

Embedding Nostalgia: The Political Appropriation of Foreign Comic Book Superheroes in Korea

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Abstract

Comic books have long expressed socio-political concerns and objectives, regardless of their origin. This article examines the political appropriation of foreign comic book superheroes in Korea. By contemplating a range of examples of such forms of appropriation, I show that one and the same foreign superhero can represent different socio-political views, including anti-communism, orientalism, and patriotism. I argue that because they are associated with innocence, superheroes can be used to summon nostalgia and a strong sense of community, even among those who were unexposed or indifferent to them. This strong association with the local culture allows them to be politicized and stands in the way of the icons becoming truly transnational.¹

Keywords: anti-communist, appropriation, comic book, nostalgia, politics, South Korea, superhero, Tokto, webtoon

Introduction

Stories of superheroes are as old as religion, but in the form of comic books their history barely exceeds half a century. Although local heroes continue to exist and occupy a significant share of the market in many countries across Asia, the notion of a superhero has become increasingly associated with the imaginary universes created by DC and Marvel Comics. Icons of these universes have been known throughout Asia for some time. In 1949, Western superheroes began to circulate in Asia for the first time when National Periodicals (later DC Comics) licensed the Japanese publisher Shōnengahōsha-ban to publish translations of Superman.² Similar licenses began to be issued in Indonesia in the 1950s,³ and throughout the region from around the 1970s. In India, American superheroes would captivate local audiences too, but not before Muthu Comics had published translations of Britain's *The Steel Claw* from 1971.⁴

Despite the fairly early date of these forms of cultural exchange, however, Western comics long abounded in ethnic stereotyping. Costello finds that around the time of World War II, the Japanese were commonly portrayed as “nearly subhuman.”⁵ On the cover of *Action Comics* 1:58 from 1943, for example, Superman is depicted turning the presses for a poster with the slogan “Superman says: YOU can slap a Jap.” In a Batman television serial from the same year (dir. Lambert Hillyer), the black-caped crusader and his two-fisted assistant Robin protect America from the threat of the “fiendish, traitorous” Japanese foe Dr. Tito Daka, played by J. Carrol Naish. Apart from being anti-Japanese, the story is strongly anti-immigrant.⁶ In the trailer for the series, in which Batman “nips the most sinister of Nipponese plots,” Naish can be seen putting on a terrible Japanese accent while speaking with a stiff neck and his eyes nearly shut: “I am Dr. Daka, humble servant of his majesty Hirohita ... by divine destiny my country shall destroy the democratic forces of evil in the United States to make way for the new order.”⁷ DC Comics cleaned up the image of its heroes shortly after the war.⁸ Superman would do very well in Japan, even as a live-action television show in the 1950s; but in the 1970s, Japan began to produce animated TV superheroes of its

own.⁹ China, meanwhile, would continue to be depicted as a communist threat for decades. The Mandarin, for instance, the archenemy of Marvel Comics' Iron Man—who was born out of his alter ego's need to escape from the communist Vietnamese leader Wong-Chu—is a Chinese anti-capitalist who in early stories worked for the Chinese communists.¹⁰ Another example is DC Comics' *Wonder Woman* 1:157 (Oct. 1965) in which the giant "Egg Fu" foe makes an attempt to take over the world, while mispronouncing every "r" as "l" in the process.¹¹

In DC and Marvel comics the portrayal of overseas nations has steadily improved over the years, though foreign locations often remain mute settings. Stories set in Asia commonly feature a temple or a high-tech building, with locals either speaking fluent English or making no attempt to communicate in any meaningful way at all. American superheroes therefore continue to be associated with the country's foreign policy, which makes them a hard sell in countries such as China. In recent years this dilemma has been compounded by diminishing sales in the U.S., and this may be why in *Action Comics* 1:900 (2011) Superman renounces his U.S. citizenship explaining that he is "tired" of having his actions "construed as instruments of U.S. policy."¹² In China, where generations have grown up with Chinese and Japanese-style comics, subtle changes in the political views of their foreign heroes will have gone unnoticed. In Hong Kong, Pan-Asia Publications Ltd. brought out a range of DC comics as early as 1973; but in June 2013, protesters at the U.S. consulate rallied support for Edward Snowden carrying, among other things, placards with a mock image of U.S. President Barack Obama in a Captain America suit.¹³

People may not immediately associate comics with politics or nationality, and indeed, many will enjoy them precisely because they are fictional and take their minds off the realities of daily life. But they remain closely tied to politics and the local culture. From the start of the Cold War, the two major superhero comic book publishers have, among others, made efforts to represent and address the entire gamut of social issues that began to ail America, including poverty, gender inequality, drugs and racism.¹⁴ This also applied to superhero comics, some of which also began to promote pacifism and anti-capitalism. The personal

struggles that the new generation of heroes faced in their everyday lives were as significant to the narrative as the evil they fought in costume: many tried to avoid being used for military purposes, many struggled to make a living, and many suffered from physical disabilities or social ineptitudes.¹⁵ Even so, superheroes remain strongly tied to warfare. They are attractive to governments because their narratives clearly distinguish good and evil and because they wield the power to solve international crises.¹⁶ What is more, the extraplanetary origin of many heroes makes them an objective arbiter to the cause, as well as a recognisable metaphor for the unstoppable power of either the military effort, or, as Dittmer posits, moral strength.¹⁷

Despite their socio-political significance, studies of comic books are relatively few in number. The use of comic books to convey political ideologies may be obvious;¹⁸ but as a form of expression, scholars have largely ignored them, which may be because they are unfamiliar with them or, as Bongco argues, because they continue to be associated with “children, adolescents, and the sub-literate.”¹⁹ This article discusses the political appropriation of foreign superheroes in South Korea. By studying the ways in which Koreans have appropriated foreign comic book icons, I demonstrate how informal literature can embed political messages in the minds of its readership. In comics featuring foreign superheroes, in particular, the icons are appropriated to serve local justice. They sometimes require artists to reconceptualise their background and identity so as to increase their appeal with a local readership that is unfamiliar with either the mythical or everyday lives of the heroes,²⁰ but mere translations often suffice. Whereas indigenous heroes tend to be tied to historical events, local myths or rituals, foreign superheroes may be appealing to local readers because they represent a degree of cosmopolitanism, albeit grounded in the cultural capital that the association with the hero’s country of origin generates.²¹ The appeal of foreign superheroes does not lie only in the soft power of their country of origin, but also in their representation of moral justice. When a foreign superhero from a politically opposing nation is employed, readers can imagine that rather than being co-opted, the character has switched sides and given up on the plight of the people in his or her country of origin.

What is more, because of the association of children's toys and narratives with innocence, a superhero can summon feelings of nostalgia, and thus nationalism, even among those who were never attracted or even exposed to a particular character in the past.

Stop the Invaders

In post-liberation Korea, Western culture held considerable appeal. Many Koreans dreamed of a modern, Western-style life with all the luxuries and personal freedoms associated. Presumably during and shortly after the Korean War, Koreans were introduced to Western comics featuring superheroes, soldiers and cowboys, as many such comics began to appear (in Korean) in the 1950s. Before August 1968, when the Korean Children's Comics Screening Committee (*Han'guk adong manhwa yulli wiwŏnhoe*) was established, the South Korean military administrations had established system of censorship that urged artists to adopt anti-communist symbolism and banned depictions of nudity and blood.²² In the 1970s the system of censorship was expanded; and in 1975 a Public Performances Screening Committee (*Han'guk kongyŏn yulli wiwŏnhoe*) was put in charge of the screening of entertainment, including animation. Already in 1951, however, the parody comic *Kim Ilsŏng-ŭi Milshil* (Kim Il Sung's Den) appeared. Another anti-communist comic book that gained much popularity in the same year was Kim Sŏnghwan's *Tot'ori Yong-sa* (Private Misfit). Best known among the vehicles of anti-communist propaganda is, however, the 1978 animated feature *Ttori Changgun* (General Ttori, dir. Kim Ch'ŏnggi), about a boy growing up under North Korea's cruel dictatorship. Products such as these did not simply depict the communists as evil; they also had communists expressing admiration for the South. In the feature *Haejŏt'amhŏm Marin Eksŭ* (Deep-sea Exploration Marine X, dir. Kim Hyŏndong, 1982), for example, a senior North Korean military officer communist party is told off for admiring the enemy for having won the bid to host the 1988 Olympics.²³ Later anti-communist movies include *Super Titan 15* (dir. Pak Sŏngch'ŏl, 1983) and *Robot King Sun Shark* (dir. Pak Sŏngch'ŏl, 1985), about an evil communist foe who bears considerable resemblance to Kim Il Sung. The



Figure 1. A screenshot from *Black Star and Golden Bat* showing the Golden Bat.

latter opens with a live action classroom scene in which the teacher explains to her students that the North Korean regime poses a threat to the peace and stability of the nation.²⁴

Several Western superhero comics were published in Korea over the years, though judging by the quality of the drawing and inking, not all of them were reproduced under license. Superman was first introduced in 1953 in Yi Chonghyŏn's comic book *Hwasŏng-ŭi Ch'oin* (Superman of Transformation). It would have been quite successful, as Yi used a redesigned version of the character for the anti-communist comic *Choguk-ŭi Samnammae* (The Three Brothers from the Homeland) three years later. In 1960, another interpretation of Superman appeared in Kim Suyŏng's *Lucky Boy* series of comic books. In 1970, KBS TV broadcast episodes of the American live-action Batman and animated Spiderman series,²⁵ while illicit copies of Western superheroes continued to circulate. The Golden Bat character appearing in *Kŏmŭn Pyŏl-gwa Hwanggŭm Pakchwi* (Black Star and Golden Bat, dir. Han Hŏnmyŏng, 1979), for example, shares many visual characteristics with the original Batman character (see figure 1) while curiously wielding Superman's powers of flight, superhuman strength and invincibility.

Copyright would not become a matter of concern for Korean comic book publishers until the 1980s. In 1979, the year in which MBC began to broadcast DC Comics' *Super Friends* under the slightly more military title *Syup ŏ T'ŭkkongdae* (Super Squad), a *Syuuup ŏmaen T'ŭkkongdae* comic was published that was amateurishly drawn and featured DC and Marvel Comics characters in the same storyline, many years before this was done by the companies themselves. In the early 1980s, having previously developed a large animation industry for the production of Japanese animation, Korean companies began to receive orders from Marvel Comics for the production of its animation.²⁶ But as in Japan, the impact

of American superheroes remained marginal; manga and their Korean manhwa equivalent have long dominated the local market. Only recently have Koreans taken a more active interest in American superhero narratives due to the success of superhero blockbuster movies.

Marvel Comics considers South Korea a market with considerable potential. The growing interest in Marvel Comics among Koreans has led the company to trial a story in the popular smartphone-ready scroll-down format of webtoons from October 10, 2014. The series, called *Avengers: Electric Rain*, includes a Korean female character named White Fox, an attractive woman with silver-coloured long hair, a little eye mask and disproportionately large breasts, who has the ability to fly and can turn her hands into fiercely powerful claws. Created by Ko Yŏnghun, the character was recently adopted into the regular comic book team of Avengers



Figure 2. A screenshot of the *Avengers: Electric Rain* webtoon showing White Fox.

in the U.S.²⁷ The nine-tailed fox legend on which it is based has a long history in Korea, as well as in the neighbouring countries of Japan and China. According to this, a fox that lives for a thousand years can turn into a creature that is able to freely transform into, for example, a beautiful woman, who often sets out to devour the heart or liver of young men. A horror movie, *Kumiho*, based on this premise was made in 1994 (dir. Pak Hŏnsu), followed by an animated feature film called *Yobi, The Five Tailed Fox* in 2007 (dir. Yi Sŏnggang). Along with a range of TV dramas and comic books these products have served to keep the legend of the fox alive in recent years.

On the webtoon's Daum portal, the reactions to Ko's deal with Marvel Comics have been mixed. While the majority of comments complained about having to pay for the webtoon, others expressed either excitement or concern over Marvel Comics' involvement.

On October 18, 2014, jes said,

“Please stop this series ... Marvel Comics are going to start in Korea at your expense.”

On October 25, 2014, Yi Chŏnghwan responded,

“The Avengers are really interesting. I have no idea why so many people are against it ... Hang in there, Mr. Ko~.”

On March 10, 2015 Paropogi said,

“The artist doesn't appear professional at all. I get that he's not a Marvel fan, but if you're going to do an official Marvel webtoon, then you've got to do some research and investigate. He just drew this after having seen the Avengers movie once. It's like he was all too happy to give up on his own comic as long as he could be the first to draw a Marvel webtoon. I feel like screaming, but I'll try to compose myself.”

And on March 25, 2015 Wizard of Oz commented,

“Goodness ... Are they expecting me to pay for this rubbish...? Ha ha, even though the author himself may have made some requests to

Marvel Comics, he still didn't make enough."²⁸

It appears that few, if any, have publically criticised the company's decision to select this particular character. As part of the American team of superheroes, White Fox symbolises the oriental stereotype of Asian women: spiritual, mysterious and over-sexualised.²⁹ She reminds us of the character of Mantis, another Marvel Comics character. Born to a Vietnamese mother and German father, the martial arts specialist was introduced in issue 1:112 of *The Avengers* (June 1973), subsequently joining the Avengers. Even though her character was supposed to remind readers of the suffering of the Vietnamese people, she ended up being ranked 99 on the list of 100 Sexiest Women in Comics in 2011 before disappearing into obscurity.³⁰

Another among the anti-communist feature animations created in Korea is *Robot Taekwon V* (dir. Kim Ch'önggi), first released in 1976. It is the story of a young man who manages to stop a mad scientist building a red empire with the help of the named giant robot and the martial art of Taekwondo, after which the former was named. The reference to Taekwondo followed the military government's designation of the martial art as a national sport in 1971. This served to nurture an interest in Taekwondo among young men, who would be trained in the sport during their three years of mandatory military service as a means to defeat communists in hand-to-hand battle.³¹ Although the character has since been regarded as one of Korea's foremost heroes, stories of similar giant robots featured frequently in the Japanese manga and anime circulating



Figure 3. An ad for the Golden Iron Man movie (*Kyönggyang shinmun*, Dec. 18, 1974, p. 3).

in Korea at the time. Indeed, the producers of the movie may have been inspired by the success of another major animated feature produced in Korea, *Hwanggūm ch'ōrin* (Golden Iron Man; dir. Pak Yōngil, 1968).³² The more humanoid superhero in this feature was modelled after the protagonist of the Japanese hit movie *Ōgon Batto* (Golden Bat, dir. Hajime Sato, 1966), which opened in Korean cinemas in July of the same year.³³ An ad for the former emphasized that unlike *Golden Bat*, *Golden Iron Man* was not based on a TV series.³⁴ In Korea, *Golden Bat* had been popular in the form of pulp novels at least since the mid-1950s, until an animated TV series broadcast by TBC in 1967 and 1968, which director Kim Ch'ōnggi himself worked on for some time, started to build considerable anticipation for the full-length feature.³⁵

The *Golden Bat* was muscular, but had a golden skull as head and a long rapier in his hand. He would fly around in a large cape with a high collar—Vukov compares the character to a “caped Phantom of the Opera”—fighting for justice both inside and outside Japan using his superhuman strength and invulnerability.³⁶ A creation of Takeo Nagamatsu from 1931, *Golden Bat* predated America’s major superheroes Superman and Batman.



Figure 4. A *kamishibai* artist performing from the back of his bicycle (Japan, 1960).

In Japan, the adventures of Golden Bat had been popularised since the 1930s by so-called *kamishibai* (paper drama) storytellers who drew stories on cardboards on the basis of popular movies, folklore and indigenous forms of theatre. The storytellers also existed in colonial Korea, where, among other things, they explained to children their duties as junior citizens of the Japanese empire.³⁷

It is believed that the first giant “mecha” robot appeared in Mitsuteru Yokoyama’s 1956 comic book *Tetsujin 28-gō* (Iron Man no. 28), which is similar in design to the robot appearing in *Golden Iron Man. Robot Taekwon V* was modelled after Mazinger Z, which first appeared in 1969 and provided the inspiration for Yoshiyuki Tomino’s 1979 animated TV series *Mobile Suit Gundam*. The latter developed the giant robot theme in the direction of a more realistic war scenario, away from the standard red, yellow and blue toy vehicles of its predecessors.³⁸ Regardless of the scenario, giant robots have maintained their popularity on the back of a tradition of giant monster (*kaijū*) movies that began in 1954 with Tomoyuki Tanaka’s *Gojira* (*Godzilla*). Many of these giant monsters came to life following nuclear testing or environmental pollution, and would have been partially intended as a critique of the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.³⁹ *Robot Taekwon V* thus incorporated Japanese stylistic and narrative concepts. This is hardly surprising, not only because Korean animation studios had worked for the Japanese animation industry for years, but also because the majority of Koreans grew up reading and watching *manga* and *anime*.⁴⁰

Due to competition from television, *Robot Taekwon V* was not a financial success. It has nevertheless managed to maintain its presence in Korean popular culture and even inspired imitations of its own.⁴¹ A restored, digitalized version premiered at the Pusan International Film Festival on October 6, 2005. Two years later, giant 3-meter tall statues of Taekwon V began to appear throughout Seoul. And in January 2011, a 3D laser show set up at the Capitol building made it appear as though the dome of the building had opened up and the giant Taekwon had come flying down from it.⁴² Around that time, mock images of Taekwon V began to circulate on the Internet that showed him destroying Mazinger Z and other, similar Japanese robots on Tokto, the island Japanese right-

wingers claim as part of the Japanese national territory.⁴³ In 2013, the media widely reported on the plans of artist Kim T'aeshik to erect a giant statue of the robot on Tokto ahead of Independence Day to protest the allegations that Taekwon V was a copy of Mazinger Z. Although many people acknowledged that Taekwon V was modelled after Mazinger Z, an online poll conducted by the right-leaning *Chosŏn ilbo* (Korea Daily) on July 4 that year received a total of 141 responses, 85.1 percent of which supported the view that the allegations of plagiarism were unfounded.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Despite their shared interest in justice and their own outsider status, superheroes may well be the most political of all comic book heroes. They have special powers that allow them to solve major, even international issues; and they feature in narratives that clearly distinguish good and evil. An additional factor is that they are the product of artwork. Comic book characters can serve as icons of justice as long as they are fictional. When they are played by real-life actors, however, they risk becoming associated with a contentious public or strong national image and shedding their veil of innocence. Toy robot heroes like Taekwon V are largely intended for consumption by the younger generations, especially in South Korea; but they can nevertheless outperform other symbols of nationalism because they are also associated with childhood and innocence. Like Trojan Horses, they can convey serious political messages in an unassuming package. Schindler and Holbrook find that the cultural products which people develop a strong affection towards during their childhood tend to affect their preferences in adulthood. They note that strong affection is a determinant, and that movies and music, in particular, are able to elicit such a response.⁴⁵ It is possible, however, that as with traditions, people who have never been exposed or attracted to certain cultural products in the past, can come to appropriate them as an intrinsic part of their community's culture, their shared childhood, when they are strongly marketed in this way, or when their children come to express affection towards such products, or both. In the United States, the use of comic book narratives as a commercial marketing tool by

Baskin-Robbins (“Fun with Basky & Robin”) and Hostess in the past are two cases in point; they were not only intended for teenagers, but sought also to boost the nostalgic appropriation of their products among adult readers.⁴⁶ It is possible for nostalgia to be idealist, and to incorporate the needs of the community at present. Boym says,

[N]ostalgia, in my view, is not always retrospective; it can be prospective as well. The fantasies of the past, determined by the needs of the present, have a direct impact on the realities of the future. Unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory. While futuristic utopias might be out of fashion, nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension—only it is no longer directed toward the future. Sometimes it is not directed toward the past either, but rather sideways.⁴⁷

Indeed, the contemporary needs of a group can lead to the reconfiguration of its past experiences. While rituals and their props can be used to support new traditions and thus serve the current needs of a collective,⁴⁸ childhood fads such as Taekwon V can do the same for nostalgia.

It is easy to find examples of superheroes becoming glocalised and appropriated for local socio-political means. Finding examples of truly transnational heroes, however, is not. Comics and animation may not be expected to express socio-political concerns and objectives, but as I have shown they can be very effective in doing so. What is more, concerns over cultural and economic capital are likely to politicise efforts to make these heroes cross cultural borders. In 2004, Deepak Chopra, Chairman of the newly established Gotham Studios Asia that has been responsible for the creation of an Indian version of Spiderman, said, “The superheroes of tomorrow will be cross-cultural and will transcend nationalistic boundaries.”⁴⁹ But will Japanese ever regard a Japanese-speaking Robot Taekwon V as their hero, and will North Koreans some day embrace a

captain dressed in the U.S. national flag after he has paid his respects to their supreme leader? It is highly unlikely. Many superheroes can fly, but few can cross national borders with such ease.

Notes

¹This work was supported by the Academy of Korean Studies (KSPS) Grant funded by the Korean Government (MOE) (AKS-2011-BAA-2106).

²See <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/ameque/e/42aa22467898caa35d018ff792cd376c>.

³For more on the introduction of Western comics in Indonesia, see Meghan Downes' article in this issue.

⁴Dan O'Rourke and Pravin A. Rodrigues, "The 'Transcreation' of a Mediated Myth: Spider-Man in India," in *The Amazing Transforming Superhero! Essays on the Revision of Characters in Comic Books, Film and Television*, ed. Terrence R. Wandtke (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2007), 122.

⁵Matthew J. Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis: Comic Books and the Unmasking of Cold War America* (New York and London: Continuum, 2009), 6. Costello notes that due to the strong political message even the heroes became "wooden, characterless visions of virtue."

⁶Marc DiPaolo, *War, Politics and Superheroes: Ethics and Propaganda in Comics and Film* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2011), 12.

⁷Naish mispronounced the name of the Japanese emperor.

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzEpyKuIhkQ> at 0:37.

⁸DC Comics, March 1943. American superhero comics have continued to be sold in Japan, though not in very large numbers. Publisher Kōbunsha first brought out a limited series of translations of Marvel comics in 1978, including four issues of Captain America, arguably the most quintessentially American hero.

⁹Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 98.

¹⁰Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis*, 63, 191.

¹¹His descendant Egg Fu the Fifth, who also made an attempt to take over Wonder Woman's world a little over a year later (*Wonder Woman* 1:166; Nov. 1966), had no accent.

¹²Saira Syed, "Comic Giants Battle for Readers," *BBC News*, August 18, 2011, accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/business-14526451>; DC Comics, *Action Comics* 1:900, 75.

¹³Dan Garrett, "Superheroes in Hong Kong's Political Resistance: Icons, Images, and Opposition," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47 (2014), 112. Elsewhere on the mainland, bootleg versions of DC and Marvel Comics have circulated at least since the early 1980s,

but it is unclear to what extent.

¹⁴ In 1983, DC Comics was asked by then First Lady Nancy Reagan to create a special 3-issue series featuring the Teen Titans to raise money to fight drug addiction.

¹⁵ Artists whose ideological beliefs could be construed as leftist sometimes earned the ire of the government, especially during the dire McCarthy years. Costello, 50–57; Geoff Martin and Erin Steuter, *Pop Culture Goes to War: Enlisting and Resisting Militarism in the War on Terror* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 55.

¹⁶ Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis*, 1–2, 5.

¹⁷ Jason Dittmer, “Retconning America: Captain America in the Wake of World War II and the McCarthy Hearings,” in *The Amazing Transforming Superhero!*, 44.

¹⁸ DiPaolo, *War, Politics and Superheroes*, 11.

¹⁹ Mila Bongco, *Reading Comics: Language, Culture, and the Concept of the Superhero in Comic Books* (Routledge, 2014), 1.

²⁰ In an Indian version of Spider-Man, the hero gains his powers from a yogi, as opposed to from a radioactive spider, while his enemy, the Green Goblin, is presented as the reincarnation of an ancient Indian demon called a rakshasa. Saritha Rai, “Comic Books of the West Head East: Deepak Chopra Takes Superheroes to India,” *New York Times*, November 22, 2004, C6.

²¹ Koichi Iwabuchi, “How ‘Japanese’ is Pokémon?” In *Pikachu’s Global Adventure: The Rise and Fall of Pokémon*, ed. Joseph Jay Tobin (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 57. I deliberate the deceptively local aspect of the notion of cosmopolitanism in “The Faux Cosmopolitanism of Korea’s Early Visitors: Albums That Picture the Home Audience,” *The Journal of English Language and Literature* 61, no. 1 (2015): 69–84.

²² See Ch’oe Yöl, *Han’guk manhwa-üi yöksa* [A history of Korean comics] (Seoul: Yöl-hwa-dang, 1995), 141–142.

²³ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dsFF6EPxrU> at 13:07.

²⁴ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZfhWKifZZ8> at 0:50.

²⁵ *Maeil kyöngje* [Economy daily], November 28, 1970, 7. Spiderman was commonly referred to as *Wang kömi* (King Spider) until the late 1970s.

²⁶ Han Ch’angwan, *Han’guk manhwa säöp yön’gu* [A study of the Korean comics industry] (Seoul: The Farm Comics, Co., 1995), 95; Roald Maliangkay, “Creating a Different Wave: Animating a Market for Korean Animation,” in *Complicated Currents: Media Flows and Soft Power in East Asia*, ed. Daniel Black, Stephen Epstein and Alison Tokita (Melbourne: Monash ePress, 2010), 11.1–11.9.

²⁷ *Korea Herald*, November 18, 2014, 16.

²⁸ From <http://webtoon.daum.net/webtoon/view/avengers>.

²⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 40, 324–5; Min-jeong Kim and Angie Y. Chung, “Consuming Orientalism: Images of Asian/American Women in Multicultural Advertising,” *Qualitative Sociology* 28, no.1 (2005): 74.

³⁰ Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis*, 63, 191; Brent Frankenhoff, *Comics Buyer’s Guide Presents: 100 Sexiest Women in Comics* (Iola: Krause Publications, 2011), 59.

³¹ Sang Mi Park, “The Paradox of Postcolonial Korean Nationalism: State-Sponsored Cultural Policy in South Korea, 1965–Present,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 15, no. 1 (2010): 80.

³² Pak Inha and Kim Nakho, *Han'guk hyōndaee manhwa sa* [A history of Korean contemporary comics] 1945–2009 (Seoul: Doobo Books, 2012), 85.

³³ At Seoul's K-cinema, where the movie first opened, there was reportedly a 300-meter-long queue. *Kyōnghyang shinmun* [Capital and country news], July 18, 1968, 3.

³⁴ *Tonga ilbo* [Tonga daily], July 23, 1968, 5.

³⁵ *Tonga ilbo* December 29, 1956, 1; *Kyōnghyang shinmun* [Capital and country news], December 23, 1957, 1; November 11, 1967, 5.

³⁶ Elaine Vukov, “Kamishibai, Japanese Storytelling: The Return of An Imaginative Art,” *Education about Asia* 2, no. 1 (1997), 41.

³⁷ Tara McGowan, *Performing Kamishibai: An Emerging New Literacy for a Global Audience* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 14–15, 18; E. Taylor Atkins, *Primitive Selves: Koreana in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910–1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 41.

³⁸ Frederik L. Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (Berkeley, Stone Bridge Press, 1996), 245–46, 330. Gilles Poitras, “Contemporary Anime in Japanese Pop Culture,” in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, ed. Mark W. MacWilliams (New York: Routledge, 2015), 52. The American company Parker Brothers should have taken note. In 1979 it tried unsuccessfully to sell a robot toy called ROM Spaceknight that came without a backstory. Marvel Comics picked up the character and created a popular series around it that has driven up the exchange value of the toy significantly since.

³⁹ Ivan Vartanian, *Killer Kaiju Monsters: Strange Beasts of Japanese Film* (New York: Collins Design, 2009), 20, 75.

⁴⁰ Maliangkay, “Creating a Different Wave,” 11.2.

⁴¹ On August 15, 1976, for example, Ch'a Myōngsu created the comic *T'aegwōn Ch'ōrin* (Taekwon Iron Man), the robot in which is a near-replica of Robot Taekwon V.

⁴² Han Kyōngjin, “T'aegwōn V-e koch'in chega pyōnt'aeraeyo, ^^” [They say I'm crazy for being so into Taekwon V :o)], *Chosōn ilbo* [Korea daily], January 15–16, 2011, B4.

⁴³ Kim Yunjong, “30-sal t'ojong robot ... Narara T'aegwōn V!” [Our native 30-year-old robot ... Fly, Taekwon V!], *Tonga ilbo*, July 22, 2006, 15.

⁴⁴ Kwak Aram, “T'aegwōn V, kwangbokch'ōl-e Tokto kanda ... noran nap'al tūlgo” [On Liberation Day he'll head to Tokto ... holding a yellow trumpet], *Chosōn ilbo*, July 1, 2013, A22, accessed June 12, 2015, http://forum.chosun.com/bbs.poll.view.screen?bbs_id=700100&message_id=1036149.

⁴⁵ Robert M. Schindler and Morris B. Holbrook, “Nostalgia for Early Experience as a Determinant of Consumer Preferences,” *Psychology & Marketing* 20, no. 4 (2003): 279–80.

⁴⁶ In the early 1980s, Hostess posted a number of one-page advertisements for its Twinkie cakes in comic books. Looking exactly like a comic book page, they featured a supervillain being beaten by a superhero using Twinkie cakes. A full list of such

ads can be found here: <http://www.comicvine.com/hostess-superhero-advertisements/4015-56171>. Sometimes Twinkie cakes also appeared in the regular narrative, such as in *Marvel Team-Up* 1:137 (Jan. 1984), in which the hunger of planet-devourer Galactus is stilled by a “Twinkle” planet.

⁴⁷ Svetlana Boym, “Nostalgia and Its Discontents,” *The Hedgehog Review* 9, no. 2 (2007), 8–9.

⁴⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6.

⁴⁹ Rai, “Comic Books of the West Head East,” C6.