring from afar while women are commanded to the "s**ing" job! A feminist intervention would have to expose the gender hierarchy that structures the nation and national family, turning women's injury into outrage, breaking apart the national family and extending it to the transnational space. While the national family gives rise to women's emotional attachments to men, women's pajama talk offers the potential for breaking apart the sacredness of the national family which functions as the conditions of its production. In fans' pajama party talk, gender injury and romantic longing (which are two sides of the same coin within the commercial space) get to be expressed through the cutting up of foreign male bodies into fragments (such as Bae's legs, pouting mouth, hand gestures, exposed belly, and so on — as shown in the newspaper entertainment pages analyzed above), but this cutting up of male bodies also functions as a form of sharing and exchange of intimacy among women. For example, a Korean drama fan spoke about her obsession with Bae to me (also a fan of Bae) in an interview: "there is nothing to say about him [my husband]. In reality, [Taiwanese] men can never be like Bae Yong-jun, this is why I like Korean dramas so much ... If you get to see Bae in Korea, touch him for me! Oh, his smile melts my heart ... I can't wait to see more of his body [in the movie Sandal], oh, his naked body is so sexy!"

Within this fan space of pajama talk, the national space of men gets eliminated (out of women's rage for their own men) from the picture, however, the foreign men also get cut up into pieces to be shared (as in "touch him for me") — something that undermines the one-man-one woman romantic ideal that heteronormativity relies on (men are exempt from this though). This subversion of normative heterosexual desire (through dispossession and sharing of male bodies) can be more powerful if we also emphasize the other function of pajama talk — as a space of female intimacy and bonding. This reading of fans' private talk, accompanied by the exposure of the logic of the economy in subordinating this talk to triviality, hopefully, can create a new script for women's speech in the public sphere which challenges the existing discursive references around the Korean wave.