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The Amateur

: Digital Transindividuation in South Korea

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DECLARATION

I, Ji Hyeon Kim, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own except when quoted as such.

Signed……………Ji Hyeon Kim………………………… Date ……18/09/2018……

ABSTRACT

This thesis inquires into the cultural-political constitution of what are commonly known as the Amateur and Amateurism, terms which need to be seen from a new perspective in the digital era. The discussion begins with whether amateur production of culture and media and the role of monetary compensation are changing upon the emergence of the Web and digital technologies. Amateur productions networked to online audience communities are here understood using Simondon's concepts of individuation, recently re-interpreted by Stiegler and Virno, as transindividual activities that realise human potential in newly structured society and politics. At the same time, however, it is not overlooked that such transindividual activities are technologically mediated by cognitive capitalist digital platforms specialised in mediating and monetising user-created content. Thus, the formation of gift culture around production and circulation of amateur content is discussed with its relationship to the commodity economy on such platforms. In this context, live streaming videos from Afreeca TV and Web-cartoons (Webtoons) have been selected as case studies to investigate audiovisual content production of professional-like amateurs on South Korean-based digital platforms, specifically during the candlelight rallies of 2008 and the impeachment proceedings of 2017. Conducted over three years, a variety of empirical studies on the multimedia interaction between amateur producers and their audience community provides a critical analysis of how the amateur's individual, self-fulfilling activities are transformed into the gift culture-based transindividual and competitive commercial activities and are embedded in the logic of cognitive capitalism. The counter-commercial movement of the amateur self-publishers concerned with the transindividuality of the memory technics is also presented. Their dedication to materalise individual and collective memories through paper-book publishing evokes the original value and ethos of amateurism devoted to the diversity of culture and life.

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Chapter One. Amateur Transindividual Activity

1. Introduction

"Who is an *Amateur*?"

Before giving a definitive answer to this question, it should be noted that the term amateur covers a broader spectrum than the producers and consumers who, through their respective activities of production and consumption, constitute the cultural industry. The term amateur also applies to anyone who takes part in activities that are not commodity-based activities for pleasure. The range of such activities is so broad that the scholarly approach to the concept is diverse and rather confused. For instance, what comes to mind when we think of uncompensated amateur activities are those of the modern Olympic Games (Wagg, 2012). However, the term previously had been used to describe the ideology of a specific class that wielded power during a particular period (Guichard, 2012; Stiegler, 2017a).[1] In this thesis, we explore the definition of amateur and amateurism which has transformed over time and the development of technology, more specifically after the advent of the Web. This thesis will thus provide broader applicability of this term, and explore new categories of amateurism.

The term amateur originates from the French word meaning "lover (of)", that is, someone who "loves" a particular "activity" and continues that love "without the spirit of mastery or competition" (Barthes, 1973: 52). This definition of the amateur is all about love. Thus, the cultural production of the amateur does not need to be compensated, or compensation

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1 Guichard (2012), who explored the relationship between the development of the French aesthetic taste community and amateurism, saw it as a central figure of the Enlightenment in the 18th century. An example is the '*Honorary Amateur of the Academie Royale*', which was founded in 1663 and reorganised as the representative amateur group in 1747. They distinguished themselves from 'spectators' or '*curieux*', and stressed the importance of their aesthetic taste regarding 'various artistic practices' as their innate nature (Guichard, 2012: 519).

is not expected as the amateur undertakes such activities voluntarily. Due to these two characteristics, non-monetary compensation and deep immersion, amateur activities have been limited to activities undertaken in the area of leisure rather than work and to the private rather than to the public. Indeed, regardless of the amateur's competence, before the advent of the web, it was rare for their work to be consumed and displayed as artwork or cultural product. This is why Roland Barthes (1977) noted that an amateur and a professional cannot be distinguished by standards of knowledge or technique: "The amateur is not necessarily defined by a lesser knowledge, an imperfect technique…But rather by this: *he is the one who does not exhibit, the one who does not make himself heard*" (Barthes, 1977: 52).

These amateur activities are valuable in their own way, so it does not matter if such activities are filled with useless moments of experience that do not have any economic or commodity value (c.f. Stiegler, 2005/2015:13). The amateur needs only to make a personal decision, unlike the professional cultural producer who needs the approval of consumers, patrons or critics to maintain their activity. The choice depends on how the amateur arranges their life, regardless of how frequently they expend time and energy on the activity. Therefore, for the amateur, who has passion and desire beyond that of a hobbyist or an enthusiast and who enjoys spending their free time writing novels, painting watercolour, or operating a ham radio, their activities are considered acts of self-realisation and not labour, as such acts would be for professionals carrying out the same activity. This is why amateur activities should be discussed as *a form of life*. Such activities are not bound by the demands that surround a labourer's livelihood, which leads to their exploitation. In a way, it is a privileged activity that improves the quality of life; as cultural productions by amateurs have a different value from that of the professional. Given that it has the goal of "renew[ing]" one's "pleasure," the purpose is enjoyment rather than "competition," and the "gracious" practice involved does not include "*rubato*" (the theft of the object to support competition) (Barthes, *Op.cit.*: 52).

In this context, the amateur is a true lover of their craft, distinguishing themselves from being just a 'consumer', emphasising the production of something cultural through the aesthetic and corporeal. While it is true that they can still be clearly understood as

passionate consumers when it comes to the consumption of products and works in the cultural industry, even to the extent that they are called fans or enthusiasts, unlike other consumers, they are individuated in the process of repetitive production that is triggered by their love for works of art. As Stiegler points out, "insofar as they love them, these artworks work on them – that is to say, the amateur is trans-formed by them; individuated by them" (Stiegler, 2017a: 7; see also Stiegler, 2017b).

As long as they are involved in the practice of '*repetition*,' that is, the regular practice required to learn an activity, they can maintain their love for works of art, while, at the same time, continually becoming what they desire to be and who they want to realise; thus, by engaging with collective inheritance they perpetuate and modify it (Crowley, 2013: 128; see also Stiegler, 2017b). In this way, they are differentiated from consumers who passively repeat consumption of industrial products and who are thus in danger of misconstruing the production and circulation of symbols and, eventually, excluded and de-skilled by the replacement of aesthetic experience, which is commercially driven, programmed, and calculated by the so-called 'culture industry' (Stiegler, 2004/2014:10; see also Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947/2002). Thus, for Stiegler (2004/2014), the figure of the amateur is defined as the rejection of that of the consumer, and, in the same manner, their activities can be reinterpreted as the aesthetic activism of the everyday, against consumerness (see also Barthes, 1977; de Certeau, 1984).

If the domains of cultural production and consumption are like the two sides of a coin, focused on different directions but closely connected to each other, amateurs are 'singularities' that do not belong perfectly to any plane. However, and most importantly, even though their production is not aimed at commodity use, the result of production is bound to be stored or presented in some way, as seen in the classical figures of the amateurs of the past who showed their works to friends, families, and cultural communities to which they belonged. In this sense, Barthes (1977) also classified the amateurs as (potentially) anti-bourgeois, because they contributed to the formation of an economy of 'love' rather than one of the commodity (Barthes, 1977, 1978; see also Highmore, 2006: 156).

With the advent of the Web, various digital platforms have allowed amateur creations to reach new audiences. The creative efforts of numerous web users, were initiated in the early days of the Internet, in what was described as 'a gift economy', when the exchanges of culture and information, became the driving force for developing an anti-commodity culture, what Bernard Stiegler (2010b) calls 'the contribution economy'. Generally speaking, in an ideal society of the gift economy, gift-giving serves to circulate and redistribute valuables; free customs and social norms are believed to govern the process of exchanges (Kranton, 1996: 835; Long *et al*., 2007: 177). The gift economy of the Web is also embedded in a circuit of a mutual relationship between gift-giver and gift-receiver. However, the exemplary figure of the contributor here is the same as that of amateurs who are primarily motived by their cultural interests rather than by economic drivers (Stiegler, *op.cit*.). As shown in the commons-based projects in peer-to-peer productions such as Wikipedia and Linux, within this 'new' gift economy the value produced by amateur contributors is not entirely based on (monetary) compensation. It is more a mode of symbolic exchange, where the works, expertise, ideas or the time of Internet users, including amateurs, are not traded or sold, but given with no explicit anticipation of monetary compensation (c.f. Cheal, 1988/2015: 1). However, such 'gifting' includes not only the free exchange of information and culture produced by individual users and amateurs but also illegal 'piracy' which continually duplicates and transmits the commodities of the existing cultural industries. Therefore, it is problematic in a way as its existence proves the inherent inadequacy of private property as the condition of digital production; it has been "warping and blasting holes in the fabric of intellectual property" (Dyer-Witheford, 2005a: 145).

Within this trend, the concept of 'the audience' which was at one point used as a popular political term in the field of Cultural Studies has now fallen into the disuse to the point where Axel Bruns was able to declare, "*the audience is dead*" (2008a: 254). At least, just lurking in user-created content on participative Web platforms (OECD, 2007), where users' participation is crucial for advancing not only cultural communities but also the platforms themselves, is considered relatively passive – although those lurkers are not 'mouse potatoes', the wired equivalent of 'couch potatoes' (Jenkins, 2006). The users' activeness thus becomes the subject of much discussion, especially in the bi-directional

nets of the social Webs, where technologies condition users as more than simply recipients (Stiegler, 1998/2009: 53), thus, enabling them to play a double role as senders and receivers at the same time.

Consequently, people who are praised in recent theoretical discourses in media studies are those who actively produce content using the tools for cultural production that platforms provide for free. Such people are also attracting increasing academic interest and concomitant neologisms, such as 'Produsers' (Bruns, 2008a, 2008b), 'Pro-Ams' (Leadbeater and Miller, 2004) and 'Creative users' (Gauntlett, 2011). These terms and many others have been coined to acknowledge web users' active and voluntary participation which have been enabled by the democratising path that platforms have taken, which allow users to inject certain 'creative' efforts and produce tangibles and intangibles across the value chain processes of producing, distributing, mediating, and consuming culture, all without having to go through the specialised path of industrial expertise. The impact these users as producers have is emerging as a discussion topic for cultural politics since their effect can spill over across the entire society, culture, and economy through the interaction of networked platform members (Benkler, 2006, 2011). Some even present the romantic forecast that, through commons-based peer productions, in particular, the creative amateur projects rule will result in a 'free culture' that will eventually stimulate a democratic change of the entire digital economy, promoting unrestricted circulation and exchange of amateur gifts produced (Benkler, 2006; Lessig, 2004; van Dijck, 2009) in response to the desire to create a real appreciation for works of art and culture (Stiegler, 2017a, 2017b; c.f. Mauss, 1954/1990).

This trend is evident in that from the early years of the Internet, the process of building the 'gift economy of information exchange' by the activity of 'amateurs' (who not only produce culture, but also circulate it) was seriously studied (Barbrook, 2002; Terranova, 2004). Their role as cultural producers has attracted increased academic scrutiny as the Web 2.0's business model for commercialising amateur created contents was successfully established and the role of users and amateurs as 'data providers' or 'content providers' has gained attention (van Dijck, 2009: 47). As there was no more appropriate term to explain those involved in the work of producing and restructuring cultures in the realm

of everyday life without seeking economic interests, 'amateur' or 'amateurism' has been used in digital culture research as a catch-all-term depicting "all the activities" related to the production and circulation of all the content that makes up a considerable share of the online ecosystem (Fuller, Hamilton, and Seale, 2013: 145). This trend has further led to the theorisation of "*mass-amateurisation*" (Shirky, 2008, 2011), within which theory everyone is an amateur self-publisher (at least when it comes to the print media) with the advent of Web 2.0; leading to the unique creation of a 'professional-like amateur' (Pro-Am) class that produces culture at a semi-expert level, unlike that of the ordinary users (Leadbeater and Miller, 2004).

However, these newly-developed terms may over-generalise or limit the qualities of the original concept of the amateur, which emerged from particular cultural and political contexts to describe specific cultural figures in sociological theories (Guichard, 2012; Stielgler, 2017a). A sophisticated theorisation of the term amateur requires the re-examination of how amateurs, with the emerging technologies of the Web, come to compete, collide, or cooperate with existing concepts as presented in other media and cultural studies. To this end, this thesis focuses on the Pro-Am concept, seeking to examine in detail whether the concept of 'cultural intermediaries' (Bourdieu, 1984; McFall, 2002; Negus, 2002; Kim and Lee, 2012) – who are the producers of symbolic value in the existing cultural industry, as in charge of service and product production, marketing and distribution on an occupational level – is changing due to the emergence of these new 'amateur' figures. For instance, the so-called Pro-Am produces and (inter-)mediates their own quality content according to a new digital labour model-which combines both the expert and amateur orientations on Web 2.0 platforms. They sometimes acquire both symbolic power and online fame that influence the formation of value for particular content, practices, or (web-)cultural genres, like the 'old' cultural intermediaries did – thus, deconstructing professional boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate culture (c.f. Maguire and Matthews, 2012: 552).

On the other hand, what will be further discussed in this project is that at least in the 'new' digital labour model where the boundaries between amateur 'work' and pros- 'labour' are fading, 'Pro-Am' can be also referred to an already-professional who needs to act like an

amateur. For instance, freelance artists such as web-based cartoonists, who are described as members of the 'creative *precariat*' (de Peuter, 2014; McRobbie, 2016) in the critical studies of creative labour, are participating in amateur-based competitions on the Web platforms. They are examples of those not afraid of "self-exploiting", "always-on[-]flexibly[-]employed workers" (de Peuter, 2014: 263), who nonetheless regard amateur-based competitions as a good opportunity and investment to get a 'dream job' in the media industry. However, despite such changes in this terminology, there appears to be a lack of in-depth evaluation, in particular, in terms of how 'new' Pro-Ams interact with groups of experts and the amateur-mass within social Webs and other digital platforms. Within this trend, there is a need to discuss the political meaning embraced in the operations of the amateurs' and, of course, Pro-Ams' digital production and the possibility that they function strategically as a resisting force. Therefore, cultural theorists' radical banner of 'amateur practices' (de Certeau, 1984) should be re-examined from the perspective of its revolutionary potential.

However, this research also studies the digital capital movement which seeks to colonise all the domains of cultural and artistic activities *in extenso*. What leftist critics argue now is that the new environment of cultural production demands more critical examination because it expands the democratic approach to everyone, including amateurs, on the plane of cultural production, as it also enables the absorption of that surplus value as commodity, in particular by cognitive capitalist digital platforms on the economic plane (Terranova, 2000, 2004; Dyer-Witheford, 2005a, 2005b; Virno, 2006). Fuchs (2013) even considers all the users' activities as prosumers,' and their work are consumed completely for free by the platforms, since he believes any wages ever paid to users for their surplus value merely creates (online ad) profits and accumulates new media capital on the platforms (: 219-220). In his Marxist view, the phenomena of the mass-amateurisation can be interpreted just as another type of capital accumulation model based on the exploitation of users' activities, in which all the time that they spent on capitalist platforms or social media must be transformed into surplus labour time (Fuchs, 2010, 2011, 2013; Fuchs and Sevignani, 2013).

Further, with Italian Autonomist Marxism, which believes that users' networks are not simply exploited, but that they can realise their own political potential (Hardt and Negri, 2001; Virno, 2003), has developed the theory of immaterial labour, the labour that defines and fixes "cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and more strategically, public opinion" (Lazzarato, 1996: 133). What Tiziana Terranova further problematize is the value of unpaid immaterial labour, what she calls '*free* labour' (2000) inside the digital economy – where the conversion from "industrial capitalism" to "cognitive capitalism" that has been "founded on the accumulation of immaterial capital" is best observed (Moulier-Boutang, 2011: 50). By looking at volunteer works for America Online, and other amateurs co-work contributed by the NetSlaves, and the amateur Web designers, free labour is understood as the "moment" "where this knowledgeable consumption of culture is translated into productive activities," (Terranova, 2004: 74) while any self-organised producing and uploading content for social networking websites, and leaving data trails that becomes 'informational goldmines' on search engines, tends not to include claims of authorship (Gill and Pratt, 2008: 25).

From this viewpoint, the activeness with which communication and audio-visual media creative users, semi-expert-level amateurs and professionals-acting-like amateurs produce, circulate and perceive by intervening with their affective and cognitive reactions to each other ultimately leads to the development of the capitalist system through the accumulation of intellectual and cognitive capital, as it becomes "an important, yet unacknowledged, source of value in advanced capitalist societies." (Terranova, 2004: 74). This suggests, skilled amateurs' cultural production and other artistic activities undertaken as free labour, are endangered as "simultaneously voluntarily given and unwanted, enjoyed and exploited" in the economic order of digital capital, even while the amateurs are not critically aware of the technological conditions of the activity (Terranova, 2004: 74; see also Kostakis and Bauwens, 2014). In the similar context, Kostakis further argues, in particular, the amateur class of the Web that are eager to participate in controlling the web production, yet, at the same time, do not care about economic rewards, are becoming a new social class mostly exploited by digital capital (Kostakis, 2009). If culture industry consumers in the past were distanced from production, these amateurs seem to have lost the value of their creation as a value expressing knowledge, culture,

and art, as generated through their passionate work and used as a new lever for the creation of wealth.

However, free labour theory cannot be explained so simply. It is not limited to the issue of self-exploitation of free labourers, such as amateurs, as 'free' here means autonomous; that is, not subject to the rule or control of capital. Indeed, its ordinate concept, immaterial labour, also suggests that the realm of 'labour' now incorporates the most 'human' activity, which is the 'speech' based on political action in Arendt's term (1958), that had previously been considered unproductive from the traditional perspective of industrialism, with a composition of all the aspects of life such as communication, knowledge, culture and affection, according to Virno (2003, 2007). What is notable is that this 'action' encompasses not only the social but also the economic, and is thus related to political action and material commodity (c.f. Arendt, 1958; Virno, 2003, 2007). In this context, Hardt (1999) also suggests the effects of immaterial labour are not limited to the (bio-)economic area, but rather extend to the change in (bio-)political production, that is, "the creation of life"; while this labour "works directly on the effects; it produces subjectivity, it produces society", and finally "it produces life" itself (Hardt, 1999: 99).

In the shift, networked practices of immaterial labour, the nature and quality of knowledge and culture that these create and their commodity value in the system are not only affecting, but are also hit by the formation of collective subjectivities, sociality and ultimately society (Hardt, 1999: 89, 96). If these discussions are linked with the amateur-mass of the Web, that is to say, bringing together users and different groups of amateurs who produce work unpaid in the service of social production, their creation and cooperation through networks of affective and cognitive activities with the projects based on 'mass intellectuality' (of the so-called 'multitude', according to Virno, 2003) cannot only be regarded as the mere productivity of the platform. This is because, within the same networks, there is a possibility of resistance and struggle against such labour problems, since productions and life cannot be separated; in other words, there is no boundary between the economic and the social, as possible struggles and resistance are always embedded in the networks in the form of economic, political, and cultural challenges (Lemke, 2011: 71-73).

Then, the question remaining is, regarding their political potential, how are amateurs today adapting or resisting changes in labour and production patterns? On the one hand, it is evident that, on digital platforms, the active production of amateurs is different from the expertise-centered production in the cultural industry of the past. The ways amateurs approach these opportunities are different, but the various digital platforms that take advantage of the market value of amateur content, such as UGC sites or Web 2.0 platforms, promote not only various ranges of social relationships, but also create various forms of labour encompassing the volunteerism of amateurs and professionalism of experts. And what has been observed in these new labour models is that amateurs feel pride in what they have developed and some are even intent on developing their hobbies into a profession (van Dijck, 2009: 51).

On the other hand, new economic opportunities are provided for the amateurs' semi-occupation activities through the new competition and compensation models that have emerged on the crowd-sourcing digital platforms. Amateurs' activities, which used to be thought of as hobbies falling within the personal realm, have expanded into the economic activities of the public domain (Fuller, Hamilton, and Seale, 2013) and have even been sold via e-commerce channels in competition with professionals as if they were cultural products. Meanwhile, their amateur production is also compensated with virtual money in the manner of the 'gift exchange' (Mauss, 1954/1990; Hyde, 1983/2007; Barbrook, 2002) that is formed on the platforms where specific user-created content (OECD, 2007) production, distribution and consumption take place. That is, the expert orientation and the amateur orientation of the Web co-exist within labour relations of diverse forms, and a re-adjustment of monetary compensation for each is taking place.

In this trend, how should we explain the activities of amateurs, which are *not* unpaid anymore? Thus, this project explores the digital platforms which use amateurs' and users' networks as a new outsourcing labour channel, - for instance, those found on the crowd-sourcing platforms in which all the knowledge and content production intersects with the desire for self-realisation of the players in the competition. Further, 'pure' love for art and culture and all the value made of their cultural practice are exhibited, heard, evaluated and consumed like a commodity. For this reason, the specific types of amateur cultural

production that are being newly defined by the capital-intensive, technology-driven economy will be critically reviewed alongside the models of peer production, shared ownership and free labour. Therefore, the analysis of the amateur economy should be conducted critically along the lines of such 'amateur gift exchange,' which exists between the gift economy and the commodity economy in the newly emerging forms of the advanced media industry and digital economy.

2. Amateur Transindividual Activity: A Framework

What needs to be stressed is that the activities of these amateurs in digital production, individuated from the works of culture and art which are also individuated from their practices, have interacted with the newly emergent Web technologies. As proved by the social media and Web platforms, these technologies are not only being used by amateur producers, but they also mediate information, content, and communication. Then, as Lash (2002, 2010) has pointed out, what is important now is the question of how to deal with such 'technological forms of life' in the shape of technically-mediated social life. "At stake is the technologisation of life itself, the mediatisation of life itself" (Lash, 2010: 149). In such technological forms, there exists "something of the human" (Simondon, 1958/2010: 26); the mediatisation of life is processed technologically. This gives rise to a philosophical discussion on the relationship between the amateur producers and the technologies.

The first structuring theory to be referred to here is that put forward by French philosopher Gilbert Simondon (1958/2010) who presented a pioneering vision for the relationship between the human and technology. Heidegger (1977) has also discussed the same matter from a critical perspective in connection with its meaning in cultural production. Simondon (1958/2010), however, rejected the thought that humans and technology and culture and technology stand in opposition. Rather, he focuses on the relationship between

them and suggests a solution to the problem of human alienation that has arisen with the development of technology in industrial production; that is, a philosophic consideration to find the actual nature of technology in which "something of the human is locked in, unrecognised, materialised, enslaved, but human nonetheless", by recognizing "the modes of existence of technical objects" (Simondon, 1958/2010: 26).

Simondon (*Ibid*.) developed the theory of individuation that can be applied not only to humans but also to technology. Refusing hylomorphism, in which the being is seen as a compound of matter and form, he strongly argued that individuals are not a substance, but the result of an on-going process of individuation (Chabot, 2003/2013: 73). Here, "individuation corresponds to the appearance of stages in the being, which are the stages of the being. It is not a mere isolated consequence arising as a by-product of becoming, but this very process itself as it unfolds" (Simondon, 1992: 301, cited in Ekman, 2012: 283). Thus, the individual should be regarded as having a relative reality, occupying only a particular phase of the whole being "that carries the implication of a preceding pre-individual state, and that, even after individuation, does not exist in isolation, since individuation does not exhaust in the single act of its appearance all the potentials embedded in the pre-individual state" (Simondon, 1995:22-23, 1992: 300; Pearson, 1999/2012: 91). This is a too-brief explanation, but the most important point to be made for the purpose of this thesis is the originality of his concept that applied the same logic of individuation not only to humans but also to technical objects.

This is clear in his critique of the theory of cybernetics, which describes and classifies technical objects employing established criteria and following "genera and species," where he insists that the best way to define a technical object is by regarding its "genesis" (Simondon, 1958/2017: 25). Like the human being, the technical object here becomes individuated through the ontological transition of becoming the element, the individual, and the ensemble just like, in biology, "the growth of a crystal in its mother-water" (Chabot, 2003/2013: 81) shown in the process of becoming gradually obtains the crystallised structure (*Ibid*.: 79-87). The potential indeterminacy (that is the pre-individual fund in case of the human) that enables individuation opens up the possibility for interaction with the milieu, so the technical object becomes the technical individual.

The unity between the technical object and the milieu through human activities is thus not predicted utility, but intimate interaction based on such indeterminacy. For instance, unlike "a purely automatic machine", which is "completely closed in on itself in a predetermined way of operation", the "(open) machine" "endowed with a high degree of technicity" is more sensitive to outside information, thus, "open" to interaction with humans (Simondon, 1958/2017: 17). Such indeterminacy of a machine, hence, has greater value for Simondon than its functionality, since the more a machine is open, the more a person who has a relationship with the machine can regulate the margin of the indeterminacy. In other words, "all open machines taken together presuppose man as their permanent organiser, as the living interpreter of all machines among themselves" and the ensemble between these machines and humans is likened to that of musicians in an orchestra and their conductor (Simondon, 1958/2017: 17-18). Therefore, technology can no longer be defined solely in terms of its instrumentality or function - as merely a tool or a means to an end (c.f. Rutsky, 1999: 4). Simondon's view of the existence of the technical object as "a different mode of being to the being whose individuation it describes" provides an understanding of the web and digital platforms (Wark and Sutherland, 2015: 5) as the associated milieu, in which instances of ensembles between human-technical objects, thus culture and technology, are observed.

In this context, Simondon made a clear distinction between 'labour' (and 'work') and 'technological activity,' and thought that, labour is the one "through which the human being is mediator between nature and humanity as a species", and so here "the inter-psychological relation put individual before individual, establishing a reciprocity [between nature and human beings] without mediation" (Simondon, 1958/2017: 250). However, according to Simondon, technological activity is "not limited to simply creating a mediation between man and nature"; As "a stable mixture of the human and the nature", technology (in his words, a technical object,) "allows for the integration of [the] human reality into the world of natural causes and effects" (Simondon, 1958/2017: 251). For example, the machine, like that of the express medium, gives an external appearance to what is collective, to what is species-specific in human thought (Virno, 2006: 36). In this technical mediation, the pre-individual reality is projected externally as a universally usable complex of signs and objectified logical schema (*Ibid*.).

Thus, it may be said that labour connects individuated individuals, while technology gives a voice to what is common or, more precisely, to what is pre-individual in subjects (Virno, 2006; Negri and Virno, 2003). Indeed, as discussed above, new easy-to-use smart devices and digital technologies help the mass play an active role as the amateur-mass and cultural producer through repetitive, every day, technological activities. According to this trend, cultivated amateurs who have conducted technical objects can bring out heterogeneous effects to today's cultural politics, by producing cultural objects via interplay with their medium. It might open up possibilities to overcome the weaknesses of a professionalised culture industry. In fact, Simondon had positive remarks about the artistic production of an amateur. Regarding the production of aesthetic objects, Simondon remarks upon the possible layers in which they were produced, pointing out that the aesthetic objects were created on the level of a "ritualised elaboration" in the form of "picking up the accepted rules of genre and putting them to work in a manner authorised by the group of experts (*connoisseurs*)" (De Boever, *et al*., 2012: 128). However, other aesthetic objects are more positively described. Those belonging to the 'futurist' layer in that cultivated amateur "consists in recruiting for the work unforeseen, local, surprising and heterogeneous effects" (*Ibid*.: 128). This amateurish cultural production as a technological activity can stand for not only a democratic expansion of the field of culture and art but also for the progress of a cultural community through blending aesthetical thought/experiences and technological thought/experiences together.

Further, for Simondon, technological activity is also considered as "the model for collective relation" (1958/2010: 245),[2] and the relation to the technical object can only become adequate "to the extent that it succeeds in bringing this interindividual collective reality into existence", which he calls transindividual, "encompassing knowledge, affectivity, and more generally, spiritual life" (Adkins, 2007: N. pag.). That is, the transindividual makes subjects intervene in so far as they carry a charge of preindividual

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[2] According to Combes (1999/2013), that technical activity is the model of collective relation does not mean that the human would be essentially a prosthetic being; nor does it mean that there would only be collective individuation through technological activities (: 77). In fact, Simondon worries about such a misinterpretation by specifying that technical activity "is not the only mode and the only contents of the collective, but it is of the collective, and, in certain cases, it is around technical activity that the collective group may be born" (1958/2010: 245; Combes, *Op.cit*.).

reality (Barthelemy, 2012: 230-231).[3] As long as this activity of technology contributes to the coupling between the inventive and organisational capacities of many subjects, according to Simondon and without using Marxist terms, "the relation of reciprocal causality and conditioning between the existence of distinct, nonalienated technical objects that are used in a non-alienating manner and the constitution of such a transindividual relation" will be found (1958/2010: 253). In this context, Simondon concludes that "labour must become technical activity" (*Ibid*.: 251-252) so that "the relation to humans to nature and of humans to one another can be reinvented" (Combes, 1999/2013: 76).

However, the weakness of Simondon's position is that he puts too much emphasis on an individuals as "generic subject of alienation" of the understanding to technological activity (Chabot, 2003/2013: 75). For instance, for him "any event and any social conflict entailing an attack on technics" are mainly caused by "a misunderstanding of the intrinsic normativity" of technology (*Ibid*.: 75). However, as Combes writes, it is important to understand why Simondon does not situate alienation in the same place as Marx does (*Ibid*.: 73). As for him, Simondon's critique more reaches humans' "misunderstanding of the machine and their inadequacy to technicity, as that which prevents any fair relationship among them," whereas for Marx, "what comes between the two are social relations of production, whose inequality structures the material life of humans" (*Ibid*.: 74).

Nonetheless, this unique view of Simondon inspired this thesis, as did the theorists Bernard Stiegler (1998/2009; 2010b; 2011a; 2011b) and Paolo Virno (2003; 2006; 2009) who are studying the digital culture and political economics today. Stiegler, through whose work the amateur was presented as an important form of cultural politics in the previous section, combines the problem of (trans-)individuation posed by the philosophy

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[3] This does not mean that the transindividual appears "as that which unifies individual and society"; It appears "as a relation interior to the individual (defining its *psyche*) and a relation exterior to the individual (defining the collective)" (Combes, 1999/2013: 26). That is, the transindividual unity of two relations is in fact a relation of relations (*Ibid*.).

of Simondon (1958/2010) with the phenomenology of Husserl on time consciousness to develop it into a more sophisticated cultural politics agenda. Regarding individuation, following Simondon, he argues that the human is constituted through ongoing processes of individuation. But such individuation is here re-interpreted as already a phenomenological process – thus, called transindividuation. For him, the "*I*," as a psychic individual, can only be in relationship to a "*we*" which is a collective individual. Speaking fo that, the "*I*" is constituted in the collective tradition, which it inherits, and in which a plurality of "*I*s" acknowledge one another's existence (Stiegler, 2001/2011: 94-95, 97-98; 2004/2014: 50-51). Thus, basically, for Stiegler, any individuation is *always and already* a transindividuation between entities (2001/2011: 97).[4]

Thus, what he suggests as an urgent problem today is that "the loss of individuation" is becoming prevalent in the consumerist society. Hinting at Simondon's explanation of the alienation experienced by workers who were subjected to the service of the machine tool in the industrial production in the 19th Century, what he pointed out is that, if such workers lost their know-how in finding their individuality and were reduced to the condition of a proletarian (Stiegler, *Ibid*.: 4), nowadays consumers lose their life knowledge and *savior-vivre* since their behaviour is standardised through the formatting and artificial manufacturing of their desires by the cultural industries that produce temporal objects (Stiegler, 2011b; 2011a: 53-55). The industrial temporal objects such as film, recordings (produced by the cultural industry), radio programmes, television programmes (products of the programme industry) would allow for intimate control of individual behaviour, transformed into mass behavior (Stiegler, 2011a: 56).

In the ideal process of the individuation, the reason that all could be collectively individuated is that the individuation of various individuals results from the appropriation by each singularity of a pre-individual field that is shared by all these singularities. Thanks to the "heritage of the accumulated experience of previous generations, such as

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[4] According to Stiegler, individuation is always "a biopolar process that is immediately multipolar: the psyhic individual, relative to the group, is like the social individual constructed from other psychic individuals". Thus, "*I* is alsays an individuation of multiple *We*'s" (Stiegler, 2001/2011: 97).

education, this pre-individual field exists to the extent that it is singularly appropriated so that it is transformed through the participation of psychic individuals who are in this common fund" (Stiegler, 2011b: 53). That is, the ideal social group can consist of "composition of *synchrony*" only in use when it is "recognised in a common heritage". In this way, it can be "a composition of *diachrony*" since it made possible and legitimised through "the singular appropriation of the pre-individual fund by each member of the group" (Stiegler, 2011b: 53).

However, the problematic programme industries, according to Stiegler, only seek to bring about a hyper-*synchronisation* composed by their programming techniques, while they hinder the singular appropriation of the pre-individual fund. For instance, technical recording was developed as an industrial technique suitable for hyper-*synchronisation* in that it allows the same temporal object to be experienced more than once. Therefore, the time consciousness can compare its distinct experiences of the same temporal object and further assess how its memory (Husserl's "recollection", which Stiegler calls "secondary retention") of its first experience ("primary retention") selectively impacts its second experience ("primary retention") and so forth, with each new experience of the same temporal object (Stiegler, 2011b; 2004/2014: 34-35, see also Hansen, 2017: 168). In this way, by theoretically proving that time consciousness depends on interaction with technical temporal objects, as it includes technical memories as the very elements of its operationality, Stiegler elaborates on how to understand technological discourse as a psychosocial condition for culture from Simondon's viewpoint (Hansen, *Op.cit.*).

Virno (2003; 2006; 2009) also seeks to re-interpret Simodon's concepts and claims that relations between the transindividual character of technology and the transindividual nature of the collective are has changed, as they are inseparably fused together and the point of this fusion is contemporary living labour, often called 'cognitive labour', or 'immaterial labour'. Therefore, he claims that the previous forms of transindividuality should be re-examined, at least those seen in living labour, since forms are becoming "something different from what they were separate from" (Virno, 2006: 37). Although the names of capitalist theorists such as Hardt & Negri (2001), and Terranova (2000) were briefly mentioned above, Virno is the main theorist who explains the individuation

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theory of Simondon in connection with the labour issues in the cognitive capitalist system. His concept of the multitude tries to explain the process of the subjectivity of 'living labourers' beyond the economic domain, spreading to the whole society. Here, the concept of the multitude as a network of individuals was re-developed from Simondon's two theses. Firstly, "individuation is never concluded"; "the pre-individual is never fully translated into the singularity. Consequently, the subject consists of the permanent interweaving of pre-individual elements and individuated characteristics; moreover, the subject is this interweaving" (Virno, 2003: 78). Thus, it can be a serious mistake to identify the subject with only one of its components. In this sense, the subject is a composite; '*I*,' but also '*one*' with "unrepeatable uniqueness", but also "anonymous universality" (*Ibid*.: 78).

Secondly, "the collective, the collective experience and the life of the group is not" "the sphere within which the salient traits of a singular individual diminish or disappear" (Virno, 2003: 79). "By participating in a collective", the individual subject, "far from surrendering their unique individual traits", has the opportunity to perform a transindividual activity – "at least in part, the share of pre-individual reality which all individuals carry within themselves" (*Ibid*.: 79). Within the collective, individuals endeavour to refine their singularity, to bring it to its "climax" (*Ibid*.: 79). Only within the collective, certainly not within the isolated subject, can perception, language memory, feeling and productive forces take on the shape of an individuated experience (Virno, 2003: 81). In short, for Virno, a multitude of living subjects is always a socio-political collective (Virno, 2006: 37; Virno, 2009: 60-61) and the subjectivity of the labourer must go beyond the scope of labour.

However, the critical issue now is that the general intellect or 'social brain' which Marx describes as 'the pillars of production and wealth', which is the very condition of the cognitive capital, no longer coincides with "fixed capital and the knowledge congealed in the system of machines but with the linguistic cooperation of a multitude of living subjects" (Virno, 2009: 60-61). Since the "invention-power" of this multitude is becoming the "labour-power" in which the cognitive capital is idealised, the cooperation of these living subjects, that is based on thought, language and imagination ("the

distinctive faculties of the human mind", *Ibid*.) is its raw material and instrument of production, at the heart of technology development and innovation itself (Virno, 2006: 37). In this context, by re-interpreting Arendt's distinction between labour and work is melted into the single notion of 'labour', Virno concludes that this contemporary labour has introjected into itself many characteristics such as action and language which originally marked the experience of politics (Virno, 2003: 51). Thereby Arendt's terms 'labour' and 'work' (1958: 83) are combined into '(living) labour' and the characteristics that were shown through politics are subconsciously accepted.

In this view, the difficulty is to adequately conceive the two aspects of the general intellect (Virno, 2006, 2009). On the one hand, it is the basis of social production located beyond the vile epoch of the wage labour of the past. On the contrary, it still lies at the basis of political institutions that take leave of the state with its centralised administrative apparatus, its compulsion for obedience, and so on. Starting from these two standpoints, what Virno (2006) questions is whether it is possible to distinguish the technological-transindividual from the collective-transindividual? This is the ambivalence also surrounding living labour. On the one hand, this labour has absorbed "the transindividuality of technology"; "the labour of the individual is not added to that of other individuals to give place to interindividual cooperation" (*Ibid*.: 38). And, an individual labour presents itself as "a particular manifestation of 'transindividual cooperation' given a priori" (*Ibid*.: 38). At the same time, this living labour has "absorbed into itself the transindividuality of the collective"; "so much so that many productive operations seem like political actions, in that they demand the presence of others and must contend with the possible and the unexpected" (*Ibid*.: 38).

For all of these reasons, what is obvious is only that labour expands infinitely, even comprehending what is not labour in the domain of political economy: passions, affects, language games, and so on. According to him, "In a way, labour is today actually productive (of the surplus value and profit) only if it coincides with the human abilities that previously explicated themselves in non-labour" (*Ibid*.: 38). Thus, labour even produces subjectivity, society, and life. This also means that there is an analytical difficulty regarding living labour because "everything is labour, but it is this very fact that

explodes the concept of 'labour' itself" (*Ibid*.: 38). Therefore, 'transindividual activity' can be used as a contrasting term to labour; it should be developed and referred to in conjunction with a cultural-political project such as this thesis.

On the one hand, amateur transindividual activity is not completely liberated from labour issues such as self-exploitation and intermediary exploitation. Digital capitalism is still active because it can "compress transindividual activity into the straitjacket of labour", according to Virno (2006: 38). A typical example of such exploitation issues is found in 'free labour,' which can be observed in the so-called network economy that was briefly mentioned above (Terranova, 2000; 2004). Such free labour can be integrated into the profit accumulation process where various types of participation of users and amateurs as living labourers, in Virno's term, commodified in the network environment, upgrade the value of digital capital. All the activities of producing, sharing, perceiving UGC or amateur content free of charge, become inputs that enter into the production process of digital capital as labour elements activating social communication.

But at the same time, there are 'things' around us that are not explained by such logic in everyday life, such as all the free, autonomous activities intertwined with labour, thereby the concept of labour itself explodes, as Virno (2006) said. There has been previous mention of the gift economy, based on the commons formulated by the amateur's web activities. Today there are users and amateurs everywhere in daily life, with smartphones, laptops, computers, and wearable machines. Such mechanical interfaces mediate their creativity and sociality. Yes, some people limit themselves to clicking on 'Like' when on social media, or upload audio-visual content to Instagram. But others engage in editing the scientific terms of Wikipedia. Some tweet messages to organise protests, such as an anti-government protest against Trump's visit to Britain. Through their activities, they can disseminate knowledge, information, and culture throughout the public sphere thus becoming part of the 'general intellect' (Virno, 2009). At the same time, one can witness the micro-politics created by the same activities of such users and amateurs. As they become more familiar with the technical conditions and operate actively and autonomously, the gift economy they form will develop and will contribute to the formation of a cultural and aesthetic community based on that commons. These gifts to

society and cultural communities exist in alternative forms even inside UGC or social media or are waiting for new opportunities to subvert them. In this sense, it can be assumed that amateur-multitudes and user-multitudes can be byproducts of the technological change in the production process, but at the same time, it can be a potential for new cultural politics.

The above discussions hint at the merits and problems involved in the problem of grasping the cultural production of amateurs as transindividual activities on the social Webs and UGC platforms. That labour is replaced by transindividual activities makes it possible for technology, as a medium, to realise human potential, newly structure human society and make an existential lead. Technological activity as the transindividual activity of Simondon (1858/2010) also dealt with the problem of alienation, which cannot be reduced to economic alienation and the labour problem. Furthermore, the insight into transindividuality of the collective, which is formed through transindividual activity, shows technical-political conditions that are worthy of attention in the current digital culture and society. However, at the same time, as various discussions on cognitive capitalism suggest, such conditions can be polluted by digital capital, which knows how to restrain transindividual activities. It seems that there is an urgent need to solve the restraining method that is entangled with various capitalist apparatuses of digital platforms. Through the analysis of Pro-Ams activities in Web platforms, I will examine techno-political conditions surrounding amateur transindividual activities. In the process, this thesis will critically analyse whether culture production of amateurs can be understood not only just as 'free' labour but also as a 'transindividual' activity.

3. Research Objects and Structure

To meet the research aim, I have selected three groups of Pro-Ams as research objects, after having conducted an online participation observation on digital platforms

specialising in user-created content mediation where the gift-like amateur content is exchanged spontaneously among users and, at the same time, their ethical practices, gift-giving, and gift-receiving can be translatable into the capitalist grammar of the general equivalent of virtual money. For the purposes of this thesis, amateurs are those who work harder than anyone else on these platforms, just like a professional. Since the following chapters will provide a richer description of such amateurs, the following paragraphs give only their general characteristics.

Most importantly, all of these amateur groups meet the general description of amateurs who are keen on their favourite activities. However, due to their passionate and continuous activities on the digital platforms, they violate the general perception of amateurs. The majority of the participants who were interviewed were more and less engaged in commodity activities centered on the digital platform to gain their subsistence. Although these amateurs did not start out with a desire for monetary rewards, the platforms on which their activities were desired developed a variety of technological apparatuses that enabled them to gain pecuniary benefits for their activities. However, the condition here is that the amount of such compensation is relatively determined in competition with other amateurs. The first amateur group that was interviewed (as detailed in Chapters 4 and 5) is the most representative example of the semi-professionals. The members of the group participate in live video production on the Afreeca TV platform. They receive sponsorship from the audience community in exchange for broadcasting their lives. Since their lives are diverse, the scope of their relays is also wide and competition among them is rife. For example, in front of a webcam, some play StarCraft, while others broadcast themselves overeating to try to attract viewers' attention. However, they sometimes hang out in the same space and relay the same event, for instance, they all rushed to relay anti-government protests to show their common political belief, just like they did in 2008 and 2017 in Seoul. Thus, this group of amateur broadcasters is well suited to discuss transindividual activities of the multitude inherent in the cognitive capitalist digital platform.

The second group of Pro-Ams described in Chapter 6 may seem relatively introspective in comparison with the previous one. The reason is that members of this group spend a great deal of time drawing comics alone at home. However, they are also in fierce competition with one another, at least in the so-called Webtoon platform, where amateur based competitions in Web-cartoon production are open all year around. Webtoon is a new form of digital comics that changed the trend of cartoon consumption within South Korean society with the emergence of the web. As the term, an abbreviation for Web and cartoon, suggests, Webtoons combines the technical characteristics of the web with the aesthetic style of cartoons, as can be seen in the abbreviation of the Web's comics. Within a decade, this type of cartoon production goes mainstream within South Korea's creative industries, thanks to the unique 'scrolling' directing style, that of vertically arranging cartoon images from top to bottom according to the technical characteristics of the web. Then, two biggest Web portals in South Korea, which noticed its commercial value, started to operate the so-called Webtoon platforms that provide amateur and professional comics together, free of charge to users. The portals intend to expand the free service of Webtoon to increase the number of user visits. Since 2003 and 2005, Naver and Daum have conducted amateur-based competitions to promote intense competition among amateurs and expand the number of cartoonists commissioned by the platform's Daily Cartoon Service. In such competitions, where the crowdsourcing evaluation decides the winner, amateur Webtoonists struggle to gain 'likes'. Chapter 6 discusses the cases of those who actually became semi-professional and were commissioned as Webtoonists through the portals' incubating system. These interviewees are inevitably related to today's digital labour market, particularly where the boundaries between professionals and amateurs are unclear, and they can thus provide answers to how today's web amateurs' transindividual activities can be examined regarding their transindividuality in the areas of digital production. It will be also explored whether or how, in particular, such Web portals' digital platform-based competition that hopes to inspire amateur webtoonists and idealise them as creative workers with cultural entrepreneurship could ultimately expand the market of on-demand labour, a form of under-wage, '*précarité* labour' (de Peuter, 2014; McRobbie, 2016), even to the existing cultural industries.

Lastly but not least, the third group of amateur self-publishers described in Chapter 7 are a bit different. They insist on the physical media channels as opposed to the other amateurs. They work on the materialisation of individual history, experiences and memories in a community through paper book-making, avoiding free self-publishing spaces on the Internet. Rather, these amateurs engage in self-publishing activities only within the physical channels of independent bookstores that only sell amateur self-publications. The symbiotic relationship between these amateur self-publishers and independent bookstores is mostly found in Seoul. They seek to be free from the digital economy, although they also benefit from digital technologies. Studies on each of the three amateur groups and a comparison of the results gained over a three-year digital ethnography research study comprise part of this thesis in order to figure out amateur culture production after the Web, providing an appropriate theoretical framework can be found.

Chapter Two. How Amateurs Became Web Amateurs
: Literature Review on Amateur Cultural Production

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to critically re-evaluate the concept of the amateur and to propose the possible new expansion and application of the term. The following section reviews the literature so far, and will comb through shifts in the concept from the 'amateur' that was a cultural political project with the advent of the culture industry (Barthes, 1977; de Certeau, 1984; Highmore, 2006; Stiegler, 2011b, 2017a, 2017b), through the 'professional-like amateur' related to the development of leisure culture (Stebbins, 1992, 2009; Leadbeater and Miller, 2004), the 'free labourer' in the post-Fordist cultural and cognitive industries (Terranova, 2000, 2004), to the mass amateurised in bi-directional nets in Web 2.0 platforms, called 'multitude'(Virno, 2003, 2007; Negri and Hardt, 2004). This comparison attempts to show what new cultural implications the concept has accrued, especially in cultural production and the arts, and what social significance its practice has. Particular attention will be paid to the cases of art amateurs who produce aesthetic works through an ensemble with technology in the Web era, in order to emphasise the new culture-political implications of amateurs and the ways in which they have survived in the fields of cultural production and the arts.

Of course, it is necessary to pursue a balanced review of the concept of the amateur beyond the perspectives of its newness or quantitative expansion discussed so far. Therefore, this project also questions whether a new form of amateurism is emerging against the concept's historical background. Therefore, the first thing is to distinguish amateurs from experts in line with the Frankfurt School's critique of expertise production in the culture industry (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947/2002). This will allow me to suggest how amateurism's identity and cultural production should be evaluated.

2. What's the Matter with Expert Production in the Culture Industry?

We here look at the arguments on expertise production in the culture industry, which still has a strong influence on the production of culture, in order to understand the historical meaning of amateur production that has always been regarded as the opposite of industrial production. From the beginning the discussions on cultural production in Cultural Studies and Media Studies have expanded into the area of research on political economy with critiques of capitalist cultural industries, regarding issues such as consumer alienation in the industrial cultural production of the standpoint of the Frankfurt school (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947/2002) or leisure activities of consumerist classism understood by Bourdieu's theory of distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984). The common point that these two classical approaches share is that through industry-controlled expert production has become standardised and commercialised, while systemically having drawn a clear line between producer and consumer. The bottom line of the Frankfurt School critique is that, after the First World War, through the so-called "culture industry" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947/2002), like film and recording, the citizen's recreation and the consumer needs are produced in a standard form as if factory mass-produced, while creating a false consciousness about the world by replacing citizens' artistic activities with mere consumption. What Durkheim's discussion (1960) about that period also suggests, the 'division of labor in society' has accelerated, thus, the 'free professions', or professional organisations emerged, which are judged to have so-called 'expertise' through specialised training focusing on specific fields such as membership organizations and occupation-based groups (Lincoln and Guillot, 2004). In this shift, what Adorno and Horkheimer give attention especially to the case of leisure areas, where the use of a technological means has been monopolised by 'artistic experts' (Adorno and Horkheimer, *Op.cit.*: 129) who deliberately contribute to the diffusion of consumerism to benefit the ruling class. In the similar context, Bourdieu's theory of 'distinction' (1984) also shows that consumption according to individual tastes produced by these experts, even very

personal cultural consumption, can contribute to the dominant order that distinguishes the class.

Further, critical approaches to this consumerism culture have also increased in Europe and the US after the Great Depression (Kaufman, 2012). The governments of these countries adopted the New Deal policy and the Keynesian system respectively to transform themselves into state-led mass-production systems, while overcoming such an economic crisis, a new industrial strategic movement to encourage consumption takes place nationwide (*Ibid*.). In this trend, the word 'consumption,' which first appeared in the early 14th century, originally had a negative meaning, as 'consume' meant to "destroy it, to make it burn up, evaporate, or waste away" (Oxford English Dictionary documented by 1395, cited in Graeber, 2007: 4), has been redefined. Mass advertising and marketing intentionally shifted the social awareness of 'consumption,' providing instead a positive image (Stiegler, 2011b: 55) that distinguishes the class and identity through product consumption (as shown in the Bourdieu analysis of symbolic capital, 1984). In this highly mechanised system, producers in the cultural industry, like those in marketing and PR jobs, creatively demonstrate their expertise in developing and classifying consumer tastes and offering products that match them. Industrial products of culture, created and planned by delicate calculations and specialist division and collaboration, and leisure activities commercialised, in the same manner, become a means to distinguish us from others. For this reason, Baudrillard has argued that, in this modern society of consumption, "it is the economic system that induces the individual function and the parallel functionality of objects and needs," "far from the individual expressing his needs in the economic system" (Baudrillard, 1981/1994: 86, 133).

So far, the culture industry has energetically executed the previously clumsy transposition of art into the sphere of consumption and divested amusement of its "*obtrusive naivetés*" and improved the "type of commodities" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947/2002: 135*)*. However, any amusement, entertainment or culture after the workday ends merely prolongs the daytime labour and amplifies its alienation according to Adorno and Horkheimer (1947/2002). For example, leisure is sought by the labourer as an escape from the mechanised process at work, but to recoup the strength to be able to cope with

such work again; "at the same time, mechanisation has such power over a man's leisure and happiness, and so profoundly determines the manufacture of amusement goods, that his experiences are inevitably after-images of the work process itself" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947/2002: 137). Although the cultural industry presents itself as fulfilling all the desires of consumers, those desires are in fact pre-determined by the culture industry itself. Therefore, it results in the overall organisation and homogenisation of everyday activities where the consumer takes it for granted and self-perceives as a permanent consumer and an object of the cultural industry, even though all components of the production, such as amusement, entertainment, and culture had existed long before the cultural industries came into being. Such loss of participation in the production and circulations of symbols eventually results in losing the knowledge about cultural production, that is, what Stiegler called '*symbolic misery*' (Stiegler, 2004/2014: 10). That is, "even the aesthetic activities of political opposites are one in their enthusiastic obedience to the rhythm of the iron system" (Adorno and Horkheimer, *Op.cit.*: 120). This complete conversion from artistic activity (that is cultural production) to consumption activity leads to the exclusion of all citizens (including amateurs) from cultural production.

Meanwhile, following Adorno and Horkheimer (1947/2002), Stiegler (2001/2011) further investigates the way (hyper-)industrial technologies surrounding cultural production has individualised while aiming to subordinate. the desires of audiences. Technologies of the so-called 'program industry' produce and circulate industrial temporal objects that modify our experience of time, and accordingly solicit our concious attention, making us adopt the time of programs (Stiegler, 2001/2011: 33-34; see also Stiegler, 2011b: 52), as well as the technologies of psycho-power which evolved and were dedicated to marketing and publicity (Stiegler, 2011a: 3-4). He emphatically points that out hyper-industrial technologies appeared after World War II and intended to develop aesthetic conditions making the 'pure' masses have their self-complacent illusion of the fake experience controlled by the industries. As they are allowed to experience short circuits where the object exists only for as long as the industry program, they have accustomed themselves to this conditioning, without recognising the loss of their aesthetic experience (Stiegler, 2004/2014: 21-22; see also Crowley, 2013). Further, the problem of such 'adoption' of the time and experience by these technologies is that it is

mutable. This means it can be easily 'organised' (Stiegler, 2001/2011) by "logistic calculations" which is 'hegemonically controlled by marketing systems and media forces' (*Ibid*.: 92-93). In this respect, Crowley (2013) argues that the concept developed by Stiegler (2001/2011), the structural openness of consciousness that is articulated via technical prostheses and coinciding with its temporal objects shows the process of the 'symbolic misery', (he also called it 'hyper-synchronisation',) as it exposes it to manipulation by commercial interests seeking to direct the operation of these prostheses in order to channel consumer desire towards standardised forms of consumption (Crowley, 2013: 121-125; see also Crogan, 2013: 110-111). For Stiegler, the first task of cultural politics regarding this matter is, thus, to reshape the technological conditions in the heart of the cultural and cognitive capitalism, so as to reinvent our destiny by the circulation of symbolic materials, which only make us imagine a new epoch of the circuit of desire, for a more precise example, the long circuit of exchange of symbols such as amateur's gifts to the cultural communities (Stiegler, 2011c, 2017a, 2017b).

However, the monopolistic structure of cultural production could have been maintained for a while, with the emergence of the intellectual property system, which transformed culture into competitive 'rival assets' (Benkler, 2006), although culture is originally non-rival, just like any information as "its consumption by one person does not make it any less available for" others' use (: 311). It was possible since cultural industries found the reason for price competition in the production and consumption of culture, with the advent of the 'author' concept. With the development of the law of 'property right', the so called protectionism that is said to protect artists (but, to be honest, to protect certain forms of business) has allowed the uses of culture only by permission (Lessig, 2004: 9). In this trend, treating culture as a controllable commodity, the competition is accelerating only between the companies in production and distribution. The problem is that, as long as the protectionism remains, the use of the culture that was free among citizens is inevitably reduced by the law. On the other hand, there was another reason for the industry to maintain and justify such structure. In the past, particularly in the case of mass media, a considerable amount of capital investment was required, therefore, quality control of the goods such as 'gatekeeping' has proved problematic throughout the intermediary activities (Roberts, 2005). Information and culture, which were for the first

time handled by professional producers, who excelled at large capital-intensive and commercial projects, were transmitted uniformly to consumers who are considerably more passive than these experts. This model of 'one-way' communication was thus accepted in the newspapers, radio, TV, cables, satellite communication, and became the dominant form of communication in the 20th century, opening the heyday of mass media (c.f. Benkler, 2004; Rettberg, 2014).

Here, a professional army of the cultural industries – often called the 'cultural intermediaries' (Bourdieu, 1984) – has also attracted the critical attention of cultural political studies (see also Kim and Lee, 2012). 'Cultural intermediaries' refers to those 'new petit bourgeois' occupations and workers who are engaged in the "production and circulation of symbolic goods and services" (Bourdieu, 1984: 325) in the context of an expanding cultural economy in Western societies (Adkin, 2012; Moor, 2012). The dynamism of the field of already-industrialised cultural production is can be observed in the tension and power struggle evoked by these 'taste-makers' (Maguire and Matthews, 2010), who work more autonomously than other labourers in (relatively un-creative) manufacturing sectors (Bourdieu, *Op.cit*.; Kim and Lee, *Op.cit*.) and who produce 'hybrid' cultural forms and circulate them through the mass media (Moor, 2008, 2012).

Ultimately, if we extrapolate this perspective, the power of such experts that exists and enters the cultural industry can be understood as a form of 'symbolic power' that traumatises the mass consumers psychologically, functioning in the purely symbolic realm, as Bourdieu (1991) suggests. Bourdieu often used the term 'symbolic power' (or 'symbolic violence') to account for the tacit "unconscious modes of cultural/social domination occurring within the everyday social habits maintained over conscious subjects" (Filčák, 2012: 178). Namely, this power is a competitive way to access scarce resources, which in the realm of culture equates to cultural capital (c.f. Bourdieu, 1984; Johnson and Bourdieu, 1993). For instance, the 'new petit bourgeois' cultural intermediaries are "the instigators of new tastes and practices since their profits and power are reliant on the production of needs" (Bourdieu, 1984: 310; Maguire, 2014: 19).

In this situation, where symbolic power exists, the activity of amateurs is also in crisis. Amateurs may also become alienated and limited from the industrial field of cultural production where the industry only programs everyone's desire for such participation. Amateurs in leisure activities have tended to be disparaged compared to professionals in the field of cultural production, even though, of course, their autonomy equals that of a professional. The reduction of amateurism to the private realms often creates a social atmosphere that defines them as a special status of the leisured classes, such as the eighteenth-century Parisian '*honorary amateur*' (Guichard, 2012). However, in this light of these discussions, above researchers provide important clues for amateurs as a counter-force against the industrial production of culture.

3. Amateurs as a Counter-force against Symbolic Misery

Not so long ago, the primary interest of cultural theorists studying so-called post-modern consumer groups was to read the "postmodern forms of knowledge and micro-political struggles of the everyday world" (Lash, 1990: 99). With Adorno and Horkheimer (1947/2002)'s critiques on the cultural industry above, Cultural Studies researchers not only focused on the negative influence of the mass media where a few groups of experts and professionals monopolise the production and distribution of culture. Instead, while expressing public skepticism about the ruling forces, they also stressed the need to take the actual experiences of working class people seriously (Jenkins, 2011: xxi), led by Raymond Williams (1979; 1983) and E. P. Thompson (1971), who studied the formation of the working class in the 18th century, UK. They thus contended that the relationship between the culture industry and the audience is not simply unidirectional and this research trend has linked to the perspective of conventional Cultural Studies. Since the 1980s, the area of Cultural Studies has tried to interpret the reception and consumption in the 'popular culture' from the angle of activeness. Following the literary theory of Roland Barthes (1973), which interpreted the 'pleasure' of reading texts (Fiske, 1992) as the

process of the deconstruction of texts and the formation of new meaning of 'writing' (Barthes, 1973; 1977), and Stuart Hall's theory of representation, the 'encoding/decoding model' (Hall, 1980), the Cultural Studies of the 1980s put most of their energy into explaining the various deciphering behaviors and experiences of audience groups as activities of social participation, and further, as political practice of resistance (Morley, 1998). For instance, when John Fiske (1992) talks about the economic value of the production of meanings, he insists that even passive consumers can also be understood as producers in the sense of participation in the making of meaning, which increase the productivity of text and contribute to the creation of new cultural goods (Fiske, 1992: 38; see also Jenkins, 2011).

Following Fiske (1992), various studies of fandom have demonstrated the political implications of their cultural practices especially in popular culture and have also extensively including various cultural production activities related to radio, TV, and music. Some studies on fandom have established that cultural practice can be linked to issues of gender and socio-politics through the re-creation, thus, re-circulation of cultural contents (Jenkins, 2006; Kinsella, 1988). Moreover, in TV show talent competitions where amateurs are selected, evaluated thus re-absorbed into the logic of the cultural industry, the participation of 'ordinary people' (Teurlings, 2001) was recognised for its importance in broadcast production (Teurlings, 2001; van Dijck, 2009). Thanks to the advent of cultural production tools at home for amateurs, home videos, and community radio stations have emerged as alternative media since the 1980s.

These unique perspectives of cultural studies have described the interdependence of culture and technology. Although there may be differences between the theorists, cultural studies researchers have been interested in the interaction of between technological change and cultural shift. This research trend has linked to criticism of technology determinism: that technology determines social and cultural trends and patterns (Chandler, 1995), suggesting that technology itself is also shaped by cultural development, though it certainly affects the ways in which we live (Rettberg, 2008: 57). In connection with the previous discussion that culture is not formed only by a particular social class or expert group, it can be understood that technological advancement can also be influenced by

competition and struggle among people who use the technology. In fact, every time the 'new' media emerged in the media's long history, competition and struggle between these classes and groups always occurred. Once the 'new' media is popularised, a small number of people who have used it early (not experts) are newly conceptualised as 'amateurs' who continue to use the media with 'passion' about it. For example, when radio technology was developed at the end of the 19th century, it was used locally by those interested in wireless technology, as well as stations, as an interactive form of communication (Rettberg, 2008). Those who owned the radio at the time were able to transmit (speak) as well as receive (listen) at that point. With this in mind, Brecht (1932/1979) thus argues that the radio "as an apparatus of communication" would be the best possible communication device in our public life, as it is a two-way medium (Rettberg, 2008: 53-54). However, as soon as the consumer receiver-only radio was mass produced, its character changed into a mass medium of one-way communication in which a few media producers transmit messages to a large number of listeners. Unlike ordinary audiences, people who are still stubbornly trying to use it as 'interactive' are now referred to as 'amateur radio operators' in that they have comparatively expensive equipment and technological capabilities to deal with the 'ham' radio (*Ibid.*: 57). This change, of course, was influenced by the government's policy of granting limited use of the radio to specific companies or public organisations so that they could only broadcast to some senders (*Ibid.*). But it cannot be said that radio has lost its great potential; it has been incorporated into the dominance of professionalism as a mass media for only twenty years.

However, as can be seen from the continuing history of the amateur radio to this day, the culture-making by amateurs has continued irrespective of competition with commercial broadcasters (before the advent of the Web). Rather, what is expected of the amateur is that they are not individuated from products of the cultural industry, but are individuated from culture-making, the individual's way and practice which is not to be reduced to consumption (Stiegler, 2005/2015: 13). In this sense, Stiegler insists (2017a, 2017b, 2017b) that "Art amateurs love works of art. And insofar as they love them, these artworks work on them – that is to say, the amateur is transformed by them: individuated by them" (2017b: 7). Unlike 'consumers' who are passive and used to consumption, or 'audiences' who are active in decoding cultural texts (Hall, 1980), amateurs are familiar

with producing culture themselves. Amateurs, as well, consume cultural products but at the same time, they are always creating something cultural through this consumption. The amateur as '*homo faber*' takes on an attitude of reflection through various leisure activities whether he or she is making music, discovering scientific theories, making short films, or taking photographs practically. Moreover, as '*homo Ludens*,' amateurs gain 'pleasure' from activities of cultural production that cannot be acquired from the 'amusement' produced by experts in the cultural industry. Unlike consumers, they build their culture and therefore get the opportunity to search a broader range of 'goodness,' or '*poiesis*' in Heidegger's sense (1977).

Most amateurs could be passionate consumers in that they are often referred to as fans or enthusiasts, but at the same time, through the act of 'making' that is triggered by such love; they own and reproduce their love in various cultural production activities. As a result, unlike consumers who experience isolation from cultural production activities, they gain enjoyment from the possible moments in which they immerse themselves into not only aesthetic but also corporeal activity. It was since, as discussed above, producers can only gain an opportunity to participate in such activity, and therefore during the process where capital has colonised cultural production, consumers have even been robbed of this opportunity, too. However, the amateur is driven by this joy and love triggered by careful attention and becomes individuated from artworks by participating in it, thus, fulfilling desire. In this context, for Stiegler conditioning (2004/2014; 2017a; 2017b), the figure of an amateur is defined as the rejection of the value of the consumer who is excluded and de-skilled by the replacement of aesthetic experience which is commercially driven. Thus, for them;

> "To love anything at all is like loving nothing at all, and to love nothing at all is to be no longer capable of careful attention: the amateur can no longer love wherever consumption has killed attentiveness to what is consumed" (Stiegler, N. d.)

Stiegler further argues that amateurs are differentiated from consumers by their necessary connection with a critical practice of informed '*repetition*' (Stiegler, 2017a; 2017b). Here, he defines 'repetition' in the French sense: the regular practice required to learn an

activity. According to him, amateurs use repetition to maintain their love of objects and, through such repetition, they continually become who they are, and distinct from the collective inheritance they are engaging with, perpetuation, and modifying (Stiegler, 2005/2015: 128). This repetition is not just of copying, reading, and deciphering. While citing Barthes concept of the 'opening of the ear', he gives an example of the amateur who opens his eyes and ears, thus, opened his senses to sense by the way a work works (Stiegler, 2017a: 13) For instance, an amateur who has a musical ear, is repetitively practicing a musical instrument at the same time listening to the music that he plays himself, thus, interpreting the instrument. That is, the initiation to listen through reading and the instrumental interpretation is thus corporeal; as his playing passes through an ocular reading. Thus, what the original meaning of amateur (from Latin *amore*) "to love something", means here is to play and to play means to read. Also, reading becomes interpretation through playing, while it becomes certainly instrumental. Therefore, Stiegler concludes that "this education of the ear by playing an instrument while reading is altogether organological and belongs to a new circuit of transindividuation" (Stiegler, 2017a: 13); that is, "a long circuit" intimates a range of social transformations which are created by connectivities between psychic and collective individuation, as it allows for the passage of thought across time (*Ibid*.). In this sense, amateurism that conditions the diachronic aesthetic experience of individuation as singularisation through the practice of repetition can be seen as real resistance in the cultural industry. And the amateur can be re-defined as an individual of cultural production and an aesthetic activist of daily life that has resisted proactively against the movement of capital to colonise cultural production activities.

4. Mass-Amateurisation with Technologies of Transindividuation

This thesis as so titled deals with the relationship between amateurs and the web. However, what I discuss here is not only the web itself but also the impact on the tradition

of amateur culture-making with the emergence of the technology as a social-cultural-political-construct, by tracing new trends, the mass-amateurisationand the amateur-professionalisation, which newly define amateurism. These terms are useful not only to understand the transformation of the social status of amateurs and consumers who swerve from their course of the cultural industry, but also to track the changes in the economic logic of the industrial production globally after digitisation and computation. Unlike within the cultural industry, which is based on the program by experts with hyper-industrial and psycho technologies as discussed above (Stiegler, 2011b), in the new milieu, the mass-amateurised and professional-like amateurs play a double-role of producer and consumer while cultivating their lives and culture by using digital technologies of self-writing and memory-externalisation technologies (c.f. Stiegler, 2010a; Shirky, 2008; 2011). Global mass participation in the cultural production using digital technologies and the business activities of amateurs acting like professionals are linked to critical issues (Shirky, 2008, 2011; Leadbeater, 2008), such as the democratisation of the production structures, the empowerment of individuals and communities that are conscious of each other, and the unconscious de-demarcation of the boundaries between production and consumption. However, it is controversial that these digital technologies are also controlled by newly-appeared capitalism that is cultural and cognitive and tempts amateur activities into the formation of digital information and culture production that relies on the immaterial labour force (Terranova, 2000, 2004; de Peuter and Dyer-Witheford, 2005; Dyer-Witheford, 2005a). Before starting a lengthy discussion, first we visit the academic debates around the issues from the beginning of the Web era.

Just after the advent of the Web and the Internet, optimism about the cultural and political effects that newly introduced technologies becoming a weapon to overcome the structural inequality in cultural production had been predominant. Some optimists even expressed hope that this new and incredible technology would empower the 'weak' (Webster, 2001; Leadbeater, 2008; Jenkins, 2006, 2011) since they believed it would not only increase the capabilities of experts and power groups, but also those of 'the people' previously seen as political and economic minorities without the right to speak, and so raise their participation in politics or the cultural area (Jenkins, 2011: xiv). In this shift toward a

participatory and networked culture of the Web, where anyone can get involved and have a voice, the technologies have been viewed as a subversive means of changing and decentralising the capitalist structure of monopoly and dominance in the media environment, forming a new type of economy at the same time (Benkler, 2006) as it lowers the barriers surrounding culture production and distribution (Jenkins, 2011: XV). At least, media law theorists like Benkler (2006) and Lessig (2004) have perceived the structural change that the cost of producing and distributing culture, information, and knowledge has dramatically reduced with the popularisation of easy-to-use devices networked to the Internet such as computers, laptops, and smartphones in the growing networked information economy. They point out that the devices allow participation in the process of building and cultivating a culture that reaches far beyond local and physical limits. This became possible because transactional costs of creating and distributing media that the culture industry had previously had to pay were dispersed (thus, may fall) into the network where individuals are connected and owning the physical capital of the Internet, called "the end users" (Benkler, 2006: 30).

Further, with the advent of Web 2.0, extensive participation by users including amateurs in not only sharing and but also making the culture is accelerating. The second generation of the Web, called Web 2.0, has newly captured the role of the Web as the 'platform' where all the Internet users use it to create, distribute, and consume cultural contents and thus made it easy to pay attention to the users' role as a content generator or creator. While the first generation of the Web merely functioned as an information portal for just sending and receiving information, the new features of Web 2.0 provides various opportunities for users of all abilities, from semi-professional to amateur, to create content in all forms of ideas, text, videos, or pictures by using free software applications (Gehl, 2011: 1232), according to Tim O'reilly (2005). As a result, Web 2.0 has contributed to activating some more competitive and vibrant sources which include not only that of professionals and experts but also a diverse range of amateurs within various categories of creativity, passion, and ideas, thus having promoted cultural diversity (Lessig, 2004: 9).

On Web 2.0 platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Vimeo, a user has free tools and functions (like tags, trackbacks, and hashtags) to upload, edit, and share their works without creating a personal website or paying separate hosting costs. Anyone with a smart phone can take a simple video clip, edit and add sound effects in minutes. Even the creative activities of teenagers, who must have used these digital technologies to learn the alphabet, have led the trend. Two-thirds of UK youth ages 5-15 have used their digital devices to create something online, such as taking videos and editing photos, and creating avatars, according to the UK's broadcast communications regulator, Ofcom (2016). Surprisingly, one in five 12-15s have made digital music, and one in six, animation (*Ibid.*: 5). These cultural contents used to be produced only by serious industry professionals and experts using expensive equipment in the studio, or through outsourcing or division of creative and media labour. However, as 'easy to use' editing tools such as Final Cut Pro, Adobe Premier and Avid and numerous mobile applications with minimal functionality allow personal computers and 'smart' and easy-to-carry devices, and eventually enabling even teenagers to join in on content creation. It happens so trivially, frequently everywhere, yet not being recognised as a work of cultivating culture today. Regardless of functional differences between the platforms, all such activities are importantly treated as the "general equivalent," (Leonardi, 2010: 253) as all are subject to the same rules of calculation and control as well as the same economic, cultural, and social activities while being integrated in an unprecedented way.

The obvious fact that such mediatisation of life every moment has become just a common everyday activity has great significance for media literacy. Shirky (2008; 2011), who has the interest in amateur production, believes that with the spread of communication technology among billions of users around the globe, the benefits of affordable digital cultural production have led to everyone becoming an amateur producer (Shirky, 2008: 211). According to him, there have been examples of this "*mass-amateurisation*" (*Ibid.*: 55) even before the advent of the Web. With the invention of movable type and the spread of typography, the profession of scribe disappeared, and everyone who could read and write became an 'amateur scribe' (*Ibid.*: 66-69). What he then suggests is that, in digital media, through their blogs, Twitter accounts, podcasting, and video blogging, the masses have become amateurs as cultural producers—at least in the publication and journalism

sectors on the web. That is why he concludes, "instead of mass professionalisation, the spread of literacy was a process of mass amateurisation" (*Ibid*.: 79). Especially in this change, the 'mass', who becomes self-publishers on the Web, takes over the role of 'cultural intermediaries' (as per Bourdieu) as they could directly participate in a series of (inter-)mediary activities, related to producing, distributing, evaluating, and consuming the symbolic value of culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Kim and Lee, 2012). Thus, 'amateurisation' here can be redefined as a political term that weakens the privileged position traditionally dominated by scholars, critics, or journalists to a considerable degree, while being expected to trigger a democratisation of cultural production.

With the concept shift, the appearance of such mass as the amateurs also leads to a change in the use of the concept, the consumer. Under the premise of using digital technologies, the consumer of the culture industry now plays a double role both as consumer and producer, whereas these positions were considered as separate and conflicting in the culture industry as discussed above, regardless of the degree of activeness and participation. As Shirky (2008) exemplified, whereas having a TV does not give viewers the ability to create TV programs, Internet users with computers are not only able to receive content from hybrid sources mixed with amateurs and experts but are also able to produce and share those made by themselves (*Ibid*.: 107-108). That is, their amateur production linked with networked technologies is embodying a procedural logic that views sending and receiving as symmetrical and complicated activities (Stiegler, 2009a: 64) that are routine in daily life. Media studies have attempted to propose a new academic term. The audience that was formally conceived of as a 'passive mass,' but came to be an important object for micro-cultural and political research as the 'active audience' from the 90s, thus, got a shift in such trends (Jenkins, 2011: xiv). Bruns (2008a) rather replaced it with an alternate term that he calls the 'produser' (a portmanteau of two words, the producer, and the user) that blurs the boundaries between passive consumption and active production, by directly getting involved in the creation of user-led contents.

However, a further consideration which will carry more weight here is, the activities of mass-amateurisation take place in a wider category than those of the production or consumption. It is since that such amateur-mass production that is bound together with

technologies of self-writing and self-expression tend to cover all the everyday activities that are related to inscribe, record, save, recollect, and share their lives rather than to get involved in reproduction, poach, or resistance to industrial production. Beyond the boundaries of popular or (sub-)cultures, the meaning of culture that is produced by the amateur-mass draws near the anthropological sense; "a whole way of life" (Williams, 1959:93). Although there have been various theoretical discussions on the relation between the culture and the technology, the concepts that can be used to discuss the problem of amateur-masses self-writing is Foucault's self-writing and Simondon's trans-individual. For Foucault (1988), the technologies of the self, such as the *hupomnemata*, a form of self-writing like a notebook, or journal of sorts for the Ancient Greeks, are different from art objects that are distinct and separate from the writer. It is since, for a purpose, "that is nothing less than the shaping of the self" where "the soul must make them not merely its own but itself" (Foucault and Faubion, 2000: 210-211). Thus, the creation of the *hupomnemata* is same as the creation of the self (Swonger, 2006: 2). It should be understood as a technology of the self, a tool for the 'self-care' that enables "individuals to effect by their means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (*Ibid*.: 2). This Foucauldian approach suggests, questions around amateur activities on the Web can also be explored with a particular emphasis given to the ethical, aesthetical, and political dimensions and thus to the need to distinguish amateur self-writing from just a leisure activity.

However, as soon as such self-technologies became transformed as digital technologies, like the Web that presupposes a network with others, it can no longer be operated in the 'self' alone. Rather, these technologies contribute to the composition of an associated milieu, the basis of the trans-individual activities, as a new "model for collective relation" (Simondon, 1958/2010: 245). Of course, it does not mean that all the amateur technical activities on the web are transindividual. What Simondon emphasises is, the relation to the technical object can only become adequate "to the extent that it succeeds in bringing this interindividual collective reality into existence", which we call *trans-individual* that "creates coupling between the inventive and organisational capacities of many subjects."

(*Ibid*.: 253). Referring to his point of view, at least examples of amateur self-publishing of the web can be considered as such trans-individual activities. Unlike Foucault's examples of Greek *hupomnemata*, which are being kept in a bookcase, a blog (that is a digital form of amateur self-publishing) is open to lurkers who read it or add comments. Here, thus, his practices, memories, and experiences are transformed into social and collective construct as long as they are inherent in such technologies.

In this context, Stiegler (2017b), who reconstituted the Simondonian theory of individuation, reconstructed the concept of technologies for self-writing as *mnemotechnologies*; that is, a kind of "technologies of trans-individuation" (Stiegler, 2017b: 49). Unlike the existing mnemotechnics of the self-technology (the artificial storage of individual memories that characterizes hypomnesis form ideogrammatic writing to the print revolution) just focus on storing and extending memory, these mnemotechnologies (embedding of memories within technological systems) individuate themselves while the systems order memories according to their own logics (Stiegler, 2010a: 64-65; see also Langlois, 2014). Social Webs can be understood as a larger mnemotechnological milieu fused with technical memory aids like cell phones that are external to ourselves thus allowing memory-externalisation onto non-human beings (Stiegler, 2010a: 64). For example, Facebook can store information and contents created by users as well generate and organise them (Langlois, 2014: 131). Here, the memory, which becomes data, can be commodified by being mined, sold and exchanged, that is, the reorganising processes of the retention (*Ibid*.). Further, as it contains different kinds of information and contents, it allows users to compete for other users' attention, while it operates a recommendation system (of 'hyper-attention', by borrowing Hayles' 2007 term) that guides users where to look, in short. In other words, the processes are not only remembering and recalling (retention) but they also can be in the present (attention) and to project into the future (protention) (Langlois, 2014). This implies that these mnemotechnologies, which are connected by the capitalistic logic of the social Webs can influence the relationship between psychic individuation (of *I*) and further collective individuation (of *We*) (*Ibid*.: 130-132). In this context, Stiegler's mnemotechnologies can be used as an appropriate term to describe the *pharmakon* (a play of positions like poison-remedy; Stiegler, 2012b) characteristics of the amateur self-publishing in this thesis that

will be discussed in Chapter 6 and 7. That is, while these technologies give amateur activities such as self-publishing of the Web a new sociality, the possibilities of transindividuation, they also lead to the loss of the value of self-expression as a means of systematic manipulation of external memories.

For Stiegler, on the other hand, the Web 2.0 platforms, where creation, sharing, and consumption of amateur content are active, are also critically dealt with, as a typical example of the organisation of transindividuation technologies in an industrial context. In the bi-directional nets of the Web 2.0, everyone must be an amateur producer where the precondition is that they can make their reception public only to the extent that they produce (Stiegler, 2009a: 53). This means their production is always constituted by nets which have more or less systemically grammatised the collective individuation within the platforms. Stiegler (*Ibid*.) points out in his analysis of YouTube, the Web 2.0 platform full of amateur audiovisual media, that the platform is based on the processes of collective, collaborative, and associated individuation which is formed around the common interest of cultural communities. While it individuates itself where the practices of auto-production are developed, and protocols of indexation are established thanks to individual drives by amateurs and other users (*Ibid*.: 53-54). All the amateur videos are generalised controllable, traceable, and categorised through auto-indexation here, while the discrete images of their lives are auto-production and auto-broadcasted through the platform (*Ibid*.:55). In this sense, Web 2.0 technologies are pharmacological, that they can be both beneficial and damaging at the same time. On the one hand, the platform may be a critical apparatus supporting counter forces, creating and extending amateur circles for trans-individuation. On the contrary, when the techniques of auto-production developed for business revenue activities get the cultural hegemony on the platform, it may lead to the systematisation of short circuits and the absence of counterforce to a dis-individuation (*Ibid*.: 54-55).

For this reason, this thesis understands the culture of today's phenomenon of mass-amateurisationon the web, as not only the participatory culture but also the culture of the trans-individuation. It is necessary not only to review the degree to which the amateur-mass might have sufficient competence (Virno, 2003, 2009) such as potential

empowerment to become a counter force against industrially controllable short circuits in trans-individuation within amateur circles, but also to critically examine how its trans-individual activities throughout the memory externalisation by the self-writing penetrate the process of psychic and collective individuation. In this way, the technical use of the term, amateur, as a form of life, is not just an identity that an individual acquires only in leisure activities, but must be extended to a political and cultural practice in the area where digital production and social activism overlap.

5. Amateur-Professionalism in Digital Production

It is evident the emergence of these social Web models has also changed the flow of research into the consumer as an amateur in production. The first thing to notice is that, while media scholars have traditionally categorised and given meaning to each category of media activities through looking at the relationship between producers and media, with the emergence of the Web and especially Web 2.0, everything is taken together as a whole, using the term 'user' to generalise (van Dijck, 2009). However, this is not to say that all 'users' are actively participating with the availability of networked digital technologies in production. According to a 'Guardian' technology reporter, "if you get a group of 100 people online then one will create content, 10 will "interact" with it (commenting or offering improvements) and the other 89 will just view it" (Arthur, 2006, cited in van Dijck, 2009: 44). Likewise, an American survey showed the distinction between six different levels of participation in UGC sites (user-generated contents sites, another name of Web 2.0) and claimed that only 13 percent of users are 'active creators' who produce and upload content, such as web blogs, video or photos (van Dijck, 2009: 44). When we look at these findings, it seems obvious that 'participation' does not equal 'active contribution' to UGC sites. Rather, cultural production is a relative term when over 80 percent of all users are in fact relatively passive recipients of content (OECD, 2007; van Dijck, *Op.cit*.), and, as van Dijck concludes, those who create or generate materials are

only a minority of platform users (2009). The OECD also clarified that the agents of user-created content (UCC) are only 'amateur creators,' those who contribute creative effort outside of professional routines and practices (c.f. OECD, 2007).

In this sense, we can confirm that those who participated in the production of content such as audiovisual media were not all users but 'amateurs.' Just as we distinguished amateur concepts from audience and consumers, we here distinguish amateurs from simple users. In this sense, therefore, Web 2.0, while used as a term to refer to a network platform where web users share information, collaborate and exchange creative activities, it can be seen in a narrower sense as a platform where users who participated in the creative exchange of amateur cultural producers share and collaborate. Studies that focus on this aspect have trouble distinguishing between 'amateurs' and 'experts' who are paid labourers traditionally involved in producing media content further, and they also point out that in the UGC or UCC platforms where the user-created or generated content determines the size of the market, a new mixed model of labour can be found (Fuller, Hamilton, and Seale, 2013; Leadbeater and Miller, 2004). Some thus insist that as the UGC market grows, the role of the expert has shrunk, while the role of the amateur has increased, becoming the main driving force behind the growth of the digital platform (*Ibid.*).

The most notable thing in this hierarchy, seen in the mass-amateurisation in digital literacy, is that cultural production and distribution by amateurs who work or act like professionals have been attracting public attention. The development of digital technology made it possible for individuals to act as cultural producers and intermediaries as producing and circulation their works through the networks connected to potential receivers. Thus, amateur 'hobbies,' such as writing film reviews, broadcasting, or creating novels or cartoons, also gained attention as the cultural contents they produced were published on blogs or other social Webs, and this has become a new cultural trend. Then, at least in the domain of digital cultural production, the scope of amateur activities even overlaps with those of existing cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1984; Negus, 2002; Doane, 2009), whose "occupations involv[e] presentation and representation" and "provide symbolic goods and services" (Bourdieu, 1984: 359; Negus, 2009: 502).

However, despite the nearly occupational role amateurs play in producing, promoting and marketing, and distributing cultural goods online, their activities need to be separated, at least on analytical level, from the concept of existing cultural intermediaries (Kim and Lee, 2012). In particular, this thesis focuses on the Pro-Ams (Leadbeater, 2004; Bruns, 2010), who work like professionals on web or other digital platforms where new digital labour models combining both the expert and amateur orientations are found. It seeks to examine in detail whether, and how, the Pro-Ams' activities can be differentiated from those of the existing cultural intermediaries by raising the following question: if the cultural intermediaries in the cultural industries professionally construct boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate culture (Maguire and Matthews, 2012: 552), how do these Pro-Ams exert influence over the formation of new value for their own creations, practices, or genres?

Leadbeater and Miller (2004:1) had earlier foreseen the rise of these Pro-Ams, "a new breed of amateurs" through the benefits of a liberal network society. As these amateurs expanded their content explosively through networks using information and telecommunication technologies, they made a new trend in popular culture but also they could have spread into new occupation areas of cultural production, such as software program development, lab music, The Sims and Jubilee Debt Campaign, according to them. What these sociologists thus insist is that amateurs who work not only in the sectors of leisure but also in all occupations in parallel with the standards of authentic professionals should be called 'Pro-Ams' (*Ibid*.: 9) collectively. While the 'old' type of amateurs could have acted through a social organisation such as a local-based club, it is notable that these Pro-Ams form a variety of cultural communities through social webs linked to other amateur-masses that produce knowledge and media content together, beyond regional limitations (c.f. Leadbeater and Miller, 2004: 42; Kim and Lee, 2012).

Likewise, another study on digital media production following the argument points to the increase of the Pro-Ams even in journalism, while also recognising them as a new form of cultural intermediaries and naming them as 'everyday amateur-experts' (Kristensen and From, 2015; Kammer, 2015). Kristensen and From (2015), who study cultural critics working in the digital realm, argue that these amateur experts in everyday life have a

different tendency than the professional critics and journalists, and the manufacturers of taste in the media. In this regard, Kammer (2015) points out that characterising this 'everyday amateur expert' is the lack of institutional justification and authority that existing experts and journalists have been granted from established media organisations (: 874). However, he also argues that these amateur experts cannot be regarded as less professional or expert than journalists or critics, because he found many of the everyday amateur experts had formal education or even research experience in aesthetics, although they write cultural reviews just as a hobby (*Ibid*.). The emergence of this amateur critics group is apparently related to the structural change of the cultural production field accelerated by digitalisation. (Verboord, 2010, 2014), although a question remains whether this is an extension of elitism to everyday life, or the emergence of new bodies of alternative voices (Kammer, 2015).

In this context, this thesis researches the Web based Pro-Ams and their amateur production who actively conducts cultural production as a semi-occupational activity at the level of semi-expert. They exhibit remarkable activities in today's cultural production, and may well be seen as a new form of symbolic power. They induce the rapid change in cultural power as a new force that confronts the authority of experts. They oppose the expert group's opinions by making organic networks online. They also function as an alternative medium that faces mainstream media and is willing to challenge 'orthodox power' (Bourdieu, 1992). For instance, a Korean political critic who recently lost his job was able to make an amateur radio program 'Nakkomsu', despite that fact that the media in Korea is mostly controlled by the government (Kim, *et al*.: 2013). The program was popularly distributed free of charge through iTunes and intensified demonstrations against the government. The radio program boasted millions of downloads from iTunes. As a result, the Korean government inflicted legal punishments on the radio show's panelists and had tried to change the law related to broadcasting and communication (Choi, 2011a; Economist, 2012). Indeed, the cultural production activities of such amateurs caused significant harm to the government and the authority of the government-friendly press. And such amateur empowerment is not that surprising to the Western Webs, as amateurs that became famous through social media and various Web 2.0 platforms, while being called 'micro-celebrities' (Hutchinson, 2017) even publish

commissioned books or are hired by the media thanks to their online fame as mentioned before. As such, they advance into mainstream institutions through various routes and such unusual cases directly or indirectly show that the boundaries between online and offline, professional and amateur, dominant power and dominated are collapsing and struggling in today's cultural production field.

Recent research about new media commonly points out that online power structures are different from those of the past. Bruns (2008a) found out that participants on 'Web 2.0' media and social software, such as Wikipedia, are all invited with no conditions as to whether they are experts (producers) or non-experts (consumers), and they form hierarchy according to their contributions to information and knowledge creation (Bruns, 2008a: 101-137; see also Bruns, 2008b: 1-3). However, the hierarchical relationship is changeable, due to the project's dependence on the (user) community; thus, even leaders' roles may themselves shift as project work continues (Bruns, 2008b: 4). Of course, this shift doesn't mean that existing cultural powers of experts or media lost all its strength in the cultural production field after the Web. Contrary to the expectation of optimists, certain parts of mainstream media or experts' power are still maintained. In fact, amateur-professionals or amateur experts rather would not refuse the approval of old media, such as from newspapers or broadcasting, in order to get more social recognition. Van Dijck (2009) researched YouTube and found out that social support of the fame acquired through social media comes through interaction with old media. For example, an 18-year-old high school student uploaded a video clip of herself singing on YouTube and was signed by the recording company to which Justin Timberlake belongs, but only after he had appeared on Dutch TV (*Ibid.*: 53). This demonstrates that the role of new media is not merely that of mediating between users who participate in the cultural production, but it is still operative under the dynamic of more commercial and macro media that mediates existing media and users.

However, it is important not to overlook the hybridisation of culture and arts that warrants a change of cultural forms in this shift of power. At least on the Web, cultural forms that used to be treated as low culture and which didn't use to be dealt with at school or in the public media, are getting attention (c.f. Kim and Lee, 2012). As such non-mainstream

genres or low culture in amateurs' cultural production is gaining attention on the Web (Kinsella, 1998; Luckman, 2013; Fuller, Hamilton, and Seale, 2013), this thesis will investigate this issue as well. For instance, amateur Web-cartoons or self-publication that were not objects of high critical or academic review have become popular cultural genres on the Internet. In the case of South Korean Webtoon (Web-Cartoon) have subsequently been remade into films or TV dramas and have been welcomed as 'one source for multi-uses' as will be discussed in Chapter 6. Such developments of bottom-top movement where amateur production and their extensive distribution online facilitate hybridisation in the so-called cultural industries, in which popular cultural elements are mixed with mainstream media and each exchanging effect with the other.

To sum it up, these changes facilitate the hybridisation of various genres in culture and the arts, threaten the authority of existing symbolic power, and dismantle the totality of the capitalist production system through the development of diverse and diffuse cultures that amateurs created. In this change, Pro-Ams not only have power but also modify the awareness of hierarchies between producers and consumers that the culture industry had conditioned before. At the same time, however, the emergence of these Pro-Ams that raise income in the areas of digital production, building their commercial value, redefining amateurism itself, which was formerly a free activity without competition and nor any monetary compensation.

6. Amateur Competition and Compensation on the Web

There remains a question of how to understand the digital economy of the digital platform created by the contributions of amateur-masses and Pro-Ams. The liberal camp of media researchers has dealt with this matter since Rheingold (2002) early on referred to 'smart mobs' to describe the self-structured application of human talents in social cooperation. He names it as "people who can act in" there without question whether they "do know

each other," and "cooperate in ways never before possible," thanks to their "communication and computing capabilities" (Rheingold, 2002: 191). As Web technologies allow the 'mob' or 'swarm' to accomplish tasks that are beyond the talents of the lone individual, their 'collective intelligence' (*Ibid*.: 191) can be practically applied to knowledge and information production. Similarly, Leadbeather (2008) also stresses such new modes of 'a collective pooling of knowledge and talents' is emerging from the mass to Pro-Ams on the Web. These theorists further express their firm belief that "spontaneous or self-organised" amateur projects (Miller, 2011: 85) and mass participation there will result in overall social democratisation and economic innovation, and eventually bring a shift in the structure and the order of the formal economy (Bauwens, 2009; Kostakis and Bauwens, 2014; Bauwens and Kostakis, 2016; Chopra and Dexter, 2008; Moore and Karatzogianni, 2009).

Benkler (2006) further argued that such social cooperation is well founded in the models of the commons-based peer production that have contributed to the reorganisation of the global economic system recently. According to him, in the Internet-mediated cultural projects where hierarchical structures are less found, contributors that have various backgrounds and motives tend not to ask for financial compensation; as shown in user-generated amateur contents to software and computer operating systems (that appears to be a much more challenging task) such as Linux and open source software (Benkler, 2006: 60). Here, users and amateurs show passion for collaborating on a common project or for circulating their contents free. That is why their production must be called "the commons(-based)," by Benkler (*Ibid*.: 61). Examples such as Wikipedia and open source software, which are voluntarily made available for the creation of the commons, emphasise the pleasures and rewards of collaboration and cooperation rather than competition and compensation (Leadbeater, 2008).

However, what is notable is, the meaning of *'the commons'* is distinguished from a general definition of the 'the common.' If the common is regarded as nature itself and all the resources associated with it, the new definition can refer to all the "results of human labour and creativity" in digital production (Hardt, 2010: 350). In the cases of exchange of ideas, contents, and affections found in the networked production of amateurs and users

or individual contributions that are all available and easily accessible to all, thus, are like air or forest (Hardt, 2010: 350). Therefore, they can be called 'artificial commons' (*Ibid.*: 352). Further, social practices contributing the formation of 'collective intelligence,' mentioned above as the driving force of social democratisation become the very part of the commons providing diverse sources of value through the networks. Most importantly, since such commons exists apart from capitalism, it eventually constitutes 'the basis for an alternative society and mode of production, a communism of the common' (Hardt, 2010: 352; see also Carlone, 2013: 532).

However, the dilemma is that such commons also is free and open to capital. The new task given to capital is how to transform its autonomy into 'positive externality' and absorb it into the division of labour (Moulier-Boutang, 2011: 64). In light of this, Moulier-Boutang introduced the concept of 'cognitive capitalism' (2011) and claimed that the contemporary economy had undergone a complete paradigm shift from industrialism to cognitivism, and immaterial and intangible assets such as knowledge and innovation became the principal sources of accumulating more capital. While displacing the existing division of labour through technological, social or agricultural means, the cognitive capitalism rather relies on the 'artificial commons' (Hardt, 2010) that is practiced through large-scale collaboration via the digital network. It seeks to mobilize the cooperation of social brains within the system that "comes to the fore as a form of cognitive division of labour" and to secure as many of the positive externalities of the network as possible (Moulier-Boutang, 2011: 64). The more a network is "specialised regarding the cognitive problem," "the greater the number of participants in this system, the greater the probability" it will be found and become the "desired solution" for capital (Moulier-Boutang: 64) and the higher the likelihood of connecting them. Therefore, in cognitive capitalism, production means that the access to the information and knowledge commons (*Ibid.*: 118), collectively owned and managed by a community of users. In this context, Roggero (2010) argues the commons is not only "becoming a mortal threat to" capitalism but also becoming "a powerful source for," it at once especially in the case of digital platforms operated by digital companies (: 360).

In this context, concerns about the colonisation of collective intelligence, knowledge production, and the commons-based peer production have prompted interest in newly developed capitalism and its order formed by such modes of production. Labour critics and neo-Marxist scholars, such as Hardt and Negri (2001) and Terranova (2004), have criticised the ways in which "the glamorisation of the digital domain was a convenient pretense for the mobilisation of 'immaterial labour' – befitting the familiar logic of capitalist exploitation" (van Dijck, 2009: 50) as discussed in Chapter 1. This thesis also participates in such criticism, since this cognitive capitalist model has also been found in the Web platforms where the amateur media production is combined with the professional's. Thus, this thesis examines whether users and amateurs who are using these technologies critically on such platforms are adapted to the logic of cognitive capitalism.

This research thus notices crowdsourcing as an example of the combination of this logic of cognitive capitalism and the mode of the commons-based peer production mentioned above. So in this new sourcing model, both bottom-up and top-down work processes exist together. Also notable is that crowdsourcing (Brabham, 2012; Taeihagh, 2017) has been applied to different aspects of cultural projects proposed by amateur artists and non-vocational hobby activity groups. Although the best-known example of crowdsourcing by amateur contributors is Wikipedia, famous for developing and gathering knowledge and information for the commons (Prpić et al., 2015), multidisciplinary researchers have so far distinguished it from other crowdsourcing types; such as 'virtual labour markets' and 'competition' crowdsourcing. For instance, the virtual labour market is distinguished from other types of crowdsourcing where participants can expect to get paid. A platform implementing this model creates a digital marketplace for scalable amateur labour "on demand", by applying the logic of crowdsourcing; it provides a winning "platform for conducting human subjects experiments" such as completing job "microtasks" ranging from small data-driven tasks, to design, translation and content production that are performed in parallel by 'paid' crowds (Komarov, Reinecke, and Gajos, 2013: 207-208). For the best example, Amazon's M-Turk can be addressed, in which individuals and organisations can agree to execute work in exchange for monetary compensation (Prpić *et al*. 2015).

And another type takes the form of *competition*, found on the 'purpose-built' platform (e.g. InnoCentive, 2017) where this Internet tournament-based collaboration processes via idea competitions or innovation contests. Examples of big-sized crowdsourcing contests are Innocentive, Eyeka, Kaggle (Prpić *et al.* 2015; Afuah and Tucci 2012) and Challenge.gov (Brabham, 2008; 2013). Various organisations and companies generate ideas or solve problems *via* mass participation in online contests (Morgan and Wang 2010). For instance, an unknown company presented challenges such as "New Application for Microscale 3D Printing," (to be closed on October 8, 2017) offered a US$20,000 cash prize (InnoCentive, 2017). 'Virtual labor market crowdsourcing' and 'competition crowdsourcing' are prominent examples of how crowdsourcing's altruistic ideology and the valuation of activity, connect with the logic of today' s digital cognitive capitalism. The words '*labour'* and '*competition'*, once thought relevant only to professionalism and expertise, are clearly becoming a new modifier of amateur activity today.

Further, in the peer-to-peer sharing digital economy, companies take profit through fees, but these platforms have also opened up ways for individuals or specific groups to exchange cultural practices for economic value. *Crowd-funding* is one of the best examples of this; it allows amateurs or amateur groups involved in handmade crafts, amateur photography, amateur game development or amateur music composition to secure production costs through a project of 'creativity' which leads to "the amateur economy" where amateurs "sell their wares, raise money for projects or share their talents" (Fuller, Hamiltion, and Seale, 2013: 145). That is, in the economy amateurs have a right to profit. 'Etsy' (an online vintage marketplace) where amateur handicrafts are exchanged for money is the most representative example, and in the case of Afreeca TV (a Korean game broadcasting platform), a unique form of amateur economy is evolving through for-fee items that the platform sells and for which the viewers donate to the amateur broadcaster.

These examples of crowdsourcing thus show a contradiction in the cultural production of amateurs in the digital environment today. In the course of its development, the commons that comes from the networked cooperation and social production of amateurs and users,

namely crowdsourcing, has a dual meaning. On the one hand, it becomes a new form of amateur activity in that it is processed in cooperation. In the past, individual amateur activities that have been projected individually have converged to one goal, creating a new sociality, that is, it trans-individuates amateurs. At the same time, as the labour and competition types of crowdsourcing mentioned above show, it becomes a commodity in a labour market where the free activity of amateurs becomes virtual labor. The 'collective intelligence' and all the artificial commons crowdsourced by amateurs not only organises and evaluates the competition among amateurs but also can be used to determine the value of such amateur labour, so those platform companies make it easier to steal it. In this way, amateur activities on the Internet cannot be completely free from the dynamics of the commercialised media background. Although their work begins with pure *love*, amateurs may become vulnerable to tangible or intangible compensation as they gain more attention on such competitive crowdsourcing platforms. Thus, they tend to agree with the logic of commercial media and what we call the commodity economy, the topic covered in Chapters 5 and 6.

For this reason, Kostakis (2009) asserts that the advent of the social web gives rise to the formation of an amateur class and new modes of exploitation, as amateurs start to have control over the means of Web production like a professional or an expert. He believes that Web 2.0 capitalism especially tries to exploit amateurs versus more skillful users, such as hackers or professionals. It is since this amateur class is less skilled but nevertheless quite eager to participate in Web production, that they receive only small financial rewards, if any. For him as a Marxist, the ideal group of amateurs must break with the common perception, and a rupture with the past occurs; the amateur is reclaiming the original value of the world by not seeing the alienated essence of human labour - that is, money - as an end in itself (*Ibid*.: 457). Thus, the production of the amateur class should not be organised by the logic of monetary incentives but rather be chiefly based on values like sharing, respect, socialisation, and recognition (*Ibid*.: 457). This approach, however, can limit the research scope of web amateurs as those of Stiegler (2017a; 2017b)'s French amateurs. There is also the risk of idealising the privileged activity of a particular class as an ethical one, pursuing self-realisation or amateur activity as a leisure activity and not having to consider economic rewards. The previous suggestion of mass-

amateurisationand pro-am discussions was that amateur culture production could be understood as a non-class specific non-classified activity through trans-individuation technologies that appeared after the advent of the Web. Rather, the question now is how the amateur and the communities that consume and share their content are willing to reward be rewarded for this enthusiastic activity, often referred to as the free labour of amateurs on the Web.

Indeed, amateurs have opportunity to subvert the system. Since the value of these crowdsourcing platforms depends decisively on the information, content production, circulation and consumption among amateur creators and users, the platform is thus increasingly dependent on their productions. The enormous contribution made by amateurs through cultural production on these platforms is delivered voluntarily, and this is spreading over the entire digital platform the practices of immaterial labour in cultural production that is seen in output and consumption in the contemporary cultural industries. According to van Dijck, this perception of "working by playing" can frequently be seen among digital media companies, and is linked to 'anti-corporate culture' (2009: 51) that is observed among young people, who are willing to work even for a small amount of money. With these changes, labour relations shift from a user-controlled platform, run mostly by communities of users mediated by social and technological protocols embedded in the web 2.0 platforms, "to a company-steered brokerage system, where platform owners play the role of mediator between aspiring professionals and potential audiences" (*Ibid*.: 52). For example, companies like Google are not looking to turn every amateur into a professional so much as to acknowledge the growing appeal of selling home-made material to audiences and media businesses (*Ibid*.: 51-52).

Furthermore, the emergence of various digital platforms that rely on crowdsourcing and the competition between them depend on the success or failure of attracting and manage such 'crowds' of creators, especially competitive amateurs who produce high-quality contents. Moreover, as Hardt (2010) pointed out, their content is often dominated by the sociality and reproducibility of immaterial goods, so that such cognitive capitalist platforms cannot keep exclusive control over both contents and creators. Indeed, as the market value of user-generated content platforms grows, the motivation of usage, status,

and compensation in amateurs' cultural production have become issues, and the need for media companies to re-conceptualize these things has been raised. General users seek UGC platforms for entertainment content, while amateur cultural producers carry out their activities to produce and share home videos, but also do so to show their skills, or to become an expert in the technologically-mediatised culture and art field. About this, van Dijck (2009) pointed out that "what is clear is that amateurs take pride in their skills and are willing to develop it into a career", and that despite this there is the issue of considering the cultural production of amateurs as '(work) volunteerism' (: 51). These discussions show that amateur cultural production can no longer be marked as 'free,' 'creative,' 'collaborative' or positive activities, or in the opposite sense, as 'competitive,' 'excessive,' or 'free labour,' nor as harmful activities. Indeed, the market approach for amateurs' volunteerism has also become more sophisticated.

The way amateurs approach these opportunities all differ, but clearly the terms '*culture*' and '*work*' bound with their activities exceed their traditional definitions in this new cultural economy with its digital platforms. To summarize, the advent of various digital platforms that take advantage of the market value of amateur content, such as UGC and crowdsourcing platforms, promotes various ranges of labour relationships and creates various forms of labour between the volunteerism of amateurs and professionalism of experts. Therefore, the specific forms of amateur cultural production that are being newly defined by the capital-intensive, technology-driven economy should be critically examined with the concepts such as the crowdsourced evaluation and peer-to-peer compensation models. Also, the analysis of the amateur economy should be conducted critically along the lines of '(amateur) gift' exchange, which is an economic form that is newly emerging in the digital economy.

Chapter Three. Methodology for Web Amateur Research

1. Introduction: Digital Ethnography, On and Offline

As discussed so far, since the advent of the Web, cultural production is being expanded as a mixed area of amateurism and professionalism and as a result, the boundary of cultural hierarchy in such production areas is also changing. Thus, this thesis chooses Pro-Ams as a research subject, along with the phenomenon of mass-amateurisation, which allows observation of the collapse of such boundaries. Clearly, on the other hand, these amateur cultural productions on the Web cannot be established without being associated with digital technology, called the technologies of transindividuation (Stiegler, 2009a: 53). Their everyday activities become culture implemented through the structuring of digital technology with bi-directional nets. According to the development of information communication technologies and the spread of digital devices, the digital technology is entering our world of experience in multilateral ways, and the digital cultural production of amateurs is engulfed with modifiers newly designed at the boundaries of culture, technology, and industry. Therefore, research methods that can apply to such shifts should be proposed.

So far, as social interactions increasingly moved online after the digital technology was developed and computer communication became commonplace in the 1990s, academica approaches are also expanding into digital forms of 'old media' or the new media (Murthy, 2008: 841, 848). So-called "digital ethnography" (Hine, 2000; Murthy, 2008) has recently gained attention as one of the most exciting methodologies in the area of fieldwork on the technically mediated practices on the Web, such as those in cases of Web amateurs. Because of the adjective 'digital,' this approach may be misinterpreted as reducing the importance of offline fieldwork that investigates the collective identity of a particular group in a particular area, or over-emphasising the online scene and exaggerating online

social interaction (c.f. Murthy, 2008: 9). Therefore, experts in digital ethnography, such as Hine, suggest that "ethnography of the Internet can then usually be about mobility between the contexts of production and use, and between online and offline, and it can creatively deploy forms of engagement to look at how these sites are socially constructed and, at the same time, are social conduits" (Hine, 2009: 5).

In recognising the significance of such a methodology, this thesis selected two digital platforms, the Afreeca TV and Webtoon platforms as the research subjects for the on-site investigation of amateur culture production. Both of them are specialised in UGC production, sharing and consumption on the Web, such as the Afreeca TV platform for live-streaming video service and Web portals conducting amateur webtoon competitions. What these platforms have in common is that they promote not only online competition among amateurs but also technologically mediate compensation, so that amateurs can continue their activities. For instance, these platforms provide amateur rankings that check the results of amateur competitions, such as the popularity of the amateur content and the users' reactions to it are calculated in real time by combining the number of views, comments, and trackbacks. Thus, in a way, these platforms can act like virtual gatekeepers (Murthy, 2008) that borrows the wisdom of the mass users in quality evaluation of amateur content by setting up the freely open competition conditions among users. And, these platforms also have introduced new features such as virtual money donations and crowdsource funding to further stimulate production and consumption of amateur content these new features allow this thesis to observe interesting examples of gift-cycle and gift-receiving based on social interaction between users and amateur producers. Of course, above all, the biggest attraction for research is that all the amateur audiovisual content on these platforms is accessible free to everyone. Therefore, this thesis could make the use of the accumulated contents of these platforms as an archive (Murthy, 2008: 845) full of research data. As a result, this thesis selected three groups of amateurs after having done online participatory observation investigations.[5]

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5. Two methods of online participant observation: One, where the researcher reveals one's identity, to visit and observe them and Two, where the researcher visits and observes 'lurking' without logging in (so that the interviewee would not know that the researcher enters the social medium). These two methods were used flexibly depending on the situation.

2. Good Reasons for Field Trips

Four offline fieldworks observed the socio-political effects that these platforms bring out. This research aims to go beyond mere online observation of amateurs' technological interventions and textual analysis of digital content, to understand the triggers for how online social interactions eventually becoming offline ones. Even though the amateur content is distributed globally crossing regional boundaries, there is still a social construct tied to the characteristics, political structure, and history of the regions where it is produced. Therefore, offline fieldworks to visit a country that demonstrates the most advanced or sophisticated uses of technology is essential (Kozinets, 2010: 17). Four offline fieldwork trips were conducted in Korea, where the platforms are based. The three field studies were conducted for the study of two digital platforms (those being Webtoon and Afreeca TV) which showcase outstanding professional-level amateur groups of live video broadcasters and Webtoonists. And the last fieldwork was conducted in Seoul, Korea, which is home to the physical distribution network of independent bookstores only handling amateur self-publications. These long-term offline fieldwork experiences allowed this thesis to find a process of combining physical and digital fieldwork while resulting in a deeper understanding of the social interactions triggered by amateur activity there, as well as more the opportunities to highlight the voices of respondents in the thesis.

The importance of offline fieldwork has been confirmed in the process of continuously tracking the social movements within the rapidly-changing platforms in the cultural and political context of South Korea. The dynamic changes between the relatively calm and intense activity periods, on the digital platforms deserve to be observed directly in the physical field (Postill and Pink, 2012: 9), with the political effect brought by the social gatherings of the platform provoked by unexpected political events offline. Particularly for amateur broadcasters on the Afreeca TV platform, the analysis of broadcasts on political events using live streaming video technology is essential for this study to explore the cultural and political implications of amateur practice. Afreeca TV (originally developed for relaying gameplay) was used for the first time in the 2008 demonstration

broadcast the 100-day candlelight vigils before this research began. Therefore, in-depth interviews with amateur broadcasters and textual analysis of video materials still available online were primary research methods during the fieldwork.

Up until 2016, there had been much discussion on how such live-streaming technology has affected the knowledge and practice of various amateur online broadcasting productions, not only in gaming or relaying politics. Since its debut on Afreeca TV in 2006, the new genre, 'Mukbang' (social-eating) has become a beloved genre in online video production worldwide. Of course, at the same time, other issues have been discussed, such as marketability as well as transindividuality. However, during as the scandals of former President Park Geun-Hye and citizen-led anti-government demonstrations between late 2016 and early 2017, the potentials of Afreeca TV as a medium to relay the demonstrations has again gained attention. What should be noted is, the range of UGC platforms for the live broadcast has notably expanded from Afreeca TV to YouTube over a decade, and the average age of the amateur producers increased due to older people now using smartphones. Therefore, additional offline fieldwork to identify the generational conflicts seen in the relaying of candlelight vigils in 2016 and the diversity of technology use was conducted in Spring 2017, to deal with such changes. And, for different reasons, another fieldwork for self-publishing became necessary. The physical distribution network of independent bookstores in South Korea dealing soley with amateur self-publications, is centered around Seoul. Thus, to examine the relationship between amateur self-publishers and offline bookstores, offline field research was necessary. These examples show that digital ethnography still engages with or can become relevant to specific localities (Postill and Pink, 2012: 1; see also Kozinets, 2010).

3. Online Fieldwork and Preparation for Future Fieldwork

Meanwhile, the efforts made during online fieldwork before and after the offline field studies follow. At least one month before going out to the offline field, analysing work on various sourced texts from academic articles, newspaper articles, books related to the research subject, to online data obtained through a systematic approach to the platform as an archive, has been conducted to get necessary data for field research. In this process, I collected examples of amateurs who are active as pros, the main research subjects of this paper, classified the desirable interviewees suitable for this study, and prepared interviews by observing their web activities. I also tried to use the general functions of all the digital technologies, which consistently involve media conversion and media mixing. It was an effort to have a precise technical understanding of the future interviewee's practice.

For the case study on the Afreeca TV platform, in order to obtain information about the fame and influence of individuals online, first, the rankings of popular broadcasters were calculated by counting the number of viewers each received on Afreeca TV during the five months from December 2013 through January 2014, and from November 2016 to January 2017. An interview plan describing the purpose of the study was e-mailed to more than 40 people who were identified as being of interest to people outside the platform by referring to records of interviews from newspapers and TV, among the BJs ranked for four consecutive weeks. Thus, there were nine interviewees. As a result, in 2014 and 2017, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with twelve people who expressed their intent to participate in the research.

Before the in-depth interviews, each broadcaster's real-time broadcasts were observed at least three times to gain an understanding of the relationship between individual broadcast characteristics and the audience watching their broadcasts as an online participant observation (Hine, 2000, 2015) conducted in the online space. This online observation has continued even after the first fieldwork in 2014 was completed. And I discovered that the 'Mukbang' (social eating broadcast), which has been popularised first on Afreeca TV since 2006, has become globally consumed through on-demand video services such as YouTube as a unique cultural format. To address the issue of global production and consumption of such Mukbang, I further conducted additional textual analysis on the

most popular Mukbang videos including those produced by foreign broadcasters who are not Korean, along with the live videos broadcast on the Afreeca TV and edited and uploaded on YouTube. As of July 13, 2017, I selected 50 videos that recorded the highest view counts under the keyword search Mukbang. The number of these videos' views was between 1,346,495 - 6,792,087, thus worth the study.

To study the amateur contests held on the Webtoon platform, the priority interviewees were those who debuted as a commissioned Webtoonist through the amateur-based competitions. I sent emails to 30 amateur Webtoonists who won a competition in Naver and Daum to explain the purpose of the research and request an interview. Before I interviewed them, I read all of the current officially-commissioned series of their Webtoons, as well as the old set of webtoons made during their amateur competition, and attempted analysing these Webtoons as a technical, aesthetic form. Further, those who have yet to win any competition but still engage in semi-professional activities due to online fame and popularity deserved research. Thus, I asked 20 semi-professional Webtoonists from the 2nd league of the amateur competition for an interview and, in total, 13 Webtoonists (and 1 Webtoon publisher) had semi-structed in-depth interviews. The difficulty, however, is that half of these Webtoonists lived in southern areas of South Korea, such as Busan and Ulsan, (rather than Seoul, where I stayed during the fieldwork). I tried to meet them as much as possible using train and airplane, but with four of them I had to conduct email interviews.[6]

Last, but not least, in the case of amateur self-publishers, the last research object group, the author's acquaintance is a gatekeeper of the independent publishing industry in Korea. With her help, I found interviewees who are famous as self-publishers who have been in the field for a long time, while critically examining whether they are worthy of study. The summarised interview plan was sent to them through email and Kakao talk messenger app. Using the snowballing method in which the interviewee recommends possible future

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6 According to Murthy (2008), Email interviews can be a possible way to gather "rich bilateral streams of data" from respondents that are inaccessible (: 838). For email interviews, a semi-structured questionnaire with "open-ended questions" (Murthy, 2008: 842) was prepared with about 40 questions on 6 pages and sent to the interviewees.

interviewees, seven people agreed to have an in-depth interview. Many of them were celebrities who have been illuminated by their cultural and political role as amateur self-publishers through the media. Some of them wanted to receive a list of expected questions so that they can check in advance the direction and contents of future interviews. Thus, I analysed all the books these potential interviewees had published. I made seven different interview questionnaires tailored to each respondent by referring to their publishing style and the self-expression contained in the books. As a result, these preparations helped raise the level of interviews.

4. Research Ethics Issues in Offline Fieldwork

As a way of qualitative methodology, this in-depth interview method is appropriate for collecting and analysing the awareness and experience of individuals that are impossible to quantify. Procedures of transcribing the recorded interviews gathered from the research participants, analysing the major statements drawn from the records, and drawing necessary data (Creswell, 1998), allowed for the users' experiences and in-depth perceptions to be drawn out. In this sense, field research is also called "the systematic study through […] face-to-face interaction" (Bailey, 2007: 2)

I interviewed the total 33 people from February 2014 to August 2017. A brief introduction to the interview process: a consent form was received from all respondents, which also served to prior inform them of the purpose and procedure of the research. In the process of asking in-depth questions, additional questions were asked freely, so that the interviewees understood that the interview format was very flexible, aside from set questions. Upon analysing the interviews, supplemental questions were sent via e-mail, messenger app calls or text. A semi-structured interview method of asking questions flexibly according to the flow and purpose of the interview was selected, common set questions. For instance, with Afreeca TV BJs, these questions were those about careers

and experiences as a Pro-Ams broadcaster, participation in the social gatherings and political events, the chances for the growth of the Afreeca TV platform, their relationship with fandom as a celebrity, the degrees of technological skill they had acquired and utilised in their broadcast production, and, finally, their experiences of historical events on the Afreeca TV platform. In the process of such further online participant observation, it was necessary to directly observe the process of the broadcasters' production of live videos, and so visited the home of one of the interviewees and watched the process of broadcasting for about four hours. After realising the importance of observing the process of amateurs working together, I conducted additional field visits for two times respectively - with the consent of both Webtoonist and amateur self-publisher.

Earlier, I mentioned that in-depth interviews with amateur producers are the most important part of the methodology. Since these Pro-Ams turned out to be more famous than I anticipated, the ethical issues regarding the use of the interview content had to be raised. 'Online celebrity' interviewees need to self-regulate their voice to protect their reputation. However, in the process of in-depth interviews, inevitably, comments about conflicts with others in the field of online culture production came out. Thus, I explained the 'off-the-record' journalism principle and promised to use any sensitive content only as 'secret reference material' never mentioned in the thesis. During the textual analysis, the same ethical issues have arisen again. I realised that all of the cultural things that these amateurs produce - whether live videos, Webtoons, or self-publications - are (self-)expressions of life. This reaffirms the transindividuality of the texts produced by their technical, cultural production activity on the Web. However, at the same time, it means that when dealing with the self-expression of these amateurs this thesis should approach the interpretation more carefully and ethically. In this context, the In-depth interview was a most critical task that required much self-reflection about research ethics.

In the case of the group at Afreeca TV, they had all produced amateur broadcasts for at least three years and gained fame on the internal/external platform by the time I met them: for instance, selected as 'Pro-Am' by a web platform or the press, or continuously ranked in the top 100 in the platform ranking system. The length of each interview averaged two hours. Many of them experienced hateful comments or cyberbullying. Recognising this

serious problem, this thesis will not mention any unusual points such that the public can guess who is who (such as style of production and direction or unique content in the audiovisual texts) and the results of textual analysis will not be mentioned directly in the following chapters.

Meanwhile, most of interviewees in the case study of Webtoon platforms have won amateur competitions on Web portals and became commissioned cartoonists, and a few of them sold their property rights to the film and TV industry. These professional activities made them well known not only in Korea but also overseas. Some are even appearing as presenters on TV broadcasting. The main topic of interviews included the experience in the incubation system, their perception of the online working conditions, and relations with the platform. Various conflicts with the web portals were confirmed, which also became a reason to protect privacy. Since their relationship with the web portal has a significant effect on their profit activities, pseudonyms are used when referring to them. Although all text analysis of their works has been done, the results are mentioned only in the general descriptions to explain the techno-aesthetic features of their works.

Some amateur self-publishers have revealed their faces or real names in various interviews with Korean media. Thus, this thesis uses pseudonyms to refer to the interviewees. Their works were often based on personal families, history and memories, typical of the general nature of amateur self-publishing. Some textual analysis descriptions of their publications have been mentioned in Chapter 7 with the consent, but not the titles of the books.

5. After Fieldwork

In this way, the methodology employed to understand the characteristics of these amateur groups can be seen as a kind of 'digital ethnography' that combines in-depth interviews

with online and offline participant observation (Garcia et al., 2009; Hine, 2000; Murthy, 2008). While in the UK during a five-year research period, the activities of digital platforms and Pro-ams based in Seoul have been studied online and offline. Such offline field studies in South Korea were conducted for nearly a half year, over four trips, and during the rest of the years, additional email and digital video interviews were conducted when required.

After the interviews, ongoing interaction was attempted by disclosing my ID on social media. Communication through social media allows me to approach and link to the target group easily and has the merit of allowing objective observation and recording of the target pages of the research, thus revealing the internal dynamics and social relationships (Murthy, 2008). I carried out continuous participant observation of the interviewees' broadcasts for three months following the in-depth interviews and visited the broadcasters' social media profiles, such as Facebook and Instagram occasionally. This facilitated rapport with the interviewees before and after the interview.

Additionally, in the process of reviewing and analysing the data and information collected, I carried out triangulation to increase the feasibility and reliability of the study. Thus, related textual data (interview records, fandom texts, newspaper articles, broadcast material) were collected. This led to the identification of a problem about the lack of professional data on the platform, so a separate in-depth interview was conducted with two employees who had worked with Afreeca TV and one specialist researching online broadcasting regulation since it was founded. These interviews with experts in the industry and academia were used for examining the interviews of the broadcasters from a different angle and evaluating their veracity. Likewise, in the case study of Webtoon, I interviewed one of the print book publishers to see the response of the publishing industry to the commercialisation of Webtoons. Also, the fact that I was a reporter working for three years in the Korean film magazine industry was beneficial for critically analysing collected digital ethnography data and for interpreting its significance. Eventually, this digital ethnography for Web amateur research entailed self-reflection on research ethics, compilation of online and offline practices, and most importantly, a willingness to depart from conventional ethnographic practice.

Chapter Four. South Korean Society and Live Video Politics

1. Introduction

: How are the free live videos made by amateurs changing our society?

The emergence of the Web has extended amateur activity from the private domain into the public domains as a result of the cultural production tools that it provides for free. This is examined in the previous chapter. Amateur-produced images used to be distributed through very private channels, such as family gatherings, or through the restricted amateur channels and events, such as taste communities or through fiercely competitive contests judged by experts. Such images are now distributed through social platforms, that enable anyone who so desires to make their work available to an immensely large audience (Snickars and Vonderau, 2009; Fuller, Hamilton, and Seale, 2013). Since the introduction of Web 2.0, images have been distributed through platforms that actively encourage users to produce culture, and that add data compression technologies and wideband services. As a result, the production and consumption of amateur video contents beyond professional channels has become popular.

The expansion of public participation in broadcasting appears to fulfil prophetic insights voice fifteen years ago by Bernard Stiegler (2002). He foresaw the widespread world-wide dissemination of "techniques for the digitalisation of animated images" through multimedia and digital television (*Ibid*.:162). Indeed, as technologies for digitalising 'living images' in the form of TV developed, amateur image production activities moved beyond simple 'uploading', and have now entered the new domain of 'live broadcasting.' 'Live video streaming' technologies have enabled users to broadcast their videos live (in real-time), and a variety of Web 2.0 platforms that provide this function exclusively have been launched.

Live video streaming platforms differ from video hosting services, such as YouTube that focus on shooting, editing and uploading images.[7] The live video streaming services enable bi-directional networking between users via 'social live streaming services', which entail the simultaneous shooting and broadcasting of images, coupled with the instantaneous exchange of commentary from users watching the live-steams (Bründl and Hess, 2016: 3). There is a clear difference between two types of service platform. The fact that interactive computer mediated communication is also possible between the producer and the consumer allows a type of broadcasting that is very different from the older medium of TV. The difference between TV's 'On air' and live video's 'Real-time air' is that while TV can be carefully planned by experts, live streaming is created by amateurs who voluntarily enter the field, and is created without any constraints of space or time. Thus, live video is often called 'Post broadcast' (Turner and Tay, 2009) and "personal broadcasting station," (Afreeca TV, 2014). It re-mediates the properties of TV (c.f. Bolter and Grusin, 2000). It allows users to produce and consume multimedia contents themselves using various Internet technologies, such as the Internet, radio, chatting and webcam (CCTV format). Thus, live streaming video has a value that should be specifically studied as a new medium in the digital environment.

The emergence of live video streaming platforms has allowed the operation of 'personal broadcasting stations' to expand. Thus, platform users who had previously only been viewers can now produce contents in real-time and make them available to other Internet users (Palmiter, 2010). Accordingly, numerous amateur broadcasters have emerged, along with audiences that consume their contents. Research in the U.S.A. suggests that the main user groups for live videos is young people in their 10s-30s (*Ibid*.: N. pag.), [8] while statistics from South Korea show that those in their 20s use them most (Shin *et al*., 2013: 1228). Indeed, the rapid growth in the numbers of these live videos around the

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[7] YouTube added a live-streaming service function to its mobile service on Jun 23, 2016 (McCormick, 2016).

[8] Based on data from Palmiter (2010), over the past year, the amount of time American audiences spent watching video for the major live video publishers (such as Justin.TV, Ustream, Livestream, LiveVideo, and Stickam) has grown 648% to more than 1.4 billion minutes. By comparison, the amount of time American audiences spent watching YouTube and Hulu increased 68% and 75%, respectively, over the same time period. Although the amount of time spent watching live video is still only a small fraction of the total time spent watching online video, its sharp growth indicates viewers' growing comfort with the content.

world is based on their popularity among young people. In 2006, 'Afreeca TV' platform became the first to solely focus on providing a live video streaming service.

Afreeca TV is the short name for 'A(ny) Free (TV broad)ca(sting)' (Afreeca TV, 2014). It is based in South Korea and provides 'real-time' (live) video sharing as its main service. It launched a beta service in 2005 and started official business in March, 2006 (*Ibid*.). According to one study (Ryu and Lee, 2013b), Afreeca TV has an average of 100,000 broadcasts open daily, which have a combined viewership of up to 360,000, and this scale was about three times higher than that of Korean cable channels in 2013 (:155-156). The number of its members reached 6.86 million by September 2016, contributing to a steady increase in total sales since 2011 (Lee, Lee, and Hong, 2016: 10). In short, the service has matured to a level at which it threatens existing media.

The basic configuration of the platform consists of a viewing-only program channel list and chatting. The users install 'Afreeca TV player' on their computers and view real-time or previously broadcast programs in a grid-delivery method. First, an Amateur broadcaster, called 'BJ's (Broadcasting Jockey) in the platform, reads out videos and views that users of the Afreeca TV player to have access to, Viewers can then choose the program they want. Each channel allows simultaneous access to a minimum of 50 to a maximum of 500 users. Although Afreeca TV contents comprise a relay of amateur game programs, the platform has a variety of other contents. Examples include 'Taxi Broadcasting', which shows occupational activities in real-time, and 'Visible Radio', which pictures the daily life of 70-year-old men (c.f. Afreeca TV, 2104). Its strengths are the broad segment of viewers and the large number of individualised programs. However, there has been some commercialisation and occasional abusive broadcasts are problematic, leading to a growing academic consensus that such activities should be controlled by government regulation (Lee, Lee, and Hong, 2016).

It is important to note that the specific nature of South Korean society provided a special environment that enabled the rapid growth of Afreeca TV. Korea is an 'IT power' and has experienced a rapid expansion of broadband services and smart devices, which has

made it possible for the production and consumption of UCC contents to proliferate in Korean society (McGlade, 2014). Even before the emergence of live video services, South Korea had become an 'online gaming empire' (Jin, 2010), and an enthusiastic sub-culture highly receptive to special broadcasting contents and game broadcasting had formed around cable broadcasting companies (Kitchen, 2010: 117). When it first started, the platform was called 'Afreeca Game TV,' which clearly indicates that a need for broadcasting reflecting the interactivity of online games was already well established among young people in Korean society even before the appearance of the world's first live video service (Afreeca TV, 2014).

However, despite having started as a live video streaming service for 'game broadcasting', it is significant that 'Afreeca TV' became well known and popular throughout Korean society when it started broadcasting about 'politics' (political events) unrelated to game culture. In the year when Afreeca TV launched, anti-government demonstrations, the so-called 'Candlelight Protests', broke out in Korea and lasted for over 100 days. This had such a huge impact on the entire society that government functions were paralysed (BBC 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d). At the time, criticism of the government friendly mainstream media increased, and citizen started to pay attention to amateur broadcasters' live broadcasts of the candlelight rally as "a form of alternative media" (Min, 2008: 15). With 7.7 million viewers logging on to the Afreeca TV platform (Song *et al.,* 2009: 71), it was amateur broadcasters' activities around the 'candlelight rally sites', rather than those centered on 'gaming', that captured the eyes of both the domestic and foreign media (Gwak, 2008; Choi, Ahn, and Kim, 2008). Thus, Afreeca TV became known in Korean society as a new medium that could broadcast on various fields, such as society and politics as well as games. Thanks to explosive responses of users flowing the platform led the streaming service to succeed in commercialisation (Lee, 2016a). The inflow of users brought about both quantitative and qualitative expansions of contents produced, as well as an increase in the number of viewers. Consequently, as Afreeca TV changed its name from 'Game TV' into 'Afreeca' (Any Free TV broadcasting), it matured as mass media form that streams live videos on diverse topics (Afreeca TV, 2014). Amateurs who are active in the production of these 'live videos' engage in non-occupational activities that go beyond mere 'participation.' They also exert a powerful influence as 'celebrities'

on the platform. The focus on their activity drives this investigation of 'live video' as a cultural form and raises questions about the role of live streaming video in the contemporary mass-amateurisation of image production and the concomitant political changes.

Web 2.0 platform, such as video sharing services, present a striking contrast to the industrial model of culture and knowledge production, and to the digital networks model, which is "only used by an elite group of affluent citizens" (Shirky 2011: 211). Indeed, Skirky has a particular interest in expanding the literacy capabilities of the mass, argues that Web 2.0 technologies have given non-literates the ability to produce and distribute contents, thus causing the mass to become an amateur agent in the area of cultural production. Stiegler has also researched the technical conditions that enable video production and sharing by these amateur-masses (2002, 2009a). For him, this technology has a political meaning, in that it allows the people who were classified as consumers in the cultural industry model to become producers mobilised for the analysis of *'digital reproducibility'*, "the possibility of duplicating temporal audiovisual objects" (Stiegler, 2009a: 42). Indeed, this shift has the potential to "produce new forms of knowledge, new philosophical questions and a completely novel relationship to animated images" (*Ibid*.: 42). Above all, Stiegler is interested in the question of whether such potential changes in the reception of images might create a 'long-circuit' in the processes of psychosocial individuation in a networked society that derive from image production and consumption. For Stiegler, the premise of the auto-production ('*isoproduction*' in his expression) of such user-created platforms, constituted by the discretisation and analysis of each individual, leads to a 'literate collectively' (*Ibid*.: 42-43). This collectivity takes on abilities similar to those of the individual citizen in an Ancient Greek polis, and is enabled to 'judge' and 'criticize' both the production and consumption of images (*Ibid*.: 42-43).

Accordingly, this chapter addresses 'live moving images' produced by amateurs as images distinct from film or TV. More specifically, the issue of 'live video' production and its recent spread across Web 2.0 platforms is addressed. Whereas most videos shown on YouTube are based on the 'On-Demand' method, for instance, pre-recorded and then

distributed, 'live video' is truly 'alive', since instant image production and consumption are enabled. Users who visit the platform can choose a channel to consume. Moreover, they can engage in two-way communication via the chatting screen. As such, they also participate in productions of live video collectively. This points to the need to address both amateur cultural production in the live video platform medium and the users' audience activities together. Thus, in this chapter I examine the technological conditions of the live streaming service to clarify how the mass-amateurisation of image production influences psychic individuation and *collective individuation* in the processes mediated by such technologies of transindividuation. Individual self-organising projects, which at the same time are always networked collaborative productions, cannot be separated from their collective individuation problems (c.f. Stiegler, 2009a). Amateurs who are active in the production of these 'live videos' engage in non-occupational activities that go beyond mere 'participation.' They also exert powerful influence inside the platform as 'celebrities' of the platform. The focus on their activity drives me to investigate 'live video' as a cultural form and to wonder whether it can realise a genuine 'revolution' that film failed (c.f Benjamin, 1936/2002; Manovich, 2001, 2009).

Amateurs produce broadcasts in 'real-time' and distribute them directly through web platforms while communicating with their audience directly via chatting applications. This appears to be differentiated from the model of communication in traditional television audience cultures. As a result, networked individuation and customised viewing are strengthened. While there is a need to focus on the fact that a form of '(cultural) reflexive community' (Lash, 1994) is being created during the process of audience activity in broadcasting based on homogeneities of culture, such as shared taste or lifestyle. This, despite the fact that the relationship between amateur producers and viewer consumers is bound together through 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973). Seen in this light, live video in the digital network age accommodates the tendency (personal viewing) of digital (trans-)individuation, while binding together the audience of such broadcasts into specific communities, and while also becoming conjoined as a new media order triggered by amateurism at the same time. I take a critical attitude to the technologies of transindividuation in this industrial context. At the same time, I explore how this cultural

community is networked to respond to certain political events, and explore their potential political power, that of the 'multitude' (Hardt and Negri, 2001; Negri and Virno, 2003).[9]

2. Live Video and Distracted Produsage

After the successful hybridisation of culture and industry, amateur activity relating to artistic production dwindled to the status of 'hobby' activity (Arendt, 1958; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944/2002). However, this is precisely why its possibility as a cultural and political force for countering the industrial expert orientation gained attention (Barthes, 1973, 1977; de Certeau, 1984). Some have claimed that during the same period, the method of perceiving artworks will change under the 'age of mechanical reproduction' and that a democratic approach will be introduced due to production (Benjamin, 1936/2002). Clearly, from this viewpoint, attention has been focused on the expectation that amateur activity will increase with the (re)production of 'movement-images' (Deleuze, 1986), such as film and video.

There has been lively debate about how technological change transforms art production methods and audience culture since Walter Benjamin's (1936/2002) analysis of film in the 'age of mechanical reproduction'. The issue of the amateur image production has been examined in relation to this (Benjamin, 1936/2002; Stiegler, 2002; Manovich, 2001). Benjamin argued that the traditional '*aura*' of the art work would collapse due to technical reproduction (1936/2002), and that a democratic approach had the potential to expand

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[9] This thesis analysed amateur live show videos on the Afreeca TV platform during candlelight vigils starting from May 2008 for about 100 days to investigate the transindividuality of the live broadcast technologies. Although most of the live footage on the Afreeca TV platform has since disappeared, crucial traces remain on the Web within on-demand platforms such as Youtube. However, it must be noted that Afreeca TV was the most popular platform ten years ago since it provided P2P hosting servers which allowed users to shoot live broadcasts for free. Even after a decade, a considerable number remain on YouTube. Most images of the candlelight rally images were taken between May 29 and June 1, during the height the clash between the police and the citizens. Two footages mainstream media broadcasts were also compared with the amateurs' as reference material. User IDs are used as producer names in the appendix 3.

artistic works through technical reproduction. Writing in the 1930s, he focused on the materialisation of the 'decay of *aura*' due to the active technical reproduction of artistic works from the invention of photography in the 19th century (*Ibid*.). This was due an increase in the possibilities of exhibiting art work to the general public brought about by developments in the technical reproduction of artistic works, such as photography and art. This took art beyond the argument that "the unique value of the 'authentic' work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value" (Benjamin, 1936/2002: 5). The emergence of photography disrupted the vague fear and mystique that surrounded art works for their viewers. Originally such, emotions are derived from the art work's unapproachability and from the aura-related authority that came along with it. Being free from such exterior factors of the art work in the process of perception meant that it was now possible to examine these subjects critically. "So long as the movie-makers' capital sets the fashion, as a rule no other revolutionary merit can be accredited to today's film than the promotion of a revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art" (*Ibid*.: 9). Thus, "any man today can lay claim to being filmed" and "everybody who witnesses its accomplishments is somewhat of an expert" (*Ibid*.: 9).

The earliest films provided the masses with a new form of expression and what Benjamin would term, '(being) reproduced'. However, even Benjamin, with his passionate attachment to technical reproduction, expected that mass participation in cultural production would not be easily achieved under the capitalist Culture Industry as manifest in the West. This was because Benjamin learned that "the capitalistic exploitation of the film denies consideration to modern man's legitimate claim to being reproduced" (1936/2002: 10). In such circumstances, the film industry was trying to stimulate mass interest as illusions promoting spectacles and ambiguous speculation. For instance, Hollywood films were rapidly commercialised after release and developed an industrial structure that mass produced, distributed and consumed cultural products (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944/2002). Further, only a few experts were able to own or use professional production tools, technologies, and knowledge of cultural production under such a structure (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944/2002). This led to Stiegler's critique of hyper-synchronisation across professionalised cultural production in cultural industries associated with cultural capitalism, which is discussed in Chapter 2.

In order to examine in detail how amateur activity changed after the emergence of the Web, it is necessary to examine the specific changes, conceived as *'knowledge'* in Stiegler's terminology (2009a), that were introduced by Internet technology in relation to amateur cultural activities. Also, critical attention should be paid to the media environment in which such activity takes place alongside a re-evaluation of its labour-like characteristics. Stiegler (*Ibid.*), who contemplated the issue of artistic production seriously after the emergence of digital technology, re-interpreted this discourse ahead of Benjamin in his essay, *The Discrete Image.* Meanwhile, he claimed that "*digital reproducibility*" today leads to a change in the audience culture of perceiving images of genuine significance (2002: 155). For Stiegler, all visual images are already affected by "the spirituality of the technology," with which they interact, "from the vantage of a certain knowledge which it has of this technology" (*Ibid.*: 159). For example, the technology of "analog reproducibility" that reproduces 'analog' images, such as photography and cinematography, enable the audience to hold the belief that "this was"— in the words of Stiegler—the task of "*synthesis*" (*Ibid.*: 159). This is made possible because the diverse technologies that cover up and erase the discontinuity of analog images are mobilised for the experts' image "*analysis*" work (*Ibid.*: 159). In other words, knowledge of technology concerning the reproduction of analog images (analog reproducibility) requires both experts and audience to focus on their roles; production (analysis) and consumption (synthesis), respectively. However, digital images are bound by the bi-directional networks of live streaming, thus the user can manipulate both process of analysis and synthesis of the images.

In general, service companies that stream live videos, encourage users to subscribe by emphasising that this is 'participatory' amateur media. Ustream's catch phrase, "*Broadcast live on Ustream*" and Afreeca TV's "*Any free TV Broadcasting*", are the representative examples. The reason that the live video is explained first and foremost through the TV's mediality, which is 'broadcasting', is because its streaming technology enables real-time information exchange and use. In other words, users do not need to download after uploading, unlike films that are serviced online, nor do they merely watch videos that are uploaded, as on YouTube. Instead, the real-time production and

consumption of the broadcast images are enabled. This real-time effect differentiates this medium from the TV, which is turned 'on' according to a set schedule (of the on-air method). In previous cultural industry models, organising calendars for program access was important, but this new broadcasting model features no navigation function. Afreeca TV's live video servers are self-organised by individual amateur broadcasters and adjust to the individual's daily rhythm so that the platform cannot predict or control them. The platform is run with the sum of these individually operated broadcast channels, by "calendar flows" that are constituted by a "cardinal principle based precisely on discretisation and the *bottom-up* production of metadata" (Stiegler, 2009a: 52). [10] Moreover, while the main service on Afreeca TV comprises live broadcasting that is produced and consumed in real time, two-way communication between producers and consumers becomes an important factor that increases the productivity of the real-time processed broadcasts. The streaming technology differentiates live video from traditional TV broadcasts, in that live video is the crucial factor that facilitates the interactivity between producers and consumers with 'real time' effects.

Although the interaction on real-time live video broadcasting takes place as 'virtual' face to face communication through screens that mediate broadcasters and users, its 'real-time effect' enables all the participants to form a level of *social presentness*. Whereas viewing existing TV formats was based on a relationship of strong solidarity among family members and friends, those who view live video collectively are bound together via 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973), for instance, their interest about a certain topic. However, even when they are bound together through weak ties, the 'culture' that comes as the shared topic serves as a sufficient driver for leading production and consumption. Live video production and its proliferation are sustained merely with the weak ties of the users' shared value systems, hobbies, interests and so forth. Participation-oriented cultural groups that are formed from live video production and consumption activity conjure up the image of the 'reflexive community' concept expounded by Scott Lash (1994). Lash, in his account of late-modernity (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994), discussed the

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[10] According to Stiegler, YouTube and video servers shatter the calendar of radio and television, in which shows the flow of programs that constitute broadcast channels. Rather, it offers a new calendar to the access to "*stocks* of traces called data and metadata" produced by users (2009a: 52).

possibility that individuals are free to construct 'their own lives' to realise reflexive cultures in a community, and juxtaposed this possibility against more traditional modes of human relationships formed by the emergence of the information society. Although the distracted new broadcasting environment is marked by increasing mobility and disposability, this does not mean that the meaning of solidarity and community is fading out (*Ibid*.). In fact, the desire for the traditional value system concerning community is manifested through new cultural communities in new forms. This chapter focuses on the generation of participation-oriented communities that use live video produced on the Web through amateur activities as the medium through which new opportunities are created by the new media environment, for instance, on the democratisation of image analysis work (production). Reflexive interaction between amateurs and viewers that takes place in such communities creates an audience culture that is different from that of the past, leading to the expectation of the formation of new social attitudes towards image production.

Of course, it is important to critically examine the question of whether this can be a true 'political community' as Stiegler suggests (2009a), in which society is 'always constituted by nets', is 'necessarily networked' (: 52). The vigorousness and surplus of broadcast production of individuals based on such hyper-networkedness and social presentness ultimately results in the commercial success of the company that organises the platform's technologies of transindividuation, and this presupposes that users form a receptive audience (*Ibid*.: 52). Animated images produced by users, such as live videos, and all the activities that take place in the process of consuming such images, are the 'navigation elements' as well as the 'elements' of the 'Montage' of the platform, which experts and professionals have formerly chosen and discretised in the industry (*Ibid*.: 52). In other words, they constitute the entire production system of the network and the whole process of the psychosocial individuation that takes place there. All user activities on this platform are digitised through the platform and reorganised into metadata to enable the evolution and maintenance of the technical platform (*Ibid*.).

It is important to note that the rapid development of Afreeca TV and other live streaming services over a short period of time was possible because the medium of streaming

technologies provides a variety of attractions. It provides a different kind of sensory pleasure, one that cannot be found on TV. For instance, my analysis of the characteristics of the Afreeca TV interface demonstrates that it is clearly a multi-media platform, which integrates a variety of modalities of media (Elleström, 2010: 11), such as video, sound and text. Therefore, it is a hybrid media that re-intermediates existing media, such as TV (team tournament game relay broadcasting), radio (the voice of the BJ and background music in relay broadcasting), CCTV (monitoring the BJ or players[11]), the Internet (chat room windows) and so forth. Since it is composed of diverse media components, it inevitably creates unique multi-sensory activities, thus, both amateur broadcasters who produce and the audience who view are stimulated by their broadcasts are naturally led to experience new modes of perception (*knowledge*). This resonates with Hayles argument that the mode of attention to media that the current young generation prefers (or should prefer) is changing from "deep attention" to "hyper attention" (2007: 187-189). In other words, high-level stimulation by rapidly converting attention between numerous information flows between various media sources is becoming popular, in contrast to the pursuit of single information flows under previous media systems (c.f. *Ibid*.: 189). That live video re-mediates divers existing technologies and creates new ways to perceive 'a broad sensory modality' (Peterson, 2009: 130; see also Bolter and Grusin, 2007) is therefore an adequate example of 'hyper attention', which would be 'distracted perception' in Benjamins' terminology (1936/2002).

Benjamin (1939/1999) was interested in the technological aspects of "distracted" media. In particular, he called this attribute "reception in distraction" (Benjamin, 1939/1999: 269), citing the example of the reception of film. Benjamin re-evaluated this as a kind of social attitude, because it arranged the premise of a collective individuation by relaxing individual consciousness – that is, psychic individuation, in Simondon (1958/2017)'s words. More precisely, Benjamin (1939/1999) reasoned that if the *aura*-like experience of classic art, such as paintings, grants an object the status of a sympathetic subject

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[11]The monitoring function is the main paradigm that TV adhered to in its early phase (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). The monitoring function becomes an essential foundation of self-argument stating that TV broadcasting is "live". In other words, "whereas television, with its capacity to record and display images simultaneously with our viewing, offers a quality of presentness, of 'here and now' as distinct from the cinema's 'there and then" (Bolter & Grusin, 2000: 187-188).

equivalent to a human, then mediation by the technology of the film camera alienates the humans as a mere object by ripping from film actors their status as objects of sympathy. This is repeated in the relationship between film actors on the screen and audiences. Thus, "[t]he audience's empathy with the actor is really an empathy with the camera. Consequently, the audience takes the position of the camera; its approach is that of testing" (Benjamin, 1939/1999: 260). Benjamin however suggested that this mode of film spectatorship in such as a way as to ensure that audiences would not fall into contemplation. This, he claims, is achieved through the collective sensory modality through which the audience enjoys films from the perspective of "a distracted examiner", while simultaneously critiquing the film (*Ibid.*: 269). He also noted the radical cultural and political effect possessed by such *distractionness* (*Ibid.*),[12] which film audiences would realise a critical public sphere through film by employing instead of an attitude of contemplation, one of critical evaluation, that reproduces the analytical work of the camera.

In order to develop a more productive discussion of this issue, I also employ Manovich's concept of the 'cultural interface' (1997/2015, 2001), and describe Afreeca TV's hybrid evolving interfaces that combine "immersive" experience of traditional cultural objects such as movies and TV and the "richness of control" provided in human-computer interface (HCI) conventions (Manovich, 2001: 90). For example, the game broadcasting screen on Afreeca TV became a target of the manipulation for online gaming, but it can also become a window through which can be seen the virtual space called 'online gaming empire' (Jin, 2010), where the gaming becomes 'a mode of socialising - a channel for human relationships' (*Ibid.*). The conjunction and interaction of these two conventions is enabled by the manipulation of an interface; however, at the same time, the manipulation of HCI essentially leads to the inhibition of immersion, particularly, to a departure from viewing gameplay. The control panel composed of a menu, control keys, and icons, etc.,

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[12] According to Benjamin (1936/2002), contemplation always comes with the risk of degeneration into religious worship and fascism. On the other hand, given that distraction was "completely useless for the purpose of fascism" (Benjamin, 1936/2002: 20), he argued that mediation through the camera would result in the estrangement effect of an epic.

evokes perception in the state of distraction, just as Benjamin expected of film, by revealing the production conditions of illusion. "The periodic reappearance of the machinery, the continuous presence of the communication channel in the message, prevent the subject from falling into the dream world of illusion for very long, make her alternate between concentration and detachment" (Manovich, 2001: 207).

In addition, turning to the social function of film, Benjamin took the positive view that it would become a medium forming an "equilibrium between human beings and the apparatus" (Benjamin, 1936/2002: 37). He expected that film would perform a kind of "psychic immunisation" role that would resolve the psychological oppression brought about by industrialissed, technological individuation (Simondon, 1958/2017) by evoking the "collective laughter" of audiences (Benjamin, *Op.cit.*: 37). However, while Benjamin's positive ideas about films illustrate his wider argument, they are prone to critique. Manovich points out that the physical interface of a film promoted immersive and individual perception, rather than distracted and collective perception (Manovich, *Op.cit.*). Rather, new media, such as live video broadcasting, provides a more appropriate example of Benjamin's distraction. If so, then given the way that live video broadcasting such as that on Afreeca TV may produce distracted perception to a greater extent than film, would it not be appropriate to expect that the medium will produce cultural and political effects?

To summarize, the discourses discussed above have several significant implications. First, live video that is digitalised and connected via networks is a new media that certainly brings about image production and audience activity that differ from those possible on existing media that transmit images in fixed forms in a one-sided manner. As a multimedia form that re-mediates the multiple sensations and strategies of existing mediums, live streaming broadcasts demand new perception methods—those of hyper attention—from both the amateur broadcasters who participate in production and from the audience that consumes what is produced. Second, live video accelerates interactivity among producers and consumers, in the sense that production and consumption take place on a 'real-time' basis. Meanwhile, interaction that goes beyond the mere self-exhibition of contents, and which enables information exchange and dialog with the audience,

becomes important, even in the case of the amateur live video cultural production. It is possible to expect that both amateur producers and their audiences will have specific knowledge and certain social attitudes as this interaction advances. Accordingly, there is a need for empirical research on the cultural and political effects of this technology. Thus, this chapter explores the interaction and self-organising activities among users. It focuses on two political events, the 2008 candlelight rallies and the 2017 national flag rallies, and their coverage on live streaming services. It specifically addresses Afreeca TV, which started as a platform for game broadcasting in 2006, and asks what role Afreeca TV's technologies play in the process of transindividuation of South Korean society.

3. Korean Society and Live Video Politics

The way that perceptions of Afreeca TV have changed since its introduction in 2006 are demonstrated by comments made by two 'Senior'-level Afreeca TV broadcasters, Tae-Hyun (11 years' experience) and Jae-Sang (11 years' experience). They have both been active since the launch of the Afreeca TV platform, and explain initial social perceptions of the platform in the following ways: "There was nothing in the beginning" (Tae-Hyun). "Since it was not in the mainstream" and "My family opposed strongly at first" (Jae-Sang). "Because it started from a game TV, the early Afreeca TV, of which most broadcasts were game broadcast, was known only among gamers" (Ji-Yong). To the public, 'game broadcasting' was treated as a hobby that "should be stopped" (Jae-Sang).[13] However, such negative perceptions of Afreeca TV were reversed as a result of a political event, the so-called 'US beef protest'[14] that shook Korean society in 2008. When anti-

[13]   Playing games, which accounts for more than half of the total broadcast content of Afreeca TV, has been perceived to be harmful to young people in South Korea, because of its addictive and violent nature. The general perception that violent games make children more aggressive was reinforced by a tragic incident that took place in 2001. A teenager, who has reportedly addicted to playing violent games, killed his younger brother with a weapon that looked like the one he used in the game (You, Kim, and No, 2015).
[14]   According to the BBC's account of the background to the protest, the South Korean government had decided to lower import standards for US beef. Since 2003, the government had suspended beef imports

government protests against beef imports from USA began on May 24th, 2008, Afreeca TV became popular as a medium for broadcasting live gatherings of citizens who claim to "become media themselves" (Lee, 2008).[15]

This, raises a significant question. Is it plausible that the grounds of national politics could be changed due to a game broadcasting platform that had previously been seen as merely a bad habit, as an activity of game addicts? Indeed, Afreeca TV originated as a broadcasting platform with streaming technology developed for broadcasting game competitions. Yet, when, instead of the usual game heroes beating monsters, it started to broadcast live footage of citizens being beaten by a riot police on May 31st, 2008,[16] hundreds of thousands of people ran out into the streets with candles to demonstrate. Given that many demonstrators were inexperienced and attended a rally for the first time, the collision with the government that had mobilised water cannons and maximum troop presence seemed to be a foregone conclusion, an 'easy' game which should have ended quickly. Surprisingly, the citizens cleverly avoided collision with government forces. As if they had a hidden tactician, they dispersed into side streets and gathered at the next rally point. They eventually succeeding in capturing the heart of the capital, from Seoul City Hall to the presidential residence (the Blue House) for a hundred days (*Seoul Daily*, 2008). Government activity was halted by the peaceful protesters carrying only lit candles, and the protest eventually led to a significant modification of the US-Korean trade agreement that had been the catalyst of the demonstrations (Song, 2008; Cho, 2008). This incident, which took place in South Korea in 2008, is an important instance of a peaceful citizen protest that employed the new media form of amateur broadcasting. It was also had a significant impact on policy, and impacted the final form of the FTA agreement.

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from the US after a mad cow disease outbreak. The decision to lift this ban raised public fears about health and grievances against the government (BBC, 2008e).

[15] On June 1[st,] 2008, there was an anti-government rally involving almost 100,000 people. According to *ET News* (Lee, 2008), a total of 61 amateur broadcasters were at the scene of the rallies during the day, all broadcasting live on Afreeca television. An Afreeca TV official was interviewed, saying, "It was the first time in three years since the service was started that a lot of live broadcasts were made on social issues, not sports or games" (Lee, *Ibid*.).

[16] When the public notice of the beef negotiations was scheduled for June 3, 2008, some demonstrators attempted to advance to the Blue House in the mass demonstrations held the weekend before the date. Many citizens were injured at the end of the confrontation with the police who tried to suppress them and, after then, the criticism of the violence of the police has followed (Song, 2008).

Consequently, it is understood to have rewritten the cultural politics of Korea, and has often been compared to the French Student's movement of May 1968 (Yu, 2008). During this historical event, how was the game broadcasting media produced, and what contribution did the amateur game broadcasting technology make to the success of the demonstrations?

May 2nd, 2008. On the day when citizen complaints against the ROK-USA FTA for beef escalated, the Korean government failed to take national feelings on the matter into account. A few middle and high school students wearing school uniforms started to gather at Seoul City Hall with candles and placards saying, 'oppose the import of mad cow beef' (Son and Jung, 2008). This newly gathering force, which had hardly been seen in previous political-led rallies, came voluntarily to the rally site, announcing that they were concerned about the health and safety of their families and friends due to government's decision. The appearance of young girls and boys only holding candles was enough to draw out the curiosity of the press, and gave rise to mass revolt.[17] At first, the demonstration only consisted of middle and high school students, but shortly after, a huge variety of people participated. These included homemakers carrying babies in strollers, women in their 20's and 30's wearing high-heel shoes, middle-aged men with ties, and so forth. The scale of the daily gatherings expanded to more than 100,000 people after a month (Cho, 2008). Candlelight rallies had been held now and then in the past, but this was the first time that such large-scale rallies had attracted such a broad range of people. Seeing this, Antonio Negri, interviewed in the *Seoul Daily* said; "When I saw the candlelight rally, Korea is a country that best shows the phenomenon of being the *'multitude'* where it is impossible to classify the gender, occupation or class collectively" (Park, 2010). At the time, the rally progressed peacefully. Citizens held candles, instead of hurling stones or firebombs, as had been more common in South Korea's rough transition to democracy in the late 1980s and the student protests of the 1990s (Roe, 2016). People of almost all age groups poured out into the streets, despite not having any common denominator except their opposition to the import of American beef that was

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[17] In an article that summarizes the history of the candlelight rallies in South Korea, the *Hankyoreh* newspaper pointed out that it was the appearance of middle school girls that triggered the 2008 rallies. See, Roe (2016).

felt to pose a health risk due to the possible contamination by mad cow disease (*Ibid*.). It was the first time since the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup that so many people had taken to the streets united in a single voice.

At first, the government expected the rally to be only a temporary phenomenon. Taking control over the media, it attempted to promote the benefits of FTA. Yet, the citizen demonstrations persisted. The protestors moved the site of the candlelight rally to a point in front of the headquarters of major pro-government newspapers, such as the *Choson Ilbo* and the *Dona-A Ilbo*.[18] The demonstrators refused interviews with the established media, and created new alternative media of their own, such as Afreeca TV broadcasts. As a result, the purpose of broadcasting on Afreeca TV switched from gaming towards its use as a media to support the rally. When the candlelight rally started, Afreeca TV was almost the only company that provided a free streaming service (using WiBro technology, c.f. Son and Jung, 2008) through which anyone could broadcast, and they received the enthusiastic support of the citizens. During an interview at the time, a citizen who participated in the rally said, "you only see the truth when you watch Afreeca TV", and argued that "Afreeca TV is sending a live feed of the citizen's rally that shows the truth that even the reliable (left-wing media) MBC, *Kyunghyang*, and *Hankyoreh* are not able to show."[19]

Afreeca TV was launched in March 2006, and while it broadcast on popular culture, music, movies and the daily lives individuals, over 50% of its broadcasting was focused on gaming.[20] In general, this game broadcasting would broadcast E-Sports game competitions, such as StarCraft, live. It was considered to be an amateur platform dedicated to gamers and for enthusiast-like amateurs. However, during the candlelight

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[18] According to Kim (2008a), the *Asahi* newspaper in Japan described candlelight protesters as insurgents, reporting that candlelight demonstrators attacked the buildings of the *Dong-A Ilbo* and the *Chosun Ilbo* in Gwanghwamun.

[19] In general, the *Hankyoreh* and the *Kyunghyang* are categorised as left-winger daily newspapers, so they are supported by the protesters during the rallies. The Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) was also trusted by the protesters, because its factual program, *Is American Beef Reall Safe from Mad Cow Disease?* reported on the controversy over the government's beef imports on 27th April 2008. See more from Gwak (2008)'s article.

[20] As of September 2014, according to Afreeca TV (2014), gaming account for 50% of live its broadcast contents. See 'Introduction to Afreeca TV Service' on the official website.

rally, Afreeca TV received attention as the 'alternative media' sought after by citizens in unprecedentedly large numbers, thus surpassing the previously dominant media forms. Citizens directly produced and viewed real-time Internet broadcasting using their laptop computers and smartphone applications equipped with WiBro (Wifi broadband) at the scene (Song, 2009). Amateur broadcasters, Jae-Sang and Ji-Yong, who had been active since Afreeca TV was first launched, also broadcasted on the anti-government demonstrations in the field for 100 days. Jae-Sang produced a live broadcast of the candlelight rally for the first time on Afreeca TV and received the most attention from the press during the period. It is notable that the new broadcasters all entered the field regardless of their previous political beliefs or orientations. Each of them had previously produced popular non-political broadcasts through Afreeca TV. They came out to broadcast the demonstration live from the field at the request of their viewers, despite the fact that this was an event that they might not have been well aware of before. Jae-Sang, a heavy game play broadcaster, and Ji-Yong, who used to read broadcast book readings to viewers, had hardly discussed political issues in their shows before the candlelight vigils. Jae-Sang even had a negative opinion about the political rally, but could not ignore chat-window requests from viewers to attend the rally. These quotes illustrate their experiences:

> After I broadcasted the candlelight rally live, BJs [broadcast jockeys] gradually came out offline. I began shooting from May 4th. The candlelight rally was held for 100 days, and I probably went there for 80 days. [Before the live broadcast) I had a negative perception of demonstrations. But as I listened to people while I was broadcasting live, I came to understand that they could not but do so. I thought that people could not help raising their voice in that way (Ji-Yong).

> Some demonstrators came to my broadcast and said that BJs like Jae-Sang must be interested in it. Female high school students demonstrating! I am a geek-gaming broadcaster, so I did not come forward, I was interested in current issues in ordinary times, though. So, I rejected [requests to cover the demonstration] with the joke that I couldn't eat beef since I didn't have money. But many [of my viewers] were displeased. So I thought 'what is all the fuss was about...?' [omitted] But I was

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impressed by the demonstration in the field. I felt that it was serious, listening to what the female high school students said, holding candles in their hands (Jae-Sang).

Between May 25th and June 10th when their activity was at a pinnacle, there were 17,222 live broadcasts in progress with the title of 'candle' on Afreeca TV and the total number of viewers was about 7,750,000, according to *Seoul Daily* (2008). During the period, the aggregated number of BJ's who performed a live broadcast on Afreeca TV was 425 (*Ibid*.). More BJs reported on the rally than reporters at terrestrial broadcasting stations in South Korea. Progressive critics, intellectuals and the opposition party also raised the heat in live broadcasts on Afreeca TV. Those in the media and academia commented that the BJs were 'One-person media' and 'amateur journalists,' and explored the platform's potential as an alternative media (Song, 2009). Jae-Sang told me of an interview with a member of the French press on the live broadcast field, in which he was described as "the birth of new media".

> The one-person media who are equipped with digital mobile phones, digital cameras, notebooks, [and] web cameras, etc., are rapidly evolving with a speed that cannot be followed by the old media, which has limited deadlines and knows only formal articles. The BJ (Broadcasting Jockey), as a 'one-person media' running around the rally scene with their notebooks [and] equipped with webcams for live broadcasts, emerged as stars throughout the online and offline worlds, and they are creating a new public sphere while providing reports, as well as a two-way exchange of ideas (Choi, Ahn, and Kim, 2008).

At the demonstration site, it was frequently seen that the reporters from conservative Korean newspapers, such as the *Chosun Ilbo,* the *Joongang Daily,* and the *Dong-A Ilbo,* were kicked out of protests. Conversely, the protesters agreed to participate in interviews with reporters from anti-government newspapers, such as *Hangyerye* and *Gyeong-Hyang.* However, these newspapers did not have sufficient digital filming equipment or staff for broadcasting the candlelight vigils for 24 hours, which was what the protesters desperately wanted at the time. Thus, members of both the progressive media and non-mainstream media, who saw the breakthroughs of Afreeca TV, soon started to use the

Afreeca TV platform just like amateur BJs did. For example, 'Color TV', a media activist group of supporters of the opposition party,[21] also used Afreeca TV to provide live coverage during the rally.[22] However, the emergence of Afreeca TV had opened up a pathway for individuals to use WiBro technology to broadcast free of charge. One of famous BJs explained that without the emergence of WiBro and Afreeca TV they would have had to have access to specific media servers if she had wanted to make live broadcasts (Kim, 2012). Ji-Yong, Tae-Hyun, and Jae-Sang who broadcasted at the same time, agreed; "In the old days live broadcasts were not possible, but now they are possible because of WiBro. For over-the-air TV, I think they shoot via satellite, but the one person media and mid-sised media like us use the WiBro" (Tae-Hyun). Ji-Yong admitted that the Afreeca TV streaming service and WiBro technology played a considerable role and they both claimed that without it "the candlelight rally could not have expanded that much" (Ji-Yong).

Here, the most important point is that a large proportion of the BJ's who took part in Afreeca TV broadcasts were 'pure' amateurs. Naturally, they lacked live coverage experience and editing skills, so their amateur level broadcasts were distant from those of professionals from the existing press or TV media. Since laptops with Web cameras and domestic camcorders were used for filming, rather than professional equipment, most of the videos were low-quality and shot with unprofessional shooting techniques. For instance, those amateur broadcasters, mentioned above, were 'real' amateurs; the first time that they had touched a camcorder was for their candlelight rally live broadcasts. At first, they brought their laptops and simply turned the 'webcam' cameras built into their computers on the scene, producing CCTV-like coverage. As shown in the low quality footage of figure 2, live images were sometimes not clear according to the reception status of WiBro, and many of them used wide-angle shots rather than the close-ups, because BJs often used built in laptop webcams to capture the scene. However, these 'poor quality'

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[21] Color TV is a group of media activists composed of members of the socialist party of the Republic of Korea created in 2008 and dissolved in 2012 (Kim, 2008b). In order to support citizens who participated in the candlelight vigils, they created a Color TV channel on the Afreeca TV platform and broadcast the site. Two video clips from their broadcasts (zottoskull, 2008; nozzang, 2008b) were analysed for this research.
[22] During the 100 days of the candlelight demonstrations, 'Color TV' moved away from a simple broadcasting method and used Joong-Kwon Jin, the famous popular cultural critic, as a BJ (Jin, 2008).

images are not fixed unlike those of CCTV. The BJs, becoming the media (the CCTV) themselves, were able to hold and pan their laptops as they moved around the rally scene, thus allowing the changes in the scene to be animated.

> At first, the shooting environment was very poor. I had not tried before, so I was trembling and very nervous, but after meeting people, I got used to it. Also, responses were very good in real-time. But one of the viewers donated 1 million won (585 GBP) for me to buy a camera. Later, I got people helping with my broadcast, so while three people were shooting, I reported on people holding a microphone. (Ji-Yong)

In general, professional video journalism requires producers to have expertise in the use of various types of professional equipment, such as HD cameras which provide high quality images, storage devices for recording and editing software (c.f. Frechette, 2012). In the process of gathering news and information at the demonstration site, it may be necessary to collaborate with information sources who will share and revise the information for accurate reporting (c.f. Dreyfus *et al.*, 2013). It is clear that amateurs could not produce professional or professional-like broadcasts, because they do not have access to such equipment and expertise. Even the amateur BJs who started broadcasting after the candlelight vigils, (who could be called the post-candlelight generation) explained that they had started filming just as a hobby and had lacked broadcasting skills and experience (Ji-Min, Tae-Yang, Jung-Woo, and Jae-Seoung). However, they were able to begin their 'amateur projects', because the Afreeca TV interface was so simple that anyone could use it, irrespective of previous experience. Their repetitive activities on Afreeca TV, even if they refer to the style of mainstream media, are still conducted at an individual level of work that is not more than that of an amateur. (I will discuss this more in detail later.)

For this research project, a total of 11 videos of candlelight vigils broadcast by amateurs were analysed in comparison with 2 videos of those by public service. These include not only videos streamed on Afreeca TV, but also other videos such as those archived on YouTube and blogs. Although the latter were mostly edited before being uploaded, many

of them focus on 'real-time relaying,' and the few post-production techniques that were used were confined to minimal subtitling and simple editing. 'Afreeca Studio' (Afreeca Studio, N. d.), a dedicated streaming software, was provided and distributed for free on the Afreeca TV platform at that time, allowing the broadcasters to insert captions, or set encoding and quality manually. However, it was difficult for BJs to use these functions flexibly at the demonstration site, where events were often chaotic. The amateurs could stop to watch the scene during breaks in the action, but whenever something unexpected occurred the BJs often had to run or fight. Therefore, a significant portion of the images shot were out of focus, aimed at the ground or captured the backs of people running away in the crowd. It is no exaggeration to say that the image quality is lower than that of CCTV, and filming skills are rarely evidenced in most of the videos analysed here.

Nevertheless, many people have continued to watch and consume these Afreeca TV live broadcasts since candlelight vigils. How can this be explained? What encouraged the popularity of these amateur broadcasts? To address this, we need to start by looking at the ways in which the amateur videos were able to compete with the established media. It is necessary to foreground the words of the citizen mentioned above. What does the "truth" mean when he says that, "I only see the truth when I watch Afreeca TV"? Is it only because Afreeca TV was the only provider of live broadcasts? Although professional coverage captured the same scenes as the Afreeca TV BJs, why did this citizen think that the amateur images were more truthful than those of the professional coverage? I will look deep into the 'truth game' where professionalism and amateurism claimed different values and competed each other.

4. Truth or Dare? Truth Games on Amateur Broadcasts

The cultural theorist, John Fiske discusses the significance of user proficiency in the use of communication technologies (1994), and argues that the amateurism of grassroots

media and the professionalism of the broadcast industry can compete with each other for reliability (Fiske, 1994: 223; see also Jenkins, 2011). In his comparative study of the 'video high' of the broadcast industry and the 'video low' of citizens working with camcorders, Fiske analyses the case of local amateur video that was used in the 'Rodney King vs Los Angeles police' trial. He claimed that this '*undoctored'* video, taken by a passerby with a home movie camera was perceived to be "so authentic" by the court jury, because there was little technical refinement and manipulation (Fiske, 1994: 233; Gabriel, 1999: 146). In the live broadcasts of the candlelight vigil, unexpected events that neither the audience nor the amateur broadcaster could have predicted unfold in such 'undoctored' images, as illustrated by the amateur's shaky hand-held camera work. Moreover, viewers presumed that there was no parallax between reality and the image, not only because the images were shot in real time, but also because the truth of the images was verified in real time. For instance, when the police threatened the demonstrators with weapons, or when the demonstrators were driven into narrow alleys, both protesters and the amateur BJs in the video sometimes asked for help from viewers watching the broadcasts (Ji-Yong, Jae-Sang). Let's see how the audience and the BJ responded in the chat window in the video, *Live candlelight vigils; the first appearance of citizen reporter,* produced by MediaMongu (2008a). After viewers provided some information, such as "the entrance six to Gwanghwamun station is blocked by the police now" or "No CCTV works there now", the BJ changed the direction of the Webcam on his laptop immediately to check whether the information was correct. Such interaction in the real time between audiences and the amateurs enhanced the credibility and reliability of the images and made their relation more reciprocal.

On the other hand, the practical limitations of live broadcasting from the demonstration site made it almost impossible for the amateur BJs to edit their images. There was no room for editing at the demonstration site. Although the amateurs took their laptop Web-cams and camcorders to the rally site, they had to produce and reproduce the images in often chaotic and rushed situations, such that they could not be reduced or interchanged, temporarily stopped or edited. For example, the BJ in the above video asks viewers to "understand" the difficult technical conditions of the site, when they point out that the sound is not audible or that the video is getting unclear reception. Fortunately, not only

the urgency of the assembly site but also the inferiority of the photographic and sound equipment used strengthened viewers' belief that the amateurs were their comrades. This is why such 'video low', real-time amateur broadcasting was considered to be 'so-authentic' truth (c.f. Fiske, 1994), truer than the skillful hands-on images produced by experts. Lovink (2007) argues that journalism, as the product of users' creation, requires a quest for "truth." Here, the truth "has become an amateur project, not an absolute value, sanctioned by higher authorities" (Lovink, 2007: 13).

In comparison with watching TV, the monitoring function of Web cameras is considered to be relatively private, because the individual viewer alone with their machine. Moreover, only one user can conduct the interaction according to Bolter and Grusin (2000: 204). However, it should be noted that all the people who broadcasted and watched broadcasts at the time were indeed participating in these Afreeca TV-mediated activities collectively, and did so with to achieve a 'common' political goal, to oppose the import of the USA beef. Rettberg, studied citizen journalism such as blogging, suggests that readers who want to read amateur-produced articles on blogs are motivated by the desire to hear the news from an 'author' who is an actual participant in the events and who can offer 'immediacy' of reportage (Rettberg, 2010: 104). The candlelight vigils were covered by the main newsreaders on mainstream television news programs and by reporters at the scene, but such journalist professionals did not participate in the rally and covered the event as part of their usual professional activities. They held a neutral position on grounds of 'objectivity and impartiality' (*Ibid*.: 104), or at least pretended to maintain these as professional standards. It was impossible for them to experience and create the event together with the audience, and they should be presumed to be outside of the social and political action. Conversely, amateur BJs shared the political aims and experiences of their audience, often running in the streets and even confronting the police: they were having a dual role as protest participants and reporters. Therefore, audiences were not only aware of their broadcasting services, but also felt appreciative and express gratitude to them. This can be called a network-based 'emotional gifting' journalism, in which emotional exchanges between the viewers and amateurs takes place in real time. In the next chapter, we will look at the exchange of emotions between the viewers and the amateurs through a discussion around the exchange of gifts.

Of course, this was not the first time citizens have used streaming technology for the purpose of journalism (c.f. Knight, 2012). For example, 'street journalism' started in 1999 at the WTO protest in Seattle, when cell phones and laptops were used along with Internet newspapers. Protesters provided audio and video clips to the Seattle Independent Media Center. Even to now, such methods are utilised in civic activities and press reports all over the world (Newlands, 2009: 2-4). In 2005, during the subway terrorist attack in the UK, a photo of the scene taken by one citizen using his cell phone camera was supplied to newspaper companies and uploaded onto their Internet sites, and the use of amateur footage in the mainstream media has increased. According to Newlands (*Ibid.*), mobile phone footage taken by citizens caused a back-up on the satellite news channels, Sky News and the BBC News during two political events, the Heathrow Climate Camp (August 2008) and the G20 3 Meltdown protest (April 2009).

However, Afreeca TV's amateurish live coverage of the rally has different characteristics to that of previous types of street journalism. The Afreeca TV BJs did not merely perform an intermediary role between the broadcasts and the viewers. Rather, they intervened directly into the events, in which they were also participants. Their strength was based on a different kind of authenticity that is not available to the mainstream media, one that imparts the perception of veracity—that 'this is true'—to the viewers (Rettberg, 2010.: 107). While street journalism can be seen to have similar advantages, amateur live broadcasts on the Afreeca TV platform should be differentiated from the precedent of street journalism. This is because the Afreeca TV BJs stayed at the scene for nearly 100 days. They did not merely mediate between broadcasting and viewers, but rather, continued to interact with viewers. While forming a kind of political community with them, they tried to create a new perception of reality-through their mediation of the action. Starting from this example of Afreeca TV, the technology of live streaming services has been prompting a redefinition of the essence of journalism.

5. Live Videos' Tele-Presentness as Fidelity

Interestingly, Bolter and Grusin claim that TV, the medium that Afreeca TV now competes with, was once thought to be superior to film and other earlier technologies (Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 187). TV claimed a commitment to the pursuit of the immediate to a degree that other technologies could not match. It was, therefore, regarded as a "live" medium. For example, Flitterman-Lewis says that television "offers a quality of presentness, of 'here and now'" because it can record and display images at the same time we watch" (1992: 218). TV's particular form of *presentness* is distinguished from that of film, which "is always distanced from us in time (whatever we see on the screen had already occurred at a time when we weren't there)" (*Ibid*.: 218). One of the unique aspects of television as a medium is that it implicitly asserts that it creates a present, live event. For example, football live broadcasts and live reports in the news are faithful to the purpose of monitoring activities and reporting changes in them. The images on Afreeca TV are produced with laptop Web cameras and domestic camcorders. While they display the function of CCTV 's 'monitoring' to some degree, they evince greater presentness, because they also they cameras can actively adapt to unexpected situations that arise at the demonstration site. However, as Jin (2008) also points out, it is important to note that such technologies (as Afreeca TV) that mediate between an event and its viewers change the power relationship between producers and audiences. It allows members of audiences to reveal their presence, to shock producers through the two-way, interactive communication via the 'chat window.' This facilitates audience participation in production that is not provided by conventional broadcast television (c.f. Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 204; see also Jin, 2008).

Afreeca TV channels can also be differentiated from other UGC/UCC media of the period (2008), such the YouTube. Unlike YouTube, Afreeca TV provides a chat room function that makes simultaneous two-way conversations possible, and allows immediate responses from the BJ. This function gained particular popularity through its effective use in coverage of impending confrontations between the protesters and the combative police

force (Chon, 2015). It worked as the mutual communication channel connecting the BJs, the protesting citizens at the scene and the broadcasting viewers. This channel relayed not only information about the rally, but experiences and skills needed at the rally scene itself. According to a survey conducted on the content of discussions in the chat windows of '615TV' and 'Radio21' broadcasts on Afreeca TV, the chatting participants wrote an average of 30 comments per person (Lee and Bae, 2008: 59). The main contents of these comments were criticisms of the beef-import policy or sharing information from the scene (*Ibid.*; Kang *et al.*, 2009).[23]

What we are reminded of here is a critique of Manovich's concept of "telepresence" (2001: 168-9). Manovich mentions two differences between old-fashioned image instruments and telepresence. Since telepresence transmits video images electronically, immediate construction of the representations is achieved. If we use remote video cameras to capture images in real-time, it means we can monitor any visible changes from a distance (weather changes, movement of the crowd, etc.) and adjust our behavior. On the other hand, because we receive long-distance information in real time, we also can manipulate physical reality at a distance, also in real-time. This perspective of telepresence gives us 'a new and unique kind of power – real-time remote control' (*Ibid.*: 168-9). Afreeca TV, which broadcasted the candlelight rallies at the time, offered multi-media functions for 'telepresence,' not only through its live streaming services, but also via the chat window in contrast to the TV or news photograph. A larger number of both viewers and producers (amateurs) were able to use the interface to share information about the rally despite their physical distance from it, as well as to help solve problems at the demonstration site through dialogues in the real time. *Mass intellectuality* (Virno, 2007; Hall and Winn, 2017) composed by the viewers and producers chatting at a distance emerged from a small window of the screen and became a new cultural power.

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[23] The survey was based on data collected over three days (June 14th, 2008 9PM to midnight of June 15th) in the chat window of 615TV personal broadcast, according to Lee and Bae (2008). A total of 227 people participated and left 30.06 real-time comments per person leaving a total of 8,176 comments (*Ibid.*: 59). On the 'RadioTV' broadcast, 47 chat windows contained a total of 1,483 comments, averaging 31.55 comments per person (*Ibid.*: 59).

Therefore, the live broadcasting activities of various amateurs did not end in the broadcasts themselves. The technological affordances of the Afreeca TV platform facilitated amateur broadcast production through which a variety of participants collaborated in an open texture, in ways quite contrary to those through with national TV was manufactured, though closed structures accessible only to professionals or experts. People with diverse backgrounds participated in the protests, but Afreeca TV BJs received more attention because they had accumulated useful skills for talking with many people at the same time through game broadcasting, as well as the ability to continue broadcasts without any breaks on the camera. Using such techniques, some BJs were also directly involved in the demonstration. One BJ who appeared on MediaMongu (2008a)'s video even agitated viewers who watch his broadcast, asking them to come to the rally.

"Get out of there! Do not just sit down and click on the Internet. There are ten thousand people watching this now. Even if half of you come out, there [will be] five thousand more people here. I can see even dogs have come here. Come out and hold up candles. Get Out, please. Let's go" (BJ in MediaMongu's video, 2008a)

Even if the amateur broadcasters were in charge of filming and proceeding their broadcasts, they accepted viewer requests through the chat window at the rally scene. The viewers' explanation and views changed the direction of the broadcasts from time to time. Various broadcasts were made simultaneously, so it was possible for the demonstrators to exchange opinions and come up with protest strategies. Since various broadcasts were screening simultaneously, viewers who watched several streams at the same time were able to collectively map out demonstration tactics through the free and fraternal interchange of ideas. This is illustrated in the interplay between the broadcaster and the audience in MediaMongu's video (*Ibid*.). The technological characteristics of the platform that had been made for game broadcasting, unexpectedly and irrespective of developer or producer intent, turned out to provide an ideal media environment for the rally. During this dynamic situation, then, Afreeca TV and its amateur broadcasters became the joystick and the characters (respectively) of a 'Candlelight-rally game' that was also controlled by viewers, discussed in Jin (2008: 178-179). In fact, Ji-Yong, at that

time, amateur broadcasters said that they felt like they were broadcasting with the viewers controlling them like a "hand moves in an (online) game!" (Ji-Yong).

The telepresence, the technological characteristics of Afreeca TV demonstrate that the distance that had been guaranteed by sight has been destroyed by the virtual technology. This can be understood through Walter Benjamin's discussion of 'the end of the aura' in art. For Benjamin, the distance covered by vision preserves the aura of the object, its position in the world (Feenberg, 1995: 205). On the other hand, the desire to bring objects 'closer' spatially and humanly destroys the distance between the object and the viewer, ultimately eliminating the material order and making the concepts of distance and space meaningless (Benjamin, 1939/1999: N. pag.). The viewers of Afreeca TV not only consumed images of the protests, i.e. symbols, but also controlled the demonstration at a distance via a signal (Afreeca TV chat windows). The technical characteristics of a platform created for broadcasting gaming competitions led unexpectedly to various interactions between members of the congregation via the new media, that exceeded those originally intended or envisioned by the developers or owners of the platform (Jin, 2008: 171). As a result, the boundary between viewers and producers seen in existing media is blurred, along with the demythicisation of the broadcaster's authority. Further, the interaction between these producers, amateurs, and consumer audiences, also helped to overcome fear; fear of the government power and fear of unpredictable isolation at the rally sites. For them, the only way to conquer the fear of the authorities was to face it together. Afreeca TV BJs did not have any legal status as reporters, and their interaction with their audiences helped them even to avoid legal troubles that could have arisen during the march in the streets. Adventurous journalists enjoy many kinds of safeguards at demonstration sites. They can protect themselves and also their sources, even in the face of violent repression by the police, thanks to the institutional protections their organisations provide.

However, service providers do not provide such protections for the use of Internet streaming services, except for any services specifically aimed at journalism. Afreeca TV marketers, developers, and owners are not responsible for assistance in relation to any

legal disputes caused by coverage by amateur broadcasters. For instance, one of the BJs interviewed (Ji-Yong), was arrested by police and had a hard time, although he was soon released. This episode created a saga that became one of his fans' favourites. When any legal problem arose, the BJs usually managed to resolve them. The rally participants were aware that the screens of Afreeca TV preserved proof of their reality and they tried to use this as a means to protect themselves each time there was suppression by the police.[24]

Bolter and Grusin assert that if telepresence systems rely on live video, then they tend to remediate the monitoring function of closed-circuit video (CCTV) (2000: 214). Citizens at the demonstration recorded instances of violent suppression by the police while they were chatting. This was possible, because Afreeca TV functioned as CCTV and the captured images that could be used as evidence to accuse the police of violence. As the BJ's comments above demonstrate, rally participants used chat windows to request that channels on Afreeca TV capture specific rally scenes so that they could be used as an evidence of the illegal police violence. Caught on screen and shared with other communities, these videos spread information about the injustices experienced. Instead of merely observing the situations, these audiences were able to perform a variety of roles, even though they might have been wearing pajamas at home and preparing to fall asleep. These roles ranged from that of watchmen leading the street to that of commanders ordering attacks and defense. As a result of analysis of streaming videos, it seems that these audiences were aware of all the control functions for distance control that Afreeca TV afforded, and were eager to reach out.

For example, on June 28[th,] 2008, live coverage was aired showing the maltreatment of a woman by men in military boots armed with military clubs. This scene of dozens of police officers beating a woman wearing a raincoat[25] with their shields is still available on

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[24] A citizen who participated in a candlelight vigil held from May 31 to June 1, 2008, a citizen who was being dragged by a group of police officers asked the photographer to record his face, saying, "Please take a good shot. Cops hit me." (Nozzang, 2008a)
[25] It seems that she was dressed up with a raincoat to avoid the water cannon attack by the police (Neo0trinity, 2008).

YouTube, as are other images recorded on live footage (Neo0trinity, 2008). The video incited much popular condemnation of the excessive violence used against the woman, and thus contributed to the general public's positive evaluation of the legitimacy of the assembly (Lee, 2016a). According to Ji-Yong, in the poll conducted shortly after the rally, over 80% of Korean citizens supported the candlelight rally. In this regard, we can see that the 'tactile character' of Afreeca TV amateur broadcasting, that enables both producers and audiences to get close to the reality of the situation, has led to real change. For Benjamin, the tactile appeared to be a disrespectful and aggressive obstruction to objects, and was not to be understood as any careful contact or caress that would respect the opponent (Benjamin, 1936/2002: 233). The aggressiveness of the tactile images, produced by amateur broadcasters, aimed at the common enemy of the community at that time, and eventually overwhelmed the organised and systematic visual 'rationality' of the experts.

Then, how did these amateur broadcasts change after the candle light was extinguished? Did it become a new force capable of overthrowing professional journalism and its expert systems? It might seem obvious that these BJs did not plan to attend the demonstration site to act as amateur journalists. That is, just ten years ago in 2008, the BJ's were not professional journalists, but they actively supported requests from citizens at the scene of the rally and informed online viewers. The BJs, whom I met, were gamers and a literature lover, who had never dreamed of becoming journalists. Because of this, they had neither the knowledge nor the experience of journalists. After the demonstrations, they mostly went back to their daily lives; playing games, eating, and starting their job search. They also acted as participants in the rally themselves. This participation contravenes established principles of journalism. They become psychologically assimilated with the other protesters. Thus, such amateur broadcasting is not interpreted as a new formation of street journalism. At the time, most media theorists and most of the press in Korea agreed that Afreeca TV had the potential to become the alternative media of the civic movement under the network (Hong, 2008). Nevertheless, with the exception of the period of the candlelight demonstrations in 2008, Afreeca TV still serves as comprehensive media site through which diverse entertainment contents are produced,

including games, reality shows, 'Mukbang' (social eating shows), as well as politics and current events shows. How, then, should we understand this phenomenon?

Borrowing the words of Hardt & Negri (2001) and Virno (2003), the 'Afreeca TV multitude' that was skeptical of the professional broadcasting system, acted as the general intellect during the rallies, having boiled in the rally scenes jointly through the amateur broadcasts mediated by the Afreeca TV's technologies, and, after that, it has disappeared without a form. The multitude tends to send itself to create intellectual capacities of the masses, through amateur projects. What was needed for such a multitude to form was a live broadcast that could show a different '*truth*', one that could not be presented through mainstream news channels, because professional journalists were considered to be one of the power groups of the elite, just like pro-government groups. Since the services rendered by amateurs provided such an alternative truth, the amateurs were able to gain public attention and trust during the candle rally, and, as a result, were able to win in competition with the pro-government media. Furthermore, the close relationship between citizens and amateur broadcasters during the demonstration period can be seen as the formation of a kind of temporary political community. As the above discussions suggest, Afreeca TV broadcasts are unusual, in that they were produced by all participants in an open system for everyone, in contrast to the production mode in existing TV channels, that of the closed systems of experts. Amateur broadcasters took charge of filming and hosting on-line materials on their broadcast sites, but they accommodated viewers' needs in the field through the chat windows, and the viewers' critical views sometimes changed the direction of the broadcast production. In other words, when they doubted the meanings created by the system of amateurs, paraprofessionals, resolved such impasses through discussion, and reproduced the meaning of participation in the process. In this sense, an amateur broadcast was the common product of the reflexivity of the 'cultural community' (Lash, 1994) and a kind of cultural, political project.

The voices of a million-people attending a massive rally for about 100 days desperately needed a medium to communicate through in the face of the silence of the government, which only played dumb. The live broadcast media available to such a huge variety of people was Afreeca TV at those times. Perhaps it was the fact that the rally started out

from a 'living issue' unrelated to politics that made it easy for participants to use Afreeca TV, which until that point head been completely unrelated to politics. What is most important is that media multiplicity and multi-sensory modalities of the Afreeca TV changed the way citizens perceived the rally, as argued above. This new media expanded its role to encompass those of other existing media; expanding from being a game broadcasting media to commenting (Radio) on images of the rally (Live Video), performing live coverage (CCTV), conducting interactive conversations (Internet chat) and ranging up to street journalism. This suggests that citizens who lose trust in a mainstream media that just forces them to consume images will be able to look at politics reflexively through the 'live' videos of amateurs. As part of this process, citizens came to understand the truth that the mainstream media had concealed, and supported such amateur cultural production, despite its relative aesthetic inferiority, with many even going so far as to participate in the production themselves. These citizens, not only consumed live videos produced by amateurs, but also analysed them in real-time, participated in the production using social streaming functions, and reflected on 'live' images critically, thus effectively changing them. The technological culture changed the political culture, and the political practices of the citizens became an art; an art as full of life as the process of searching for the truth. And finally, it individuates the nation. In other words, it shows *digital transindividuation* in South Korea.

6. Amateur Broadcasts in Conflicts

Since their use in 2008, candlelight vigils have become a unique way of collectively expressing socio-political messages in South Korea, and Afreeca TV has been named as an alternative medium. For example, citizens with candles filled the streets again following the Seowal disaster in which 300 people died in a preventable ferry sinking on April 16th 2014. The inadequate reactions of the Park Geun-Hye government were questioned at the time, and Afreeca TV was again used to relay demonstrations that were

not covered properly by the mainstream media. The BJs who had been broadcasting gaming shows and 'Mukbang' shows (social eating broadcast) went down to the disaster scenes and interviewed the families of the deceased.[26] They tried to represent the positions of the family members, which had not been told through newspapers and TV broadcasts, only available to Afreeca TV audiences.[27] One of the families who had lost their children in the Seowal ferry worried that the mainstream media might distort their stance. The family itself even broadcast live footage of (former) President Park Geun-Hye talking with a relative of theirs using the Afreeca TV platform. A part of this live broadcast was edited and is still available on YouTube (Jungyunkim, 2014). However, we are now paying attention to the continuing development of communication and information technology and we can say that, as of 2017, Afreeca TV has lost its monopoly position as a live streaming technology that broadcasts political and social events, such as candlelight vigils, in Korea. In addition to the mainstream media, Afreeca TV now competes with other UGC media that have introduced streaming services.

Over the last decade, the types of devices popularly used to access the Internet in South Korea have rapidly switched from PCs to smart devices, such as smartphones and tablet PCs, according to the *Korea Internet and Security* Agency (KISA)'s 2016 survey. By 2016, 85.2% of the total population were using smart devices. It is worthy of notice that there was an increase in utilisation rate of smartphones (40.7%) among people over the age of 60. Currently, 92% of Koreans use messenger apps to instead of text messages on smartphones and PCs. They use these apps to share information and consume cultural contents in which the user participates in the production, such as videos, video chat, etc. (KISA, 2016). The popularity of smartphones has increased the use of social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. As a result, the use of live streaming broadcasting services, which these social media started in 2016, has increased. YouTube has launched

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[26] One of the BJs, 'Eyeglasses without glasses', who broadcasted Mukbang shows normally, was attracted to the media by relaying live shows with the permission of the bereaved families, at the Jindo Gymnasium where they were staying, (see his official website on Afreeca TV, http://afreeca.com/vip00112). The *Asia Today* reported that the real-time broadcast of the BJ was "live streaming", and the subtitle "submitted for permission to shoot" was located at the bottom of the video (Bang, 2014).
[27] According to *Sisa-In's* (a weekly news magazine) coverage on June 3rd, 2014, on the fourth day after the sinking of the Sewol ferry, the families of the missing people strongly rejected all media coverage except that of BJs' who were based on Afreeca TV (Myung, 2014).

'YouTube Gaming' and has also jumped into the streaming broadcast market for games, the core genre of Afreeca TV. Of course, the meaning of Afreeca TV as a live broadcast in Korea is different from its relationship with the success story of candlelight vigils, but the challenge of these competitors is a potential threat to its market influence.

Traditional news media, such as newspapers and TV broadcasts, have also begun to threaten Afreeca TV's technological prowess. The features and advantages of the Afreeca TV interface and its audience chat function have been employed in by the mainstream media, even by entertainment programmes, such as *My Little Television*.[28] Outgoing newspapers and broadcasts also create a commercial channel on YouTube and, in the case of an impending political events, they air from the site without any time limits. Their live broadcasts are well received in the spots where a journalist ID is required; thus, precluding access to such sites by the amateurs of Afreeca TV. In these professional productions, the quality of the live video is improved by manually manipulating quality settings, such as captioning work or encoding, (which is hard to do for non-professional beginners), and this differentiates them from the live streaming broadcasts of amateurs. Of course, as we saw earlier, the value of the amateur is its 'liveness' and it is based on public support. Therefore, it is premature to conclude that this new competitive landscape and these threats diminish the influence of Afreeca TV. In the process of changing the technological environment and the live streaming service market, Afreeca TV has also been growing rapidly, with the number of amateur BJs participating in live broadcasts increasing to 1.3 million by 2015 (Gwak, *et al*., 2015: 54). This relates to increased production of various subculture genres, in addition to games and rallies on Afreeca TV. In particular, some amateur broadcasters have tried to improve the quality of broadcasting by using specialised hardware and high-quality Web cameras, and, in response, Afreeca TV developed a unique system called 'Star balloon' in 2007, that allows fans to sponsor amateurs, so that they can continue their activities at the semi-professional level (this will be discussed in detail in the next chapter).

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[28] *My Little Television* (Hangul: 마이 리틀 텔레비전) is a South Korean television show broadcast from February 2015 to and June 2017. It featured personal Internet broadcasting, and was often compared with the shows on Afreeca TV.

Having outlined changes in the Korean media environment, especially in relation to the growth of real-time streaming services, it is also important to explore further the impact of the candlelight vigils and the political transformation of Korean society they occasioned. These impacts did not end in 2008, and have continued until the present day, nine years later. Candle light vigils can be seen as a medium of collective action that is used to illuminate social and political events in different forms. Indeed, since angry citizens first swarmed the Gwanghwamun area (the holy land for the candlelight vigils) after hearing the news about South Korea's presidential scandal on October 29th, 2016, a total of 19 rallies have been held. A total of 15,854,130 people participated in one candle light vigil for 134 days, leading up to the impeachment of Former President Park on 10th March 2017 (Ye, 2017). These candlelight vigils all were broadcast live through streaming service broadcasts on various platforms, including those of Afreeca TV, and many amateurs participated in the broadcast productions as they did in 2008. Some commenters point out that the key to the candlelight vigils in 2017 was resistance to the government and its conservative regime with the biggest number of peaceful protests (Ban, 2017). In light of its scale, however, this candle should be remembered as the best example of the form; it was a great success, not only in as the 'biggest', but also in terms of impact. It leads to the impeachment of the president. We will now look at the role that amateur live-streaming has played in this political change during that period.[29]

7. 'Taegukgi' Amateur Broadcaster, Waving a National Flag

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[29] The case study on the Taegeukgi rallies focused on the older generation's use of the live streaming technologies through YouTube, rather than Afreeca TV. I analysed live videos streamed between January 30 and March 28, before and after the decision of the Constitutional Court to impeach Park Geun-Hye, the former South Korean president. In investigating the older generation's favorite channels, a total of 20 live broadcasts including TMT, SNS TV, A Gift of God, and MFN were examined, along with other amateur images of Happy Dream, Jonjang, and DKDK TV channels that covered the live broadcasts of the same demonstrations. The length of the images varied between 30 minutes and 4 hours.

The candlelight demonstration for the 'impeachment of the president' is an interesting case. Since the use of smartphones has spread to the 'silver generation', middle-aged conservatives have participated in the use and production of real-time streaming services, just as younger people do.[30] One thing that stands out in this phenomenon is the connection with the use of technology on-site, which could be called 'mass amateurisation' (Shirky, 2008, 2011).[31] Amateur broadcasters of past candlelight protests produced their broadcasts together with their audiences and collectively exchanged information for common political goals. In more recent times, amateur broadcast producers with different political tendencies have conflicted with each other and were divided by generational differences. The majority of the people who participated in the live broadcasts of the candlelight vigils were young progressives with anti-government tendencies in their 20s and 30s. However, a small number of the elderly were willing to '*neutralise*' the rebellion of these younger generations and have entered the scene of the live broadcasts as well. The differentiation of these producers along generation lines, mainly into two groups of youths and the elderly, is connected with social issues, such as Korea's low birth rate and aging population.

> "They call their gatherings the "Taegukgi Rally," after the South Korean flag. They say their flags represent a growing fire, the true fire of patriotism and democracy, countering the supposedly ill-conceived fire of the candlelight rallies. They say most of the anti-Park protesters are disruptive communists, or naive young people who don't know any better. They believe the disgraced president Park Geun-hye should return to office." (Kang, 2017: N. Pag.).

On 29th October 2016, more than 50,000 people came out to protest against the corruption of the Park Geun-Hye government, just as former candlelight protesters came out to protest the issues of the day. The number of participants increased with each successive

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[30] The monthly *Chosun* published an article in its February 2017 issue titled, "Is it possible to change public opinion about the impeachment and the future presidential election by a conservative, one-man broadcasting?". It introduced famous broadcasters working through YouTube, such as Jang-Soo Hwang, Dae-Jip Choi, Jong-Hwan Kim, Kyu-Jae Jung, and other renowned conservative broadcasters (Lee, 2017a).
[31] This describes the capabilities that new forms of media have provided to amateurs, and which make it possible for them to participate in a variety of production areas, including media, that were not possible in the past (Shirky, 2008, 2011).

rally, which were held every weekend, so that by November 26th, 1,900,000 people from all over the country participated in the largest demonstration of the history of the Republic of Korea (Jung and Hur, 2016). Following that, in December 2016, President Park was impeached by parliament due to a corruption scandal. She had taken bribes from *Chaebols* (large Korean family-owner conglomerates), including Samsung, the world's largest smartphone manufacturer, based in Seoul. At that time, supporters of the former president, pro-Park protesters, composed of extreme-right groups mostly aged in their 60s and 70s, came out to fight against the candlelight vigils. This became a decisive factor in parliament's decision to impeach the president. The pro-Park protesters crowded a square in front of Seoul City Hall, about 100 metres away from Gwanghwamun, where the anti-government candlelight-vigil demonstrations were taking place. Foreign media even reported that they were shouting for the 'impeachment of impeachment' and waving ROK flags (in Korean, *taegukgi*). These flags had rarely been present on the streets of Seoul since the 2004 (*when* the *2002 World Cup* held), before they were 'swung, plastered on trucks and pitched outside big buildings' (*Economist*, 2017). While 42% of South Koreans felt 'uncomfortable' at the use of the flags as a political tool according to a recent survey (*Ibid.*), the nickname attached to these protests still is the 'Taegukgi Rally.'

Interestingly, the 'Taegukgi' protesters, who pronounce themselves to be conservatives concerned about national security, also denied the veracity of media reports, which had effectively been the catalyst for the impeachment. The protesters started to broadcast live, claiming the media broadcasts were as 'fake news.' In a mediated dual of live-streaming, both demonstrations were mixed: the 'candlelight rally' consisting of citizens demanding the impeachment of Park Geun-Hye and a 'Taegukgi rally' by Park Geun-Hye's supporters denying Park Geun-Hye's impeachment. The Taegukgi protesters displayed hostility even to the young amateurs who relayed the candlelight demonstrations. They tried to take the cameras out, threatened the unarmed young citizens, and only allowed broadcasters holding a flag or wearing small pins in the shape of the national flag to interview them, as observed in the streamed videos analysed for the study. As the Taegukgi rallies were only about one ninth as large as the candlelight rallies, in terms of production size, the number of live broadcasts of the Taegukgi rallies was also smaller than those of the 'candlelight rallies'. However, the Taegukgi rallies continued for over a

hundred days, eventually expanding to 100,000 people, and reaching a peak when the Constitutional Court's decision on the was about to be disclosed to the public.

Regarding the expansion of the Taegukgi rallies, Korean newspapers such as *Ilyo News* (Moon, 2017*)*, *Edaily* (Kim, 2017a) pointed out that the sponsors of the Taegukgi rallies broadcast most of the rally scenes using YouTube. This allowed an audience of mostly senior citizens to actively consume the videos, and played a significant role in the expansion of the rallies. The preconceived notion that the elderly are likely unfamiliar with the use of smart devices is reversed here. Young amateurs who mediated the impeachment candlelight protests in 2017 used a variety of social media, such as YouTube and Facebook, as well as Afreeca TV. The younger generation uses media aggressively. On the other hand, the platform used by elderly people relaying national flag rallies was limited to YouTube. Some newspapers argued that 'the majority of the elderly at the meeting site were using YouTube with their smartphone', and reported that they witnessed the elderly watching the live broadcast through it (Moon, 2017; Kim, 2017a). In the case of the Tan-Gi-Guk[32] hosting the Taegukgi rally, the organisation directly opened a YouTube channel named TMT and broadcast their activities live throughout the rallies. In December 2016, when this group opened its YouTube channel, it revealed its intention to 'establish a relationship with supporters of the president through YouTube broadcasts and to express the voice of justice and truth' (TMT official homepage, 3rd March 2017). Other YouTube channels run by presidential supporters or conservative groups include, 'A gift of God', '(Patriotic Channel) SNS TV', 'Patriotic Tube Korea', and 'Watch Again'. 'A gift of God' is especially well-known as a must-watch channel among Park Geun-Hye supporters. As of 3rd March 2017, the channel has about 70,000 subscribers and more than 700 videos, according to the *Ilyo News* broadcasts mentioned above.

At the same time, it was embroiled in controversy that the participation of these older people had become a 'propaganda tool' or an adverse reaction to the president's crime,

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[32] The Korean abbreviation for the headquarters of the National Rebellion Movement for the rejection of the impeachment of the President.

such as the dissemination of fake news (Moon, 2017). The elderly audiences not only consumed these real-time broadcasts, but also shared captured images and video links with their friends through SNS, when the streaming video or edited video was uploaded (here, edited video means YouTube clips that are edited and cut after the streaming service ends on YouTube). It was reported that they did not learn how to use smartphones not from family or friends, but from 'lessons for computer illiterate' (*Ibid.*: N. pag.). These lessons for people who do not know how to use a smartphone were provided for free by '*Bakssamo*', the Park Geun-Hye fan club. The lessons taught the elderly how to open their smartphones, and how to access YouTube, copy links to newspaper articles, and share them with their friends.

The question here is, why only YouTube? There could be many reasons for this, but I suggest the following. Afreeca TV has a relatively involved subculture of fans and it takes a relatively lone time to get familiar with the interface. Therefore, the live broadcasting service that YouTube launched in Korea in 2011 (following Afreeca TV, 2006), would be more accessible to older people. Another reason for this is related to the fact that the Samsung smartphone has the highest penetration rate in Korea and is mostly used by the elderly. It has a mandatory YouTube app installed on its Android interface, and the app cannot be deleted. Old people who own a smartphone but are limited to the use of pre-installed apps can find it hard to use Afreeca TV, because they have to install the app for the service separately. In other words, I can assume that the production and consumption of streaming broadcasts for the elderly was very effective on YouTube due to the penetration rate of Samsung smartphones and the YouTube platforms' easy technical manipulation in the South Korean context.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that the ruling party had a significant interest in the production of streaming services for the elderly in relation to the Park Geun-Hye government. For instance, former President Park gave an interview to the YouTube channel for the first time when she showed up in public after the corruption scandal. Her interview was streamed on a YouTube channel, Jeong-Kyu Jae TV. This interview received a lot of attention. It seemed unusual that she would agree to be interviewed by an amateur YouTube channel rather than by a pro-government-oriented channel, such as

MBC, in which she owns a 30% stake, and which had been friendly towards her. Some media channels, such as the *Huffington Post*, have argued about 'why Park chose the YouTube channel' (Gwak, 2017). It was suggested that the presenter disregarded the principles of journalism, while 'throwing questions and exchanging questions with President Park Geun-Hye as if he and Park were almost one in body and soul' (*Ibid*.: N. pag.). As for the discovery of a tablet PC that contained key information related to her corruption, and which led to Park's impeachment, the presenter commented that 'the possibility that a tablet PC has been organised seems to be a matter that is now revealed' before he asked about it. Neutrality, a key principle of journalism in the general media, was ignored. President Park responded with a smile which was broadcast live on YouTube. Because it was an amateur broadcast, it could not be cut and could be (re)posted on YouTube.

The internal relations between pro-government organisations and the organisers of Taegukgi rallies were controversial during the protests. Public organisations that receive public funding from the government have been revealed to have been among the organisations that jointly hosted Taegukgi Conventions. The Korean Public Election Law states that when receiving government subsidies, organisations must maintain political neutrality in their activities.[33] With the headline 'the Taegukgi rally is under the direction of President Park', the *Kyunghyang* newspaper also reported that a public service organisation funded by the Park Geun-Hye government had supplied human resources of about 100,000 people for the Taegukgi rally on March 1st, 2017. For this reason, suspicions that the older people's Taegukgi rallies and the streaming service channels for them were controlled by powerful groups linked with President Park have spread throughout the general public. Those who streamed at the Taegukgi rally scenes across the Internet and disseminate fake news through social media.[34] This means that vulnerable people who have limited education about media and technology use, such as

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[33] However, according to the report of *the Seoul Economy News*, organisations such as the Liberal League, the Righteous Movement Council, and the Saemaul Movement Council have sponsored the Taegeukgi rally on March 1, 2017 (Hong, 2017).

[34] The criticism about the live broadcasts that broadcasted the national flag rallies has drawn since April 1, 2017, after SBS, one of the broadcasting company in South Korea in its prime time factual program, *"The It's Know"* reported that numerous fake news has been produced through YouTube and SNS, which have an impure intention by the back forces of Taegukgi rally.

the elderly, can assess with the false information through live broadcasts. Further research on the process of mobilising old people through streaming services, fake news, and social media is needed. However, I focus here on immediate concerns. The fact that the spontaneity of the participants in the production and consumption of the streaming service is suspected is, of course, a new phenomenon that cannot be found in the live streams of the candlelight demonstrations in 2008. This demonstrates that it is not only 'the weak' who are able to utilise the productivity of the mass-amateurisation. Indeed, 'the powerful' have caught up, and utilise this productivity to their own ends. This issue is related to the democratisation of the production brought about by technological changes in the field of cultural production, as well as to the fake news controversy in the 2016 US presidential election.

8. The Ongoing Struggle for Recognition

My analysis of the 'Taegukgi rally' broadcasts streamed on YouTube during the impeachment period, suggest that the most common phrase in these videos was, ironically, 'the *truth*'. South Korean media theorist, Jeon Gyu-Chan, explains the background of the impeachment, saying, "the gatekeeping and censorship of the media has given rise to a controversy of the state power, which has abandoned the function of inquiring truth, finding truth, and expressing truth" (Jeon, 2017: 830; my translation). What is interesting is that the participants of the Taegukgi rally, who came to support President Geun-Hye Park, to protect her from the candlelight vigils, criticised the mainstream media, just as the candlelight protesters did. In their streaming video, they often yell out that they will produce the 'truth' that the mainstream press never gave them. During the 100-day political event that led to the president's impeachment, there was another game of truth or dare, in which expert news journalists and amateur live broadcasts competed against each other by offering their viewers different realities; the truth of the press produced by experts, the truth of the candlelight demonstrators denying it, and the truth of the

Taegukgi rally supporters, who denied both the other groups. It is not necessary to say what is right or wrong here. Rather, I attempt to keep track of the different 'truths' production by the opposition between the views of the amateurs relaying candlelight vigils and Taegukgi rallies. To do this, I first pay attention to the following words from the relay of the Taegukgi rally;

> "Patriotic people, let us unite now. We, conservative rightists. To unite the right wing conservatives, we need to strip away the falsification of President Geun-Hye Parkthrough the unity of patriot citizens through the unity of unity. It is the fact that the truth is living in the Republic of Korea, and that makes the future of Korea." (Politician Won-Jin Cho, shown in the video of Story, 2016a)[35]

The 'Truth' is a rallying call that was constantly voiced by Taegukgi rally participants in their streamed video. Yet, this is not the same truth that the media or the candlelight demonstrators could prove or deny in the reports or broadcasts, including those by amateurs, that revealed the corruption of the president from various angles. The 'truth' that people close to the president repeatedly iterated at the rally was that 'President Geun-Hye Park has no selfishness, no corruption, and worked only for the people in the Republic of Korea' (Story, 2016a). [36] The Korean media, the prosecutors and constitutional courts, and the foreign media all bore witness to all the president's corruption and provided evidence, yet all the people in the live videos at the Taegukgi rally claimed that there was no truth. This particular political group reworked the relaying of the streaming service and uploaded it to YouTube as a compilation. Their distributing 'fake news' through social media became a social issue. In 'Fake news' dispersed to an unspecified number of people belonging to the conservative group, Lee Jung-mi, one of the members of the Constitutional Court, was described as 'North Korea's judge' and

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[35] Won-Jin Cho, known as one of those closest to former president Park Geun-hye, came to the Taegukgi rally on March 17th, 2017. His words were relayed in real time through YouTube's 'Story' channel. I recorded these words in real time.
[36] On March 17, at the rally site, this phrase that Won-Jin Cho stressed was one of the slogans most often repeated by Park Geun Hye supporters. He also repeated it at another Taegukgi rally held on February 11th, 2017 (Kim and Kim, 2017).

'witch judge' (Moon, 2017). At the rally site, these soundbites were confirmed in the images as the rallying cry that I analysed for the research.

It is interesting to note that some of the same strategies that young people in the candlelight vigils used (examined above), were also adopted in the live broadcasts made by the older people at the Taegukgi rally. For example, in one of the live shows on the SNSTV dedicated channel, broadcaster announced that 'It is an emergency. Patriotic citizens should come quickly', when the police tried to disperse the rally crowds. He used his live broadcast as a tool to collect evidence and monitor the police activities. 'If there is any physical action over there, we, patriotic people, will confront it squarely' (SNS TV, 2017a).[37] In the streaming video, another broadcaster is shown shooting the scene with his smartphone. Eventually, both the protagonist (broadcaster) and the subject of the video were made to leave the scene of the demonstrate by the police. They shared information about the live broadcast with the other demonstrators they met on the street, saying, 'We once said that the operation was retreating' (*Ibid*.). The viewers watching the live broadcast of the Taegukgi rallies actively participated in the production of the broadcast. In another live broadcast streamed by a representative of 'the mothers' group, who joined the Taegukgi protest in front of the public broadcasting service hall, one person says, "the media should not be reigning over the president" (MFN, 2017).[38] Viewers talking in real-time gave her their feedback, for example, contributing comments of support such as, "I'm so sorry for not being there" (Comment from viewer, MFN, Jan 23th, 2017).

The producers who broadcast from the Taegukgi and candlelight vigils can be clearly divided into two groups, the old and the young. Tacitly, they were conscious of each other because they were holding national flags or candles, respectively. For example, one of the live comments from the Taegukgi rally held on March 17, 2017 is "Put the Taegeukgi

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[37] When the police tried to dismantle the tent of the Taegukgi rally on the Seoul City Hall plaza, the broadcaster made the process live, and said "the patriotic citizens who watched this come here and stop the demolition together" (SNS TV, 2017a).
[38] In order to put pressure on the media coverage of the former president, representatives of the mothers group and Taeguek-ki rally participants came to the biggest public service (KBS) building on Jan. 23, 2017, and one of them showed the process live on the next Web page of YouTube (MFN, 2017).

on your body so that you will not be misunderstood."(Story, 2017a).[39] Protesters who moved with the broadcasters in the rally field also strictly distinguish themselves from those of 'the other side'.

Indeed, when 'enemies' entered the 'screen', the demonstrators collectively pushed the enemy cameras out. For example, on the 'impeachment' day, 10th, March, 2017, when Park's impeachment was announced, the DKDK TV broadcaster, who is famous for K-pop reaction videos, tried to interview elderly people in order to broadcast from the Taegukgi rally from a neutral standpoint. He made three YouTube live shows (DKDK TV, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d) on this day, and he was threatened by Taegukgi protesters. In the streaming video, Taegukgi protesters constantly appeared and asked him to confirm that he was not from the candlelight vigil. An elderly gentleman said, 'Think of me as your father, grandfather. I saw two people today who have lost their camera to the rally people' (DKDK TV, 2017a). In the words of a BJ in another streamed video (2017d), when he came to collect evidence on police violence at the Taegukgi rallies, a middle-aged woman was suspicious of his intentions and threatened him, 'We are not taking seriously what young children say.' The woman then asked DKDK TV "which news are you from", also threatening that "prosecutors, media, and journalists, I have to kill them all!" Although the broadcaster told her, "I'm from a neutral source," she continued to interrupt his coverage, saying "there's no such thing as neutral!" (DKDK TV, 2017d). During the same live broadcast, few minutes later, another Taegukgi protester approached him and even threatened to take his camera (*Ibid.*).

"I show South Korea to people outside of the country" (Reporter)

"You shouldn't be doing that!" (Protester)

"I'm covering both sides neutrally" (Reporter)

"But this isn't good for the country. You shouldn't do this if you are a patriot!" (Protester)

"I'm just showing the reality here" (Reporter)

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[39] DKDK TV became famous by uploading videos on YouTube that contain reactions to the K-pop music in Korea. He broadcasted the Taegeukgi rally in South Korea live on the impeachment day (DKDK TV, 2017a; 2017b; 2017c).

"It's not real. That is not the *reality*!" (Protester)[40]

If it is technically possible to create a regime of truth with the same technology, then others who occupy different truth regimes can play the same role as a broadcaster; that of being political. An elderly person who sees through the true nature of the live broadcast, therefore, tries to expose himself only to the desired intermediary channel in order to be recognised for his truth. The elderly man knows that if the reality becomes mediatised, the screen may reproduce a reality that he cannot accept. He has an intuition that it is dangerous, because some 'truth-effects' will arise from the image created by his opposing forces. In this old man's words, we can see that it is irrelevant whether the 'truth' they speak is true or not. The old man initially claimed that it was only legitimate for the purpose of patriotism to take images of their rally, however, when the DKDK TV said, "I will show reality," he denied that the reality of the Taegukgi rally, saying it is not 'real', despite being there himself. Why did he talk in such riddles? What we should be aware of is that what the elderly man demand from the younger man was not the responsibility or impartiality as a medium or journalism to reflect and represent reality.

I reiterate here an observation made above, that thanks to their popular support the 2008 candlelight vigils were justified through the amateur live broadcasts. Borrowing Foucault's expression, they were justified as 'the techniques and procedures which are valorised for obtaining truth'. Similarly, during the rallies, the 'candlelight broadcasters' acquired 'the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true' at that time (Foucault, 1976/2001: 13). Live video was a crucial technological condition in the discursive work of constructing the 'regime of truth' (*Ibid*.: 13) called 'candlelight'. At the same time, it now constitutes another regime, from the perspective of the otherwise-minded.

It is natural that conflict arises among the groups in society belonging to other truth regimes, and this is what we see in the live broadcasts, a clash between generations

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[40] The conversation between this man and DKDK TV can be found from the video clip (7:37-7:59) edited relay video at that time (2017d).

manifest as division between the candlelight vigils participants and the Taegukgi rally goers over the impeachment of the president. The seniors at the rally were mostly socially vulnerable people, who mistrust young people (as represented by candlelight demonstrators), and the cultural and political effects of the real-time streaming service on this group were unusual. The struggle here was to persuade others of the truth that they held right, and to acknowledge themselves as those who believe in the truth. However, in this particular situation considerable suspicions about the spontaneity of rally were raised. The financial backer of the production was criticised for participating under false pretenses, leading to suspicions that the rally was more planed than spontaneous, just as the amateurism of the rally streaming service broadcasting fell under suspicion of pretense, with the result that the value of the broadcasts is undermined. Yet, despite the reasonable suspicions raised by the younger generation who represent the 'left wing', such suspicions have no effect on the rally participants. The streaming video service is a precious asset in political struggle for the older generation as well. Even if the broadcasts were full of false information and falsehood, they also provided a means to overcome the fear of reality, the reality of their loss of the greatest power, i.e that the president for whom they voted in the presidential election was corrupt and had been impeached.

"It is not over yet. It is not over if we do not finish. We have to keep the president. From those evil crowds." (viewer comments during a live broadcast of Story (2017c)[41]

Above all, most of the slogans shouted on the scene expressed a fear of reality and feelings of tragic foreboding. Live broadcasts provided a means to overcome their negative emotions, and to reaffirm their beliefs, and connect the ralliers with people of the same political orientation. Concerns have also been expressed in the comments the ralliers made after using streaming services. The worries about the country's future expressed in the broadcasts are serious enough to make the audiences feel like they are standing at a crossroads between life and death. Thus, the live broadcasts become a medium of life-

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[41] Posted on March 9th, 2017 in response to the live broadcast in front of the Constitutional Court (Story, 2017c).

saving. For example, on the day of the impeachment citation, tragic events occurred in one of the Taegukgi rallies when three protesters died amid the chaotic protest.[42] The fell out of police patrol cars during confrontations with the police. The gruesome deaths of three elderly people were reported live on YouTube, and the broadcaster cried out, "We swore to die! We swore by blood! Let's go to the Constitutional Court (where Park Geun-hye's impeachment decision was announced)! Let's beat it!" (Story, 2017b)[43]

Such dramatic scenes at the Taegukgi rallies are also considered to be an interesting subject for young YouTube creators and amateur broadcasters of Afreeca TV. Some of the broadcasters presented the live broadcasts as a dangerous game, because they were aware of the high possibility of conflict with elderly people who refused to cover the younger generation's perspective, as seen in the case of DKDK TV. However, when he attended the Taegukgi rallies instead of the candlelight rallies, Afreeca TV BJ, Jonjang, voluntarily pushed himself forward in an extreme game which entailed shouting "let's impeach Park Geun-hye" in the middle of the Taegeukgi protesters (Jonjang, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d). However, such reactions by the participants of the candlelight vigils do not comprise a realistic solution to national conflicts predicated on inter-generational divisions. Indeed, conflicts intensified, with each side calling the other's media "evil". This was a popular expression that people in Taegukgi rallies frequently used to describe the candlelight vigils. On March 27, 2017, 'A Gift of God' Youtube channel interviewed a citizen who came back to South Korea after 38 years living in Seattle specifically to participate in the Taegukgi rallies. This citizen said that other broadcast other than the pro-Taegukgi YouTube channel, "broadcast Satanic conversations" (A gift of God, 2017b). The more the younger people criticised the images, the more the older people came to assemble due to the images. Indeed, the media criticised the spread of fake news through live broadcasts of the Taegeukgi rally, but it did not have any power to prevent them. Over the past three months, the mainstream

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[42] CNN reported that three protesters were confirmed dead after the protest and dozes of people were injured at the same rally site (Hancocks and McKirdy, 2017).
[43] On March 9, 2017, the Story channel, which broadcasted the Taegeukgi rally in front of the Constitutional Court, reported the process of the collision with the police and asked the protesters to go to the Constitutional Court. Some of the demonstrators climbed over the police car and rallied. These scenes appeared in YouTube video clips that recorded live footage in Story (2017c) at the time.

media, both liberal and conservative, has come to a consensus over the president's corruption. Despite this, and even now that the special inspection and the Constitutional Court have invoked impeachment through the rule of law, the Taegukgi rallies and their live broadcasts are still alive.[44]

Some were surprised by the persistent vitality of the Taegukgi rallies and argue that there is a need for social understanding of the 'political emotion' of the elderly. For example, the conservative writes, Kim Hun (2017c), described his experiences at the Taegukgi rallies, saying that "[the] people participating in the Taegukgi rallies do not belong to any socioeconomically homogeneous group. Although the rallies did not seem to result in any 'periodic sentiment' among those who shook the Taegukgi, the participants seemed to share a political sentiment that could go beyond the real situation in front of them" (Kim, 2017c: 742). It has also been pointed out that the 'agony' that many old people experience in their everyday lives may have been manifested in the public sphere through Taegukgi rallies. Indeed, the *Kyunghwang* newspaper suggests that generational conflict may become more serious (Park, 2017). Anthropologist Choi pointed out that the elderly was excluded economically and socially and were angry at the impeachment of the president (2017). They were also angered by the fact that even the conservative press, which 'they [had] thought of as their window on the world agreed with the decision [the impeachment]', and this made them feel a sense of fear that their time might be over.

In a sense, the elderly protestors denied the live broadcasts of mainstream newspapers, broadcasts, and the candlelight vigils, because these media only represent former president Geun-Hye Park as an image and consume her as a symbol of absolute power, 'the disgraced president'. To the Taegukgi ralliers, however, Park is more than a symbol; she is a materialisation of patriotism, of the most significant value that the elderly can deploy against the harsh realities of their lives. Let us recall the moment when Park Geun-

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[44] In the case of "A Gift of God", its live broadcast has continued after the impeachment quotation was officially done (A Gift of God, 2017a, live on May 21th, 2017) and become serious. The broadcaster interviewed a conservative group member protesting against the impeachment citation in front of the Supreme Prosecutors' Office (*Ibid*., 2017c, live on May 27th, 2017), and bought a new camera equipment called "Gimbal" to show a 360-dimensional real-time relay shows to the audience (*Ibid*., 2017d, live on May 28th, 2017).

Hye, the country's supreme power, fell to from grace and was imprisoned. At that point, the elderly did not want to acknowledge her loss of power, they trembled with fear as if it was the end of their era. They chose to watch live broadcasts from the Taegeukgi rallies on Youtube, because they were the only 'live media' available to them that could reconstruct, reinforce and share their truths via very simple technological processes amenable to the elderly. Without any critical understanding of the infrastructural nature of the digital media and technical devices, and while having collectively individuated through the mediation of hate via the live broadcasts, the 'patriotic Taegeukgi warriors' finally materialised as a new political force in South Korea.

Chapter Five. Gift Economy and Amateur Living Labour

1. Introduction: Amateur Gift Economy

After the emergence of the Web, interest in the cultural and political effects of amateur cultural production in the digital economy continued; with the expectation that the objectives of amateurs' cultural production would be personal enjoyment and for the benefit of networked communities, supported by an online network where active amateur producers share content free, rather than gaining monetary compensation. That was, perceived as contributing to the 'economy of love' where such love is placed in "an economy of pure expenditure" (Barthes, 1978: 84). However, this view has developed in line with the concern that amateur online 'activity' can no longer be regarded as unproductive, where all the immaterial inputs of users such as cultural creativity, human sociability, and cooperative interactivity have become a part of the accumulation of the capitalist platform's wealth (Moulier-Boutang, 2011; de Peuter and Dyer-Witheford, 2005; Dyer-Witheford, 2005a, 2005b). While the evaluation of the commons produced through amateurs' contents production has developed through the same logic as labour under post-capitalism, passionate amateurs' contribution to the platform often brings critical issues to the fore. Likewise, it seems to be under the ambivalence of 'free labour' that is "voluntarily given and unwaged, enjoyed and exploited" (Terranova, 2000: 33-57). If it is possible for the platform to proceed and assess its privatisation adequately, this may be considered as an opportunity to produce new commodity value relating to the absorption of all the artistic and immaterial inputs by amateurs and users to the cognitive capitalistic platform (c.f. Terranova, 2000; Lazzarato, 2004). To the scholars who share this viewpoint, the 'love economy' of amateurism is expected to develop into a form of commodity economy.

This chapter at a first glance focuses on the 'gift economy' as operating under a different logic to that of the commodity economy, which started even before the emergence of the

Web. In the sixty years following Marcel Mauss (1954/1990)'s introduction of his concept of the *Essai sur le don* (The Gift), the radical nature of the gift has been discussed extensively by numerous theorists. In particular, this topic was addressed seriously in the field of economics as a means of re-evaluating the 'non-capitalist economies' that are undervalued or marginalised in the discourse centred on capitalism (Malinowski, 1966; Lawler and Thye, 1999; Gregory, 1982). In particular, the 'free' economy of 'love' on the Web that was accelerated by amateur devotion during the early stages of the Web, led to the expectation that this would spread to the rest of the digital economy (Barbrook, 2002). Cases of open source software and creative commons that are made through user peer production or cooperation in the networked information economy (Benkler, 2006, 2011), enabled a re-imagining of the 'gift economy.' However, what we should notice is that, as the Internet became commercialised, mechanisms of tangible compensation spilled over into the 'circulation of the gift' that used to take place merely through users' contributions. As such, the economy did not get divided into a 'gift economy' and a 'commodity economy.', instead, they co-exist on the Web. Evaluation of this symbiotic relationship is split into two camps; it is either seen just as post-capitalism poaching amateurs' and users' voluntary free labour (Terranova, 2000, 2004), or the co-existence of the two economies is seen to ensure the long-term advancement of the gift economy (Barbrook, 2002, Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013). However, both sides agree that a new form of economy that is different from the existing commodity economy is being created in the digital economy. Accordingly, there is a need to examine the kinds of interaction found between amateur cultural production and the 'commodity economy' or 'gift economy' in this new digital economy environment. Based on this controversy, we first look at what the meaning of the gift is, and how it's important in cultural production.

The idea of the gift economy that this chapter focuses on starts from Marcel Mauss's *Essai Sur le Don* (*The Gift*) (1954/1990) which became a prominent issue in Anthropology, but also sparked a debate in wider areas, including but not limited to economics, philosophy, and even post-Marxism, such as Bataille's concept of the 'general economy' and Barbrook's work of the 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy' (2002). The issue that Mauss's theory inspired was the vagueness of the gift that appears free-spirited and free on the outside, but in actuality is forced and calculating. Prior to publishing The

Gift (Mauss, 1954/1990), Mauss (1924/2014) wrote an essay with a short title, *Gift, Gift*, in which he analyses the vagueness and quandary of the etymological meaning of the word 'gift' in German. He focused on the fact that the typical meaning of the 'the gift of drink' for the Germans and Scandinavians of ancient times held two meanings; both 'gift' and 'poison' (Mauss, 1924/2014: 28) Anticipating quite specifically the undecidability of the Derridean *Pharmakon* (that was also used by Stiegler (2012b) in the discussion of the ambivalence of technology, more precisely tertiary retention), Mauss (*Op. cit.*) argues that the recipient would always feel uncertain as to whether the gift he or she was about to drink was a drink-gift or a drink-poison. This uncertainty anticipates the conjoined pleasure and displeasure "we will feel when receiving gifts" (cited in Schrif, 1997: 7). Mauss saw this feeling as the sense of obligation for returning courtesies and stressed the complexity that gifts are not only presented as a token of gratitude to return courtesies but also implicitly accompanied by an "obligation to return presents" (Mauss, 1924/2014: 31). To cancel out this sense of obligation, people tend to return more than what they received. Thus, leading to an increase in the size of gift exchanges; that is the starting point for the formation of a gift economy.

Later, Mauss studied primitive society's ceremonial gift exchange in his book, *The Gift* (1954/1990), and revealed that gifts or giving signifies a three-tier obligation of giving, receiving and reciprocating. To him, the system of giving is comprised of a circular relationship consisting of the following obligations; giving, which is the required initial step for the creation and maintenance of social relationships; receiving, for to refuse to receive is to reject the social bond; and reciprocating, in order to demonstrate one's own liberality, honour and wealth (*Ibid.*: 8). That is, obligatory relationships between the concerned parties of the exchange systemises the gift exchange. The principle of 'reciprocity' lies behind the act of giving. Mauss (*Ibid.*) refers to all these arguments as a system of 'total prestation' or 'total social phenomena' (: 2). The most typical form is the potlatch of the North American Indians. Originally, potlatch meant "to feed" or "to consume" a meal (*Ibid.*: 6-9). Here, overall provision means that all the members enter into a contractual relationship with the chief serving as the medium for all that the clan itself owns and acts on. This provision is essentially marked by high payback and wastefulness because it delegates to the chief the authority to assume an extremely

speculative attitude. Thus, the essence of the potlatch is the obligation of giving that becomes the privilege of the giver. The giver's (chief) moral and social superiority increased as the giving resembled pure 'free gift' that does not wait for reciprocation or compensation (Mauss, 1954/1990: 6-9). Meanwhile, the beneficiary who receives the gift is bound to the giver and falls to a lower rank when he or she does not return the courtesies or does not return them sufficiently (*Ibid*.). The problem of the asymmetric mechanism of gift exchange shown in the potlatch is that a massive increase in the volume of exchange occurs, due to obligation to reciprocate the gift received, the potlatch's inherent competitiveness and rivalry of expenditure and excess becomes a means of organisation of the socio-economic hierarchy.

However, the strange thing is that, as Muthu (2016) points out, in his book, Mauss hardly puts any emphasis on the notion of 'solidarity' in relation to the act of generosity particularly in giving gifts, which is implicit in the dynamics of Potlatch's gift-exchange (Mauss, 1954/1990: 55-56). Mauss, who detects this problem himself, claims that it is necessary to divide up the approach to the 'common store of wealth' fairly in order for Western society to avoid the social class hierarchy problems of the potlatch and the resulting class-conscious anxieties in society (*Ibid*.: 83) at the end of his book by saying; "It is useless to seek goodness and happiness in distant places. It is there already, in peace that has been imposed, in well-organised work, alternately in common and separately, in wealth amassed and then redistributed, in the mutual respect and reciprocating generosity that is taught by education" (*Ibid*.: 106-107).

Given that Mauss considered the even distribution of wealth, the commons of the democratic society, and goodness, mutual respect and reciprocating generosity the basis for social phenomena, his approach to 'gift' can be understood as a political project and triggers imaginations of social idealism. Bataille (1985) also devoted critical consideration of the relationship between the gift economy and the commodity economy and tried to develop an alternative form of the commodity economy through the strategic use of the gift economy concept (see also Richman, 1982) Following Mauss, Bataille re-interpreted Mauss's potlatch as the "constitution of a positive property of loss" (Bataille, 1985: 122), thus it opposes the balanced relationships of gift exchange. Since potlatch is

the gift which must be considered as "a loss" and thus as "a partial destruction" (Bataille, 1985: 122) and the desire to destroy is partly transferred to the recipient. Therefore, potlatch's unproductive expenditure or *dépense* aims at waste and loss instead of reciprocity, and thus it can be symbolised as anti-economic and anti-utilitarian consumption; it causes only the "unwanted" result "in the realm of acquisition" (Derrida, 1978: 257). This consumption is also developed into the form of "heedless sacrifice of presence and meaning", with no compensation or deferment (*Ibid.*: 257). Then, an amateur 'gift' that does not want the rewards we deal with here can be aesthetically and ethically meaningful as a political practice based on "sacrifice for existence and meaning" in this perspective (*Ibid.*: 257).

The concept of the gift economy that assumes this type of meaning, giving without reciprocating and unproductive expenditure or *dépense*, holds significant implications for the discourse of cultural production. After industrialisation, amateurs' production of art and culture was considered a 'hobby' or 'consumption' that does not generate profit (c.f. Arendt, 1958; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947/2002). As such, it was considered to be unproductive expenditure or *dépense* activity. However, when Bataille (1985)'s logic is borrowed, this consumption can be understood as activity on the level of self-sacrifice that takes place beyond utilitarian calculation. The act of 'giving' that transfers without expecting a return of courtesies for the output of such activity can be re-evaluated as a driver that ensures a community's continual advancement, and that can bring new vitality and activeness to the inside of the production system. The potential of the gift economy that is taken as a form of an ethical project when examined from this viewpoint may be realised as an act of giving that entails sharing and building consensus around humanistic values, such as sharing, sacrifice, and devotion. This is the 'free gift' of the Web economy produced via voluntary cultural production carried out by amateurs, more so than a new form of exploitation under post-capitalism.

After the emergence of the Web, Barbrook (2002) first analysed the 'Hi-Tech Gift Economy,' which was formed by amateurs' contributions. He pointed out that the New Left camp created a new form of progressive politics, 'anarcho-communism', during the last 60 years (*Ibid.*: N. pag.). Likewise, he claimed that the situationists and similar groups

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presented a Utopian vision of an alternative economy where individuals could live together without requiring the market or government through a tribal gift economy (Barbrook, 2002). Moreover, he pointed out that the cultural production of amateurs and the self-interest of users during the initial stage of the Internet resembles the ideal of the 'gift economy' that anarcho-communism desired because it featured a series of activities for circulating free information via websites whilst ignoring intellectual property rights (*Ibid.*). Although the contribution of these amateurs to the development of software, such as the Apache and Linux programs, goes against these expectations in the sense that they are being privatised into a form that is based on the logic of the money-commodity, what he considers important is that they bring out progress towards an advanced form of social democracy through the co-existence of the 'gift economy' and the commodity economy: "Money-commodity and gift relations are not just in conflict with each other, but also co-exist in symbiosis" (*Ibid.*: N. Pag.).

How can we critically understand this symbiotic relation? Although it is true that amateur cultural and artistic production is being poached under the new economic order of the post-Fordist economy, it is not possible to ignore the fact that new opportunities are being provided as a result of this process (Lazzarato, 2004). The meeting of art production and labour production brings out an interest in the exchange value of artistic production. Following Mauss, Hyde (1983/2007) sees the gift economy as an alternative system for measuring the merits of a transaction in art production. To him, artworks exist in two types of the economy; the commodity economy and the gift economy. However, only one of these is essential: a work of art can service without the market, but where there is no gift there is no art (Hyde, 1983/2007: XIV). To support this assumption, Hyde analysed various cases of cultural production in the gift economy and evaluated the difference between a gift and a commodity. Gifts in art production depend on altruistic motivations; they circulate through acts of generosity and reciprocity and social norms rather than through contractual relations governing their exchange (Hyde, 1983/2007: 69). The circulation of gifts is socially rather than economically motivated and is not simply symbolic of the social relations between participants; it helps to constitute them; "Because of the bonding power of gifts and the detached nature of commodity exchange, gifts have become associated with community and with being obliged to others, while commodities

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are associated with alienation and freedom" (Hyde, 1983/2007: 69). As an example, this type of discourse by Hyde implies that the values of exchange are evaluated amidst their relationship with the dynamic values (goodness, happiness, and peace, re-distribution of wealth, fairness, and impartiality) of the community even when the market economy and gift economy co-exist in the production of culture and art. Of course, what is important is that these values do not emerge from a sense of 'obligation' to the community, that can be explained through the logic of 'reciprocity' that requires giving and taking as well as reciprocating. Instead, as Mauss's Potlach emphasised, it is pursued based on not only rivalry and destruction of wealth but also generosity that is tacitly forced on the rich or begins from an individual desire to be recognised by other people in the community as well (Mauss, 1954/1990: 106-107).

What we are paying attention to is that new forms of gift exchange that have value for generosity and fairness among users are standardised with new social ethics in web space. Returning courtesies that 'do not cost anything,' such as showing interest in the amateur contents in UGC platforms by posting up compliments and by clicking on the "(I) like (it)" is considered a norm. Meanwhile, unique mechanisms for creating interest in the gift economy are being developed, that recruit donations for amateur cultural production centred on some platforms, or which enable transmission between users of the P2P form. These range from the 'mission type' method (Kickstarter) in which the target donation amount is set by each project, to the 'cyber-money' method (Afreeca TV) in which donations of (cyber) money are delivered directly person-to-person. The latter monetary gifting' method for backing amateur cultural production by applying various Internet commerce methods is emerging and gaining attention. Can this 'sponsorship' method, which entails raising money through platform users (community members') voluntary donations for the sake of amateurs' cultural projects, create a radical 'common store of wealth' among the gift suppliers (producers) and parties who receive the gift (users) via the platform economy (taste community), as Mauss (1954/1990) had predicted above? In the case of the 'amateur sponsorship type' of the Web platform, it is interesting to see that it attracts more interest in society for individual amateurs' cultural production than the 'commons' based production through peer production (Benkler, 2006) that existing research on amateur cultural production has studied. This question also enables the

examination of multiple relationships between individual amateurs. In particular, Afreeca TV has gained attention globally as a unique cultural production site for amateurs despite the fact that it is a Korean language based real-time video streaming platform. In particular, the 'P2P method based sponsorship' system that was developed to encourage amateur cultural production is the latest economic model to have emerged in the digital economy today, and it makes an interesting example through which to investigate which symbiotic relationships the gift and commodity economies build within.

2. Live Video's Gift Economy

It is clear that there is non-monetary dealing which is not based on the currency and social circulation which is not similar to the financial exchange between users in today's Internet society. In social circulation, there is users' voluntary participation and cultural production. On the early Web, people seemed to use various services for cultural production activities with the non-monetary products in the fairly non-market form (Benkelr, 2006; Kleiner, 2010; Bollier, 2014). In this study, general types of user' immaterial cultural input which are observed through the Web 2.0 platform were classified by two forms. First, as it is well known, there is the User-Generated-Content (UGC) in the contents dimension. The UGC model emphasises the activeness of all users as producers and presupposes interchange of content (as gifts) free with other users. The amateur contents of live video platforms are the typical case, the contents which are voluntarily produced by the amateurs are distributed and consumed through digital technologies of these platforms. General digital corporations provide a free service to users to increase the number of their UGC products, so they try to develop both a platform scale and various profits (c.f. OECD, 2007). As the contents increase qualitatively and quantitatively, it can induce the inflow of the various connections. Advertisers can measure the platform value by the number of connections, and it can assume an

advertisement effect (c.f. Fuller, Hamilton, and Seale, 2013). Thus, the various technologies to encourage the UGC production can be developed continuously.

In this trend, not only on the Web 2.0 but also in social media, there are various immaterial inputs that reproduce the value of the above amateur contents. For example, affection exchange between users represented by linguistic and pictorial forms such as comments, emoticons, etc., is quantified as big data and replaced with the economic capital of the platform. For example, in this recent trend, the way of users' affection expression has become standardised, thus recently rendering it calculative and quantifiable by the use of widget buttons of the simplified social media form (i.e. Facebook's 'Like' etc.), and, for amateur producers, it is becoming the important index of attention and fame, that is "an "affect-based law of value", which is eventually accumulated as the "immaterial or intangible wealth" in the network (Arvidsson and Colleoni 2012: 142; see also Arvidsson, 2009). In the technological condition, all the users' data, the record of all user activities such as the production and consumption of information and culture contents on the platform relates to a certain degree of activeness, all affective exchanges on the platform become the core target for profit-making in the commodity economy of such platforms. That is, the users' activeness merely expands the dominant ideology of cognitive capitalism on such platforms or social media (a new version of the 'social factory'), and sustains the current structure of cultural production (Fuchs, 2011, 2013).

Then, what else is there in the economy of live video produced by amateur broadcasters studied here? The live video that is produced by the amateur broadcaster in this study is the product that corresponds all the types discussed above. In the streaming service platform following the logic of web 2.0, this production is conducted through the 'free tool' (as supposed) and it can be distributed by 'free' (organisation, promotion), and it is consumed for 'free' by the viewers. The platform companies such as Ustream, Justin.TV, Afreeca TV, etc. intermediate the amateur who produces the live video through the 'streaming service' and the viewers who consume the video. The necessity of the (cultural-)intermediary as the platform is for dealing with the 'transaction costs' in the process of using contents between the amateur and viewer. In other words, the platform enables contents exchange that would occur without it (or cannot occur) for the use and

activity of the amateur and the viewer (Min-Ho, Young-Soo). The amateur and viewer become a necessary condition of the profit-making for the platform as seen above. As the dealings between both increased, the amateur content amount is the driving force for developing the platform scale, and the users' affective investment and the amount of use data are the means of the profit-making for the advertisement and marketing, so it increases the market value of the platform. For this reason, Petersen (2008) criticises that the "architecture" of UGC production "turn[s] into an architecture of exploitation", that is, users are transformed into "commodities" themselves through the network, and "can be sold on the market" (N. pag). This implies the possibility that commodity economy can still come to existence within the development of 'gifting' platform.

Besides, the fact that the intermediary role of platform specialises in the streaming of live video is similar to the method of TV as old media cannot be over-looked. The reason that this platform can be called 'Post broadcast' (Turner and Tay, 2009) and compared with TV broadcasting companies is due to the similarity to the profit-making method through the distribution and promotion of the broadcast contents. As the US model shows, public service and commercial broadcasters are given the exclusive rights such as monopoly licenses to use scarce spectrum at no cost under government regulation and control (McChesney, 2013: 77).[45] However, the value of these exclusive rights is threatened by the emergence of streaming technology that anyone can create and share broadcasts in real-time. In terms of production, different to the live video platform, TV broadcasting companies get involved in producing the contents directly. There is the case of outsourced production in a way that subcontracts independent production companies (for example, the BBC proposed a new strategy for the 'free market' for program-making in 2014, to increase the outsourcing rate, according to *Guardian*, 2014), however, TV broadcasting companies are concerned with the plan of the products and organisation to generalise the production process in general. But in the live video platform, the user produces all content. It is impossible for the platform which takes only the intermediary role to be concerned

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[45] McChesney (2013) criticises that the total amount of wealth, created in the United States from the 'free' use of radio and TV broadcast frequencies which was given as gifts to the broadcasters since the 1920s is more worth the hundreds of billions of dollars, props up the media empire (: 77).

with planning broadcast contents, organisation, and the distribution process which can be produced by the amateur. The amateurs plan the production of contents freely and show the real-time broadcast to the viewers spontaneously in the space in real-time selected by them. What is the significance of the fact that the media cannot decide the rule and structure of the individuals' cultural production, that is the self-organisation project of the amateurs anymore? It means that the 'orthodox power' of professionalism (Bourdieu, 1984) or the expert standardised in the existing cultural industry is not used in the space of Web 2.0 for the users' cultural production autonomously. Only in the live video platform, the power of the cultural production belongs to the amateur. It is the reason that the cultural production of the amateur cannot be evaluated simply as 'free' labour as the 'new modes of exploitation' (Kostakis, 2009) which is absorbed in the labour model of the cultural industry.

However, the dilemma that the platform has is that the live video production of amateurs can be conducted by only personal choice so it can be stopped for personal reasons. In the nature of the 'personal broadcast' the unique personal characteristic becomes the broadcast content, the amateurs put their 'life' such as their knowledge about the culture area, various talents and creativities, private experiences through hobbies activity, feelings about daily life, privacy, etc. unavoidably into the production process. As it was observed through the previous analysis, the amateur broadcasters who were met during the research recognise the fact that their 'life' is put on display and even exposed by viewers, but the production cannot be stopped easily. But as they pointed out in the interview, and as the Afreeca TV company officials mentioned in 2014, these are very few cases regarding the 'popular' broadcasters and celebrities of top class in the platform. 1.5 million Amateurs annually on average try broadcast production through Afreeca TV, but the majority of amateurs do not continue their activity due to viewer indifference and personal problems (that will be discussed later). For the live video platform corporation which should increase the production of the amateur contents maximally, the 'continuity of amateur broadcast production' or 'deep immersion' to the activity is the problem connected directly to the growth of the company.

The reason Afreeca TV is interesting is because of the way they may be overcoming this dilemma by implementing a system of sponsoring the 'cultural production of the amateur'. Afreeca TV introduced the 'star balloon' system that the viewers can give the virtual goods-in-broadcast items'-to the amateur broadcaster since September 2007 (Young-Soo, Min-Ho). The 'star balloon' of a similar form and function to in-game items which are bought and sold with real-world money; the virtual goods have the value of 1000 Korean Won per unit, and can be bought unlimitedly. The famous amateur broadcasters receive thousands and even tens of thousands of star balloons from the viewers in a day. The amateur broadcaster can exchange the given star balloons for cash through the 'exchange' process in the platform. For example, as shown in Figure 9 in the streamed video, *New record of Afreeca TV's 520,000 Star Balloons*, Sohee Yoo, one of Afreeca's famous broadcasters received 520,000 star balloons from one viewer after her broadcast was aired (viewed on August 9[th,] 2016). This had a value of 52,000,000 Korean Won which at the time was £37,726. This is slightly over the 'ideal wage' that British people have suggested in 2015, of £37,000 per annum. However, 'Sohee Yoo', just by showing herself sitting in the house on the screen, earned such an annual ideal wage in ten minutes.

Afreeca TV exchanges the virtual goods for the amateur broadcasters to cash in real-time, and the 'star balloon' is sold as a 'gift' by the platform for general viewers to amateurs, while the value of the balloon is split between the performer and the video hosting site upon exchange. Although, the amateur's reciprocating for the 'gift' is just words or minor gestures like "Thank you." According to the interviewed amateur broadcasters (Chul-Soo, Min-Hyuk) sometimes, that social representation cannot be conducted for the characteristic in the real-time broadcast. In the case of Min-Hyuk and Ji-Min of the game broadcast, it is hard to watch the chat window during the game "for being distracted," so it is difficult to check who gives the gift and how many. But ironically, he had the top star balloon revenue among the interviewed amateur broadcasters among the BJs in this thesis. He was eager to express his gratitude to the viewers donating the star balloon, especially those that sent a big amount of 'popping' star balloon.

So, the action that the viewer shoots the 'star balloon' to the amateur broadcaster can be understood as the reciprocation of the 'free gift' from the amateur to the viewers. But the

reciprocating is voluntarily selected by viewers, so it is hard to be regarded as the 'sense of obligation'. As the characteristic of 'real-time' is based on many anonymous viewers, so the viewers' 'gift' in the process of the live video broadcast cannot be predicted by anybody, so it can be accidental by somebody who may be observing. The viewers' gifts in the platform are described as 'patronage support' for the broadcast, or sponsorship. Considering these points, it is difficult to regard the viewers of Afreeca TV as part of the "ceremonial gift exchange" giving any obligation to the people who give or receive (Mauss, 1954/1990; see also Satlow, 2013).
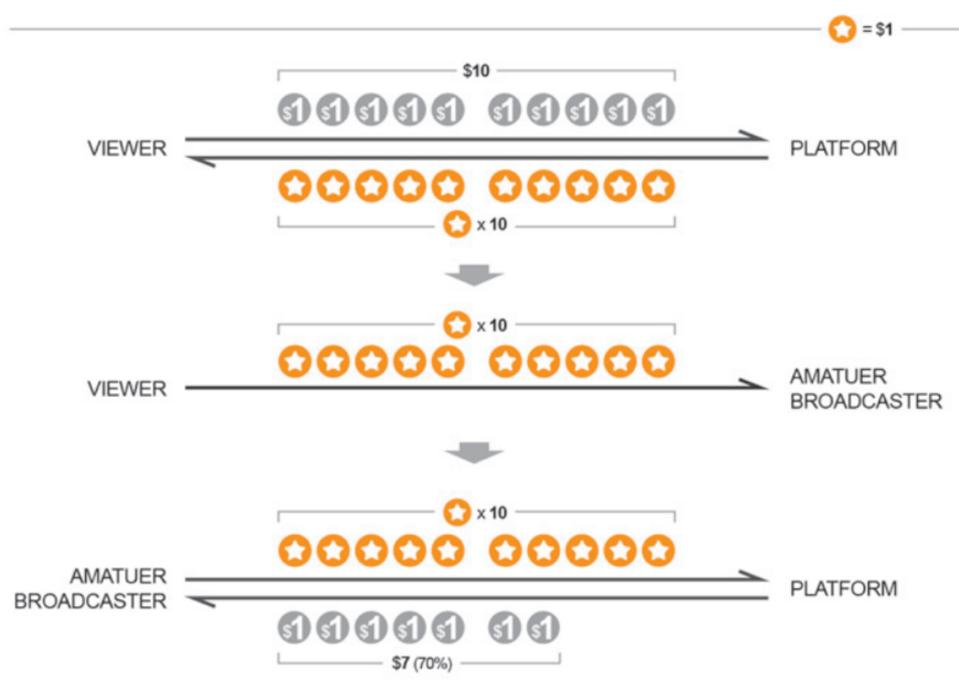
Table 1 Circulation of gifts in Afreeca TV

The "star balloon" is the approximate one-way gift which the viewer gives to the amateur. If the 'free gift' on the live video from the amateur is rejected by the viewer, (this means that viewers do not watch) it may be rejected at any time. The live video as the information form and the free goods can be exchanged (giving-receiving). Therefore, the exchange of information between the producer and consumer can be conducted selectively by the interaction of both subjects. But the 'star balloon' as the virtual goods is given by a one-sided selection of the consumer, so the producer cannot help receiving.

In the technology characteristic of the star balloon without the cancel function, the consumer should recognise the fact that after giving the gift, it cannot be returned in any form. In other words, the exchange relationship of the star balloon is "asymmetrical" in essence (Mauss, 1954/1990; see also Bourdieu, 1997). By excluding the principle of reciprocity that should be returned after receiving, the exchange of the gift as the 'star balloon' is to be understood as donations and sponsorship following the principle of generosity. The 'donations' beginning from said generosity, the gift economy of 'patronage support' can be developed as the altruism of the community of the gift economy so that it can be evaluated positively. For example, the sponsor of an artist has long been a part of numerous historical art societies and communities (Shiner, 2001, Hyde, 1983/2007).

At the same time, however, the sponsorship of viewers towards a particular BJ is transformed into excessive competition and rivalry in the process of visually presenting the gift (star balloon)-giving. This is possible because it happens in real-time broadcasts in which other viewers are watching together. As discussed above, a member of Afreeca TV gave the BJ, 'Sohee Yoo', a total of 520,000 star balloons that is equivalent to about 52,000,000 won (£ 37,726), by shooting a 30,000-star balloon twenty times as shown in the figure (c.f. 30,000 is the largest number of star balloons that could be shot at a time on Afreeca TV). Like the giver in Potlatch, while he distributes his wealth represented by "star balloons," the other viewers celebrate and support his patronage with comments such as "this is a new record!", "he is not to be on the same level from us". Some pushed him to set the highest star-balloons-giving record on the platform. Another user, who claims to be the 'manager' of Sohee Yoo's BJ, asked other viewers to "[If you don't donate anything,] pay for watching by clicking the 'recommendation' and 'favorites' buttons" which can be regarded as free labour for the subscription.

Criticism arose from South Korean media (Kim, 2016e; Kim, 2017b) that the pure love of the fans for the broadcaster has been transformed into an excessive subsidy competition, while rumours and gossip about the "people who shoot balloons" sweeping the South Korea web, as shown in comments such as: "many of the sponsors own big buildings in

Gangnam area" and "some of them are CEOs of major corporations", according to Weekly Donga (Kim, 2016e: N. pag.) The identity of a few sponsors had been revealed, and surprisingly some of them were criminals who embezzled money from their firms and spent much of it to sponsor some famous Afreeca BJs. But most sponsors, including the one who donated a great sum of money to Sohee Yoo, remained anonymous, and the speculation over their identities is still ongoing.[46]

It should be noted that when the sponsorship was transferred to the BJ by shooting like (star) balloons, communication between BJs and their audiences was greatly diminished. When such massive amount of virtual money popped out directly on the screen, Sohee Yoo seemed overwhelmed and almost rendered speechless. This reminds us of Benjamin's discussion of 'distraction', however, in this case, 'star balloons' sent by one sponsor replaces other viewers' thoughts with live-streaming/distractive-moving images, and makes them contemplate the sponsorship action. The above example shows such 'distraction' in real time, hinting at a hyper-distractive broadcast environment where the possibility to 'cash in' attention might embody 'dis-individuation', and thereby hamper the conversation between amateur broadcasters and their viewers.

This controversy is also connected with the reification of live amateur video that mediates the amateur's life itself. In the case of Sohee Yoo, she was mainly broadcasting her private life, while a large amount of her admirers' patronage was aimed at attracting the BJ's attention and making themselves stand out from the (transient) conversation in the real-time broadcast, rather than initiating a real dialogue between the BJ and audiences. The financial sponsorship (as in shooting balloons), thus, more fundamentally signals an act that aims to transform economic capital into social capital. This can be seen, in the Marxist fashion, as referring to (new) 'reification' of amateur gifting, which may have negative effects on the collective individuation of the audience community. As with the conventional process of reification, here all transindividual activities of amateur

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[46] Meanwhile, there are also criticisms of both sponsor-giver and sender, as shown in the YouTube comments on Sohee Yoo's video (Yoo, 2016) such as that "this [sponsoring BJs] is a waste of money", "he (the sponsor) should have donated the money to poor people instead", "jealous", "her reaction to the sponsor seems too passive" and "any appreciation not shown to the sponsor".

producers and audiences come to be identified with 'money' – virtual currency such as 'star balloons'.

Nevertheless, as the donation means for the production of the live video, and the mechanism inducing the sponsor, it seems clear that the 'star balloon' has been the driving force to continue the cultural production of many amateur broadcasters since 2007, when it was first introduced to the platform. This 'patronage system' for the amateurs who gave up the dream of being an expert due to lacking the educational capital or cultural capital, are provided a new evaluation method for their self-fulfilling activity in the private area, and the activity can be continued without "labour" (Min-Hyuk) through the substantial compensation for their production, it is regarded as the opportunity of a lifetime (Ji-Yong, Min-Hyuk, Tae-Hyun, Jae-Sang).

Through the interview, four amateur broadcasters wanted to work in cultural industries, but they could not enter the field due to their family's objections, or the lack of the educational background and career. During the production of the live video, they expressed satisfaction with planning and organising the so-called 'creative work' of the cultural industry, which had previously refused to accept them (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). As the broadcasts are the products of his or her (daily) life itself, even if he or she has respect for the ethos of creative work that emphasises 'self-exploitation' as 'self-realisation' (Berardi, 2009, 2010; McRobbie, 2016, Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2013), their relationship with the industry is different from that of the creative labourers. The reason why their free (thus, precarious) cultural productions can be maintained on the platform is that there are fans who love the product of their lives, watch it repeatedly, share it, and show support for it. As their case as successful broadcasters, by the viewers' long-term sponsor, the amateur can take on semi-professionally activity as a Pro-Am' which can receive the exchange value of the activity financially. However, on that platform, there remains a dilemma that they are still left as consumers of platform services as active users who are bound to rely on the platform operating exclusively on such sponsorship systems.

So far, we have discussed that the sponsor culture on the Afreeca TV is the new form of the 'gift economy' based on the amateur cultural production and consumption. The sponsor culture of the platform showed that it would be possible to allow amateurs to be compensated, although their activities start without asking for any financial rewards. However, there remains controversy that those amateurs are also exploited by the Web 2.0 platform, which intercepts a part of sponsorship of the audience community as a commission fee. However, what we still notice is that, in the cultural community which was triggered by the amateur's live video production, the value of the amateur's culture products is evaluated autonomously by the members, but the evaluation is rewarded. It becomes the driving force of consequential amateur cultural production to induce the long-term growth of the myriad cultural community of the platform. At the same time, these sponsors are more likely to promote competition among amateurs who want to become semi-professional or occupational in that they rely on how much they receive depending on how much they attract the limited amount of attention on the platform. The nature of the activity, thus, can be changed from the original 'volunteerism asking no compensation' to 'commercialism.' For example, the platform shows the 'rankings' that reflects the popularity of BJs on the screen that users see for the first time and encourages extensive competition among the BJs who cannot help compelling it.

This reminds us that, as pointed out by the previous researchers, it may be impossible for the pure gift economy to have existed on the web (Barbrook, 2002). In the web 2.0 platform which is operated for profit-making, as production and consumption are conducted, the amateur should be related to the gift economy as well as the commercial economy in any method. In the case of the 'gift economy' which can be conducted by the giving and reciprocating of the 'star balloon,' the platform takes the 'exchange' to cash the virtual goods, so the intermediary role of the platform cannot be ignored through the gift exchange. The viewer buys the star balloon from the platform, and the amateur broadcaster cashes it in through the platform. In this 'exchange process,' the platform obtains commission for facilitating the exchange to accumulate wealth. Afreeca TV had 7 billion Won (4,095,555 GBP) of profits in 2013, which jumped to 79.8 billion Won in 2016 (Noe, 2017). According to one of the company officials whom I interviewed in 2014, 60% of the 7 billion Won revenue was from star balloon commission. When the viewer

sponsors the broadcast production through giving star balloons to BJs, Afreeca TV is parasitic via the commission for exchanging the star balloon to get the profit. The platform depends on the outcome of the viewer's sponsor.

Most importantly, both the amateur (BJ) and platform (Afreeca TV) are grown by the 'viewer's' patronage support, so obtaining 'attention' from the viewer is an important problem. As the attention (the number of viewer inflow) for Afreeca TV increases, the sponsorship for the amateur's broadcast will increase. As the sponsoring increases, the profit via the collection of commission for exchanging on the platform will increase. The 'symbiotic' relationship between amateur and platform builds consensus about the righteousness of the commission for exchanging on the platform. When I met the amateur broadcasters, they knew the financial value by the 'zone' as the commission for exchanging of the web platform, but without resistance, they regarded it as the justice company activity positively. Despite being amateur; they know the reason that they can continue their activities as the cultural producer is due to the technology provided as a 'free service' on the platform. (Tae-Hyun, Chul-Soo). But the hegemony legitimates for exchanging is shared by the amateurs, and the commercial economy of the grown platform increases the intensity of competition between them with time.

By the existence of the platform, the amateur's cultural production increases the amount of content 'broadcasted' infinitely, but as pointed out by Terranova, attention becomes an even scarcer resource (Terranova, 2012). Despite the increase of conctent, the attention is necessarily limited since 'the sum total of human ateention' is scarce (Goldhaber, 2006, cited in Terranova, 2012: 2) So, amateur content may be non-competitive, but the viewers' attention is the competitive resource; as much as it is both scarce and measurable, it can become not simply a commodity but a kind of digital capital (measured by the automated forms as in 'clicks', 'downloads', 'likes', 'views', 'followers' and 'sharing' of amateur content), thus it may bring conflict (c.f. Terranova, 2012: 2-3). The fact that the sponsor increases as much as the attention increases are an evident reason for this. No viewers mean no sponsors. The gap between rich and poor between the amateurs are caused by it. The attention (popularity) of the amateur on a ranking system can be visualised as the index of number of viewers. It is shared as the tacit knowledge approving the amateur

broadcaster as 'Pro-Am' in the substantial platform by the users. Perhaps for Illouz (2014), this can be understood as a process of "commensuration" that transforms qualitative distinctions into quantitative distinctions by using numbers to create social relations between (in this case, immaterial) things, thus the most important thing is the difference which is expressed only as "magnitude according to some shared metrics" (Illouz, 2007: 30; see also Espeland and Stevens 2008: 408). If we follow her arguments, we can say that the affective relationships based on attention giving and receiving in live videos have become 'things' such as numbers in the rankings, while all entail an "intellectualisation" of intimacy bonds among the broadcaster and viewers. Now the position of the prominent amateurs in the ranking, who "act like pros," translates into the economic value of their video production, just like how the status of stars in mass media has contributed to attracting the viewer's attention in product promotion (Shifman, 2011: 199).

In the situation that the competition is intensified, some amateurs produce live videos with contents considered ethically problematic, so it evokes social criticism. To obtain star balloons, they accept viewer's excessive requests, such as to show erotic dance or unreasonable behaviour on the broadcast, so the press critically reviews it. But among the many interviewed amateur broadcasters, some insisted that people should not make a hasty conclusion about Afreeca TV as a 'low-grade platform', or should not misunderstand it all as slaving for star balloon by some amateur broadcasters. In the case of the top-ranked amateurs at the professional level, they have a sense of responsibility as a public figure, so it is rare cases that produces the unethical broadcast in reputation management dimension for preventing the 'bad rumor' in the platform (Tae-Hyun). Most of the reported issues on media were by nameless broadcasters without ranking, and the 'exposed image' captured photos of the amateur broadcaster which is reported by some newspapers was found to be the 'misinformation' of other adult video platforms about Afreeca TV according to interviewees (Tae-Hyun, Chul-Soo). However, the controversy remains. The public and academic circles are criticising the government for regulating the amateur broadcast, and public complaints are growing (Kim, 2017b; Lee, Lee and Hong, 2016). According to the communications regulator in South Korea, complaints about 'inappropriate content' of amateur internet broadcasts increased by 180% from 160 cases in 2015 to 680 cases last year (Kim, 2017b: N. pag.). Above all, excessive

commercialism can reduce the political implications of Afreeca TV real-time technology and make users who are sick of it to use the technology as a tool for pleasure-seeking only (that is, it is problematic in that it increases the possibility of de-politicisation of both amateur producers and viewers).

So far, we have discussed the new economic model that amateur's real-time broadcast production forms through the gift exchange between BJs and viewers. The pharmacology of the amateur gift economy here is characterised by the following: 1) compensation for self-organised activity is given out of voluntary patronage by the community, which makes the amateur's activity sustainable; 2) at the same time, the platform takes charge of the amateur activity as commission, in the process of converting the form of wealth from a virtual currency called a star balloon to real KRW. This can be seen as a capitalist strategy of a new enclosure project that privatises the activities of users freely simply because it provides a space for the activities. In the patronage culture supporting amateur culture production, the design and development of such apparatus are a trick to pass the responsibilities of compensation for the amateur's activities, which contribute to the development and growth of the platform, from the platform to the audience. Since the exchange of gifts is realised in real time, affections such as love and devotion to each other between the amateur and audience too easily become exploitable before they notice it, because they become 'money' while driving pleasure that comes from shooting and receiving star balloons like playing a game. In Korean society, Afreeca TV has already dominated the live video market in Korea for nearly a decade, with the exclusive proprietary technology that enabled this unique game type sponsorship. As the gift economy of the platform grows, platform and amateur broadcasters are increasingly dependent on each other.

Of course, there has been much debate over the issue of commission on broadcasting revenue. On October 14th, 2016, Afreeca TV suspended personal broadcasts of a famous BJ couples for seven days because they did not inform them of broadcasting commercial contents including the promotion of a new online game in advance to the platform (Park, 2016b). In press information circulars, the platform also insists that it is "responsible for reviewing over-commercial and illegal forms of broadcasting for users," thus, individual

broadcasters "should inform of the content to the platform before they broadcast it, "in the case of "producing commercial advertising for publicity and commercial purposes proposed from a particular individual or company or marketing agency" (Park, 2016b).[47] However, these BJs have argued that the platform's claims are hypocritical. According to them, the platform did not sanction commercial commercials before, but it tried to charge the couples a host server fee of 8,000,000 KRW (5276 GBP) for the commercial activity (*Ibid*.: N. pag.). Also, even if it is broadcast for advertising, they claim that they would not have paid the host server fee because it is themselves who produce the contents while the platform made no contribution to it.

Taking this opportunity, it has been argued whether Afreeca TV should be viewed as a 'hosting service' or a 'centralised hosting system' to which individual live broadcasts belong. Since then, the BJ couples have moved to YouTube and have been in cooperation with YouTube, while working as a tester in the development of a donation system so-called 'super chat' for YouTube live TV broadcasting service (Garun, 2017), which officially started on April 5th, 2017. Since then, famous BJs such as Hong-Ban-jang, Sheri, the Ulsan Whale and Yang-Ting have moved their base of broadcast activities to YouTube and Twitch TV, and media reports have revealed that "BJ's great exodus from Afreeca TV has begun" (Park, 2016b). This reminds, Hardt and Negri (2001), Virno (2003, 2006, 2009), and other post-Marxist theorists who have paid attention to the problem of the immaterial labour, have described the 'exodus' as the radical movement from the 'multitude'-the networked immaterial labourers forming collective subjectivities in this context,- to reject the existential social and/or political order and established a new social and/or political order, in the various forms of escape, retreat, and withdrawal (Hardt and Negri, 2001; Virno 2003, 2006, 2009; Dyer-Witheford, 2005a).   .

Despite the break-outs of these BJs, however, Afreeca TV has not responded to it. In an interview with a stock market newsletter in February 2017, a manager of the company

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[47] Actually, the 13th code of the Afreeca TV Terms of Use stipulates that "we (Afreeca TV) can impose sanctions on business activities without the company's prior consent."

said, "the BJs' deviation is not meaningful to us," while revealing the reason for this is that the number of BJs earning high profits from star balloon donations has increased by 300-400 per month (Hwang, 2017). The number of so-called 'best BJs', who receive more than 10,000 balloons per broadcast in 2016, is more than 10,000 people and their sales revenue accounted for 33.8% of the total (*Ibid*.). In other words, the profitability of the platform has not been affected because the number of newcomers of the best BJs has caught up with the number of the BJs who have suffered conflict with the company so far. It implies that the profit model that Afreeca TV pursues is different from that of other UGC or crowd-sourcing revenue models, which generally follow the long-tail rule; here, the Pareto's principle (known as the 80/20 rule, in this case, 80% of the revenue sales come from 20% of the best BJs' production) is found as well. Of course, the fact that the activities of BJs that are not the best, thus do not bring in much star balloon revenue, constitute the majority of the broadcasts of the entire platform, and that the sum of them determines the overall economy of the platform. Thus again, we can confirm that the Afreeca TV platform is a blend of commodity and gift economies, where the two different economic principles work together. Although the exodus case of Afreeca TV BJ's has proved that, in immaterial labour especially about live video production, there was a possibility of a breakout since it always uses the technologies of communication that can bring out such an uprising and inform others of it. However, such 'exodus' from that platform has only ended up 'moving' to another capitalist platform, thus reflecting the environment of the UGC media having been colonised by digital capital at a concerning level.

While recognising that, this chapter now explores how real amateurs are embracing the complex aspects of capital accumulation on that platform, coupled with the duality of free labour and/or the issue of exploitation in the technological conditions of the immaterial labour of the Web. To do this, I conducted additional empirical studies on amateur broadcasters. The important thing in the process is that even though amateur live video is produced and consumed in a virtual space, as seen above in the process of turning virtual money (a star balloon) into real money (Korean Won) shows that the social and economic exchange is based on the massive material supports in which are depending on the material circumstances amateur broadcasters and users belonged to. From here, I will

examine how the daily life of Afreeca TV's BJs and the material conditions underlying their activities affect their broadcasting production.

3. Pro-Am Broadcaster? Professional-like Amateur Broadcaster

The previous chapter covered the political effects that amateur cultural production produced in Korea, when an IT powerhouse used Internet democratisation, not to kneel down to the external pressure of the neoliberal economy (as symbolised by American beef), but to affect an episode of democratic drama. The drama of 2008 had a happy-ending and everyone seemed impressed by a living history produced through the candlelight rally. The praise from critics that 'Mr. Smith' (from *Mr. Smith goes to Washington*) was led on to Afreeca TV and amateur broadcasters were deemed to have led the candlelight vigil. Their influence was recognised, both governing and opposing parties, and Afreeca TV, which had enabled this popular cultural production, received attention as a democratic platform of alternative media. This confirmed its presence to the world as a successful IT company with stock values hovering around £38,000,000 as a result of the influx of attention from 8,000,000 users during the candlelight vigil period (Hong, 2008). It was a political triumph for amateur cultural production. Even in foreign academia and press, light was shed on the political subjectivation of these amateurs, and expectations grew that the way "this expression is tied to social will become the characteristic of the new generation of the modern day" (Ito, 2009: N. pag.). Here, Ito emphasises; "their participation in the protests was grounded less in the concrete conditions of their everyday lives, and more in their solidarity with a shared media fandom. The lesson here is that you should never underestimate the power of peer-to-peer social communication and the bonding force of popular culture … what's distinctive about this historical moment, and today's rising generation is not only distinct form of media expression, but how this expression is tied to social action" (Ito, 2009: N. Pag.).

What the candlelight vigil proved was not only that Afreeca TV's characteristics as an alternative media source could be used as means of assemblage, but also that its high commercial value as a Web 2.0 platform with massive view counts and traffic was proven by having over 8 million viewers during the rallies.[48] In the field of broadcast production where the physical density of attention had thickened, amateur BJ's underwent intense competition to receive 'star balloons', a paid item that is sent voluntarily by viewers in the name of 'patronage support'. Because Afreeca TV was praised as an alternative media source, as a 'good' political field of 'free culture' (Lessig, 2004) and was protected by leftists, the government watched it carefully and put increasing pressure on the radical movement. Nevertheless, the platform attracted greater levels of attention. With the influx of new amateur BJs who were attracted by the increasing publicity of Afreeca TV, the quantity and quality of content produced within the platform increased. And, as the intensity of competition rose, the order among amateurs started to be governed by a ranking algorithm that was deemed a free and democratic platform.

The number of BJ's that have created content on Afreeca TV at least once had reached 1.5 million already in 2014 (Young-Soo, Min-Ho). The average number of broadcasts that these BJ's produced amounted to 100,000 every day (*Ibid.*). The mathematical steps of algorithm that calculates only 200 people introduced to the top 20% on its first page. In a survey of the BJ yearly profits revealed by parliamentary inspection of the administration in 2013, the top BJs' earnings reached approximately £171,457 (300 million KRW) and ironically the total income of these exceeds total Afreeca TV profits. These BJ's within the top 200 in the ranking algorithm fit the academic jargon of 'Professional amateur' (like "Pro-Am", Leadbeater and Miller 2004; Bruns, 2010). By sharing diverse forms of cultural production through the platform, such as games, radio, eating shows, and comedy shows, they earn social attention, such as fame, social bonds, and symbolic capital, and thus profit from viewers' voluntary patronage support. They create profit comparable to professionals. Few 'evil' amateurs committed to competition bear with the disgrace of being called '*Byeol-chang*' (means 'a prostitute hungry for sponsors') and create unethical video content decorating the social site as examples of the

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[48] This is the total result conducted by Afreeca TV corporation (interview with Young-Soo and Min-Ho).

superficiality of the Internet economy. Racy shows by BJs yearning for star balloons exceed the simple sexual gestures and lead to self-destructive acts, such as eating amounts of food fit for dozens of people, leading to travesty from foreign media, for instance, the 'food-porn' show was reported in *Dailymail* in UK (Malm, 2014)[49]. We will separately analyse this social-eating show, generally called "Mukbang" on the Web, which was first created by BJs on the Afreeca TV platform, in the next sub-chapter.

All the BJs interviewed in my research are 'serious amateurs' (Stebbins, 1992), whose activity is the systematic pursuit of amateurism. Most of them are celebrities of Afreeca TV who feature in the top 100 on the ranking system determined by the number of viewers. They may well be called the winners of the 'attention economy' (Terranova, 2012), scoring in the top 0.006666667%, considering the fact that over 1.5 million BJs begin broadcasting each year. Their 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1984) is proven by the trophy given in the annual broadcasting award organised by Afreeca TV, and by the storm of interview requests from public media such as TV, magazines and newspapers, as well as through the abstract figure of the ranking system. It seems that Andy Warhol's prophesy "in the future everybody will be world-famous for fifteen minutes" hits the mark. Through their activity at the highest peak of the attention economy, the cultural production of these 'star' amateurs have escaped the level of the simple self-satisfied hobby of individual amateurs, whether evaluated for its aesthetic or artistic value, and has been converted into a kind of media labour for attracting social attention.

The amateur broadcasts have a stable economic base with their own demand-supply system and are constructed as a genre with unique aesthetics. The amateur role is multi-layered, and the audience's agreement and expectations also form a mutual relationship of conspiracy. According to a study of the contents distributed within the Afreeca TV platform, people watching the broadcasts regard a reciprocal relation with amateur broadcasters (Shin, *et al*., 2013). The results of a survey of the preferred features and frequency of use of viewers on YouTube and Afreeca TV are revealing (*Ibid*.). On

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[49] The *Dailymail* reported that a South Korean woman known as The Diva makes £5,600 a month streaming herself eating online for three hours a day (Malm, 2014).

YouTube, the function of recommendation related to search words (50%) was most highly preferred, while on Afreeca TV, communication with amateur broadcasters (56%) was most highly preferred, which was followed by the ability to chat with viewers (54%) and to bookmark frequently watched broadcasts (20%). In other words, Afreeca TV users frequently watched the genre they like or contents broadcasted by a specific amateur broadcaster rather than watching several popular contents.[50]

Like the amateurs I had interviews with, once they became famous in the platform, they already succeeded in moving fans of a cultural genre to give attention to their broadcasts. Registering their names repeatedly in the Afreeca TV ranking system, BJ's constructed stable audiences and periodically played a role in planning, producing and providing popular contents themselves reflecting their viewers' needs. To keep 'the promise with viewers' (Min-Hyuk) or "because they don't come unless I broadcast regularly" (Chul-Soo), their cultural production is carried out regularly like TV programs (Ji-Min, Jae-Seoung, and Tae-Yang as well).

> "If I broadcast everyday regularly from today, then, the number of viewers changes drastically within a month. Anyway, what you get is what you pay for" (Chul-Soo).

> "There have been many times when I would want to rest. For three and a half years, [after he started to broadcast,] I just had a vacation in Japan for three nights and four days. I think, (there is) a desire for income. The anxiety that I feel on Afreeca TV is that I will be forgotten if I take a break. There's fear like that." (Ji-Min)

Gaining a place in the Afreeca TV ranking, that produces 100,000 broadcasts a day, means that the commercial success of the broadcasting contents has been verified. Thus, amateur broadcasters that I interviewed said that once they gained popularity, they became more careful about choosing a genre and once chosen, they hardly changed it.

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[50] According to a survey of MezzoMedia (2017), a media industry analyst company in South Korea, when it examined the average usage time per person using a mobile app to view a live video, the average usage time of Afreeca TV is longer than that of YouTube in South Korea .

Many quit after observing viewers' reactions when they tried something different (Min-Hyuk, Chul-Soo, Jae-Seoung). What is interesting was that game broadcasting is a famous genre on Afreeca TV, but some amateurs pointed out that since "game broadcasting is saturated" (Tae-Hyun, Jae-Seoung, Tae-Yang), trying different genres would be better in the current situation for securing competitiveness on the platform (i.e. Jae-Seoung and Tae-Yang changed the broadcast genre from gaming to Mukbang). It seems that a long broadcast career on Afreeca TV allowed them to accumulate 'tacit knowledge' (Fuller, 2013) that beginning broadcasters could not know. They recognised that attaining a place on the ranking is useful for obtaining the symbolic capital of fame, and they used various strategies to maintain it, such as securing the originality of their broadcast contents, creating viewing time strategies to secure a regular audience, and shooting content and creating menus to match viewers' needs. That is to say, a kind of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984) that is hard, or virtually impossible for new broadcasters on Afreeca TV to acquire was made possible through long accumulation. Therefore, in that they cannot simply be called 'amateurs,' or in that they are professionals, at least on Afreeca TV, they must be called 'Pro-Am'. Thus, attention should be paid to their broadcasts as unique content with their own unique position and meaning that sets them apart from derivative content of more amateur broadcasts.

Then, what are the main characteristics of the contents they produce? Shifman (2011) names popular amateur clips on Youtube that are generated by user's engagement by "the way of creative derivatives" as "memetic videos" and proposed its common characteristics from ordinary people, flawed masculinity, humor, simplicity, repetitiveness to whimsical content (Shifman, 2011: 187). According to him, these video clips were successful in the acquisition of popularity because they generally invoked creative dialogue between users as each of them as incomplete or flawed. This suggests that people in the UGC platform are not necessarily interested in the sophisticated content of experts. Rather, ordinary people's work could fit the YouTube affinity, which is simple, emotional, and at the same time easy for other users to imitate and share, thereby to engage with it, even if it lacks normatively valued content (see also Lange, 2009).

Afreeca TV amateur broadcasters become unconsciously aware of this secret of popularity through repeated cultural production. Since they knew that it was impossible for them to share professional shooting techniques or to cooperate with a large group of staff, they follow or transform cultural industrial product forms cleverly. And yet, at the same time, at least in the area of planning that "takes no money" (Min-Hyuk), they attempt to exhibit their competence like experts. In addition, since, with long experience, they already know that utilising state-of-the-art editing technology and adding analytical descriptions does not win any support from viewers, they try to attract attention by amateurish aesthetics, that is, making use of the characteristics of an unsophisticated, rough and crude, but real-time broadcast. What they attach the most importance to is "showing themselves as amateurs as much as possible" (Tae-Hyun). Since "it is useless to decorate myself" (Jae-Sang) and "I like to look like an elder brother ('friendly older guy') in the neighbourhood to viewers," so many amateurs choose to broadcast in "comfortable clothes at home" (Chul-Soo) on purpose. Even amateur broadcasters who made a lot of money rarely rent studios or luxurious shooting equipment. This is because they know that showing themselves as they are in their daily life through the rough screen is a friendlier approach to the viewers. This intact 'everydayness' produced by amateurs in a non-professional way promotes the ties between them and their viewers, and makes the 'live videos' they produce function as a kind of "videos of affinity" that promotes "feelings of connections between people" (Lange, 2009: 71).

> "Sometimes, I share my daily life on purpose. After a broadcast, I say, 'I wrap up,' and allow people who want to exit to exit, and I just talk playing good music in a radio format. If the broadcast time exceeds 8 or 9 hours a day, I don't have any personal daily life" (Min-Hyuk).

> "React to replies, amateur broadcast like that. Just call out their names on the chat window. They are happy with that." (Chul-Soo)

> "We, BJs, call people who do not shoot any star balloons as 'hardtack' (bread without jam or cream inside, thus does not taste sweetness). However, I treat them fairly. I found out even such passive viewers may have sponsored me later." (Ji-Min)

A remarkable fact is that these Pro-Ams take for granted that they reflect the things that form their lives, feelings and values, and do not hesitate to share their life itself. It was found through a long observation of their broadcasts that they reveal little things or make social comments on their life rather than providing or sharing professional knowledge. Unlike broadcasts produced by experts, 'phatic comments', such as "I did something" and "I am reminded of 'X' in the news" repeatedly appear in their amateur broadcasts, and comprise a language of 'phatic communion' (Malinowski, 1923: 315) to express society and maintain social relationships, rather than aiming to exchange meaningful information. This social communication has an important significance in today's social media, which should not be misunderstood as being 'meaningless' (Miller, 2008). Outgoing messages potentially convey more weight than the contents they propose and allow continuous communication between members. In online communication, what is important is '(social) connection' rather than 'exchange (of information)' as Miller (2008) emphasised. What is important in amateur broadcast is maintaining the audience community through repetitive viewing.

On the other hand, because they are 'amateur broadcasters' without capital and technology, their production of 'live videos' is inevitably done in private space. Mainstream TV shows various images in a space planned professionally (a studio or location site), while the amateur broadcast shows the extremely private space of the amateur. All the amateur broadcasters I met produced live broadcasts in their own living rooms, studies or main rooms. Since they usually used a webcam, the images seem to be in a CCTV form. One of the characteristics of CCTV is that it implies the principle of *'Panopticon'* Foucault (1977) outlined in his discussion of the operation of power in modernity. The moment an amateur broadcaster appears in the webcam, CCTV, the person is no better than spontaneously choosing to be watched. The special space of the webcam monitor in live video allows the viewer to monitor the amateur broadcaster, while the amateur broadcaster him or herself internalises the monitoring. Of course, in spite of the short monitoring time of around four hours a day on average, amateur broadcasters are sufficiently cognisant of the fact that they are being watched, and try not to deviate from the viewer's criteria at least during the time of the broadcast. The moment

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they do anything immoral or illegal, the viewers will capture the webcam images and report it to Afreeca TV. Indeed, Tae-Hyun and Jae-Sang, two of the amateurs interviewed, quarrelled on the phone during a live broadcast and filed a civil action to decide who was right or wrong that is ongoing. Ironically, the video they submitted to the court was from images captured through the 'surveillance' of viewers. This unevenness in the spectral economy is inevitable when amateur broadcasters use a webcam, and it sometimes becomes a powerful factor in determining their fame on the platform, which can be said to be a problem that should not be overlooked in amateur cultural production.

Furthermore, disclosing one's 'life' itself in real-time inevitably leads to exposure of the BJ's private lives. The problem caused by that can be serious; Tae-Hyun got into hot water when 'anti-fans' (kind of online enemies) sent threatening messages through the chat window and threatened to come to his home. However, as celebrities on Afreeca TV, the BJ's accept the exposure of their private life as an 'unavoidable problem.' Even Tae-Hyun said, "I would not quit producing my broadcasts because of problems related to the invasion of privacy," but instead, taking a positive tone, she said that "anti-fans may become fans."

> "In fact, some people do 'noise marketing'. They promote themselves, causing a controversy deliberately. If anti-fans are formed, I enjoy the effect of the noise marketing sitting by. No attention, no anti-fans. That is correct, right? Actually, some think that anti-fans, kids who come and curse in my broadcast are anti-fans, but they are not anti-fans. They just want to receive attention. ... Funnily, if something bad happens to me, they are the first to shield me. Only we can curse Tae-Hyun, but how come you guys curse her? (Laugh)" (Tae-Hyun).

For those who have become Pro-Am, amateur broadcasting production has already become a unique goal in life, which cannot be "quit" (Ji-Yong, Tae-Hyun, Jae-Sang, and Chul-Soo) "even if they cannot make money out of it" (Chul-Soo, Tae-Yang). It is beyond a mere hobby. Amateurs who became celebrities through repeated cultural production sometimes take on responsibility for "having a means through which they can talk to people" (Tae-Hyun) as "former amateurs that did not have any power" (Ji-Yong). This

recognition of their role as public figures becomes a necessary condition in which their broadcasting activity develops to a public activity for their community beyond the individual dimension. During the candlelight rally, their true value was already exhibited, and even after the candlelight rally, a considerable number of them (Ji-Yong, Tae-Hyun, Jae-Sang, and Chul-Soo) were concerned with connecting their cultural production to activities for their community. They stated that the biggest reason for their concentration on broadcasting; "I recognize the broadcasting production method of amateurs created through the Afreeca TV platform until now, was made possible through the community's power, which can maintain this amateur broadcast so far"(Tae-Hyun). Consequently, Tae-Hyun expected that this value would be helpful for the political advancement of South Korean society.

The above discussions demonstrate that amateur broadcasters who became 'Pro-Am' through ongoing amateur cultural production activities have changed their roles in relation to cultural products, the producer and the audience. Unlike professionals, they moved constantly to find the best point of contact that might exist between cultural producer and the audience, existing as active cultural producers concerned about their own role of interaction between them. All of them clearly responded to the question of whether they thought of themselves as a 'professional' at the end of the interview, stating that they were surely 'amateurs' not 'professionals' because they did not yet have an identity guaranteed socially or systemically. However, on the other hand, as shown above, they did engage in the semi-professional production of 'amateur contents' that are not amateurish, they also behaved as those responsible for fame on the platform, and possessed the most 'tacit knowledge' (Fuller, 2013) of the live video platform. Here, the tactics chosen by the amateurs themselves, rather than the strategies of the industry, are developed. Unlike strategies in which companies mobilise to "turn the elements of various (sub)cultures into commercial products", the tactics, as a result, can refer to the individual amateur involvement in "the cultural appropriation and/or remix of commercial culture" (Manovich, 2009: 326).

We can say their activities of cultural production are on the ambiguous boundary between the professional and the amateur but cannot be expressed as 'Pro-Am' for now, but in the

process of the development of the digital economy, depending on the labour model these activities would be combined with, or the way in which they are approved by the system, their cultural status will be evaluated legitimately someday. These issues around immaterial labour in the amateur production on the cultural and cognitive capitalistic Web platforms will be discussed in more detail through the analysis of the Webtoonist who has already been recognised as a '(dream) job' in Korean society. However, we will discuss the production of "Mukbang" on the platform in advance, that is a unique subculture genre that such 'Pro-Ams' BJs have developed in the certain cultural context of South Korean society and, in recent years, its uniqueness has been consumed in the global context.

4. How Mukbang, Pro-Ams' Eating Broadcast, Goes Global

Mukbang (Korean: 먹방; meaning both "eating room" and "eating broadcast") is a genre of online broadcasting, which first appeared on Afreeca TV in 2009, and has since been popularised globally (Kim, 2015b: 437), with the on-demand videos of YouTube that mimic the format gaining attention[51]. In general, it shows a broadcaster, called a Mukbang BJ, who interacts with audiences, eating an enormous amount of food whilst in front of a Webcam. Just like other genres on the platform such as politics and game competition as discussed above, it is produced by Pro- Ams, who are not ashamed of 'eating' in front of someone's eyes. Since it only focuses on showing the process of eating food already cooked, rather than the procedure of making it, it is differentiated from other UGC contents or mainstream TV outlets producing cooking shows (Ketchum, 2005), and celebrity chef shows (Flowers and Swan, 2016; Howells and Hayman, 2014), which tend

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[51] Etymologically, the word 'Mukbang' comes from the Korean words for '먹는' (eating) and '방송' (broadcast). And, the 'Bang' is also used as a synonym for 'room'. When the Afreeca TV started its live broadcast service at the first time, Mukbang attracted attention among users while some BJs were eating something in front of the Webcam and soon became one of the most popular genres of the platform. However, South Korean media has begun to pay attention to the use of the term later, it was mentioned for the first time in an *Hankuk Ilbo's* article in 2009, according to Kim (2015b: 437).

to illuminate good quality food and describe the cooking process for its very purpose of covering "every aspect" of food culture (Howells and Hayman, 2014: 20). Likewise, other existing media forms such as newspapers and magazines heavily describe the art of cooking while dealing with (usually healthy) ingredients as raw broadcast material and show professional criticism and commentary on the recipe and the finished dish. In the amateurism-based Mukbang production, only the instinctive admiration or disappointment of food that anyone has ever eaten in everyday life is found.

In typical Mukbang, the prepared or convenience foods are introduced as an individual collection. The specifics depend on the choice and style of each amateur broadcaster, while the audience also plays a significant role as it participates in the whole production process, either through the chat window in real-time (on the Afreeca TV platform) or via the comments section (as seen also on YouTube). Since the equitable relationship between the producers and their audiences has a high impact on the success of the show, the status of the show producer is emphatically amateur. Interviewees working for Afreeca TV introduce themselves and the broadcast production methods as amateur: "I'm not conscious of the experts or professionals. I think Mukbang is just showing myself" (Ji-Min). Furthermore, 'Mukbangers' tend to differentiate themselves from the experts in the media. Unlike professionals – who naturally distinguish themselves from their audiences in order to more effectively focus on their positions and roles such as chefs, food specialists, journalists, and critics – a Mukbanger's primary aim is to demonstrate their eating as a daily activity, without any editorial input. In their eating shows all of interviewees emphasise that "it is important to eat while communicating (with viewers)" and are thus "just standing in (for viewers)". In other words, the show is a product of an equipoised relationship.

When I selected 50 videos of Pro-Ams' Mukbang with the highest number of view counts on YouTube on 13th July 2017 for the textual analysis to understand international production patterns of it, I found that only one third of the people in the videos were cooking at the beginning of the show. Even in these cases, as the cooking is done in the narrow space of a webcam's screen size, the broadcasters tend to deal with relatively easy-to-cook instant noodles or semi-cooked food, in which the description of the cooking

process and recipes are relatively compact and simple. In fact, in its home country of South Korea, showing only the act of eating rather than cooking has become a norm. This is because, most of the Mukbang videos aired on South Korea based Afreeca TV are likely to be watched during late night hours, which tends just to show the BJ taking a late-night snack or meal that the viewers would like to eat at that time.

Furthermore, as anyone can guess easily, the directing style in which individual broadcasts are produced is different to that of mainstream media as well. Just like everyone has their own habit of eating, these amateur broadcasters' habit of organising the show is of various kinds. For example, in the case of Mukbang broadcasters I have met, the subtle differences of the broadcast format in individual broadcasts was mentioned during the interviews, such as eating faster (Jung-Woo, Jae-Sang), or louder (Ji-Min, Jae-Seoung) than other BJs- of course at large in common, sometimes while mixing the prepared foods (Tae-Yang). In their live videos, all the broadcast materials and the directing styles are influenced by the person involved, such as what to eat, how much/many to be eaten and in what manner. Not only these interviewees but also YouTube's favorite Mukbangers such as Keemi, Kinoshita and Blndsundoll4mj tend to consist of individual show's where each narrative is related to the routine of the individual's daily life such as what happened to the broadcaster during the daytime.[52]

The Pro-Ams broadcasters who produce only Mukbang contents daily, often named as Mukbanger, eat convenience food and fast food in their room or part of their house. The producers of the above-mentioned 50 videos share these characteristics while regularly producing Mukbang contents. The interesting thing is that these videos were produced by only 15 people, and most of the producers, except for four YouTubers based in Japan and the United States, were Korean BJs and most of them are mainly active on Afreeca TV. Their live broadcasts typically last for an average of 1–2 hours and, after the broadcast, highlight scenes of them are edited and distributed widely via other UGC video platforms,

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[52] In the case of Keemi of MV3, which was analysed for research, she described the uncomfortable experience when she went to the shopping mall to buy food items that day (MV3). Also, Kinoshita of MV33 explained why she chose the Cheese flavoured ramen as a broadcasting topic that was sent by a Korean fan, at the broadcasting introduction part. Blndsundoll4mj (2016), who ate the Italian food in the MV16 told a personal story about the restaurant where she took the pizza and pasta shown in the middle of the show.

mostly on YouTube to facilitate interest and raise advertising revenue while accepting donations and partnering with online advertising networks globally. They use YouTube's automatic captioning feature to provide English subtitles on videos to overcome the language gap with foreign audiences. The self-branding of Korean Mukbang BJs with the purpose of the diversification of profits by distributing individual live video on various platforms contributed greatly to the increase in the consumption of Mukbang as global contents. As of July 16th, 2017, the total number of videos uploaded with the word 'mukbang' in an English title on YouTube is 1,350,000, and that of its other name 'eating show' reached 25,900,000.

Also notable is the fact that such Mukbang videos, at first glance, the media characterisation seems similar to other media of 'televising gluttony' (Greene, 2016: 112), which also deals with eating a lot of food in the form of competition (for example, ESPN's *Nathan's Hot dog eating contest.*). In fact, on the global Web and Western media, it is undeniable that Mukbang has been considered as being synonymous with 'overeating broadcasting' (Geary, 2015). What we can mention first as the reasoning behind this phenomenon is that Afreeca TV, a starting point of Mukbang, specialises in live broadcasting. On that platform, amateur broadcasters individually consume more food than 2 or 3 servings sometimes up to four or more over the average two hours of broadcast time according to interviewees. Something to be noted here is that, as we discussed above, most of Pro-Ams broadcasters wish to earn a livelihood by producing live broadcasts based on the patronage support from their fans. The problem is, however, unlike other Afreeca TV's broadcast genres, in this eating show, the body transformation of the broadcaster is processed in real time, while the size of the sponsors is controlled by the degree of such change. Since the broadcast time depends on his or her meal time here and the donations are continued as long as they eat, the size of the meal controls the amount of possible sponsorship. Also notable is, when the bodies of broadcasters (starting from their stomachs,) change over time in real-time, it informs both broadcaster and viewers of the risk of such physical inputs (that can be considered as material labour) in the background of online live video production, which is vaguely comprehended by immaterial labour on the screen. Unlike YouTubers, who rely on online advertising revenue, the extent to which these live broadcasters can eat has an impact on the

sustainability of the broadcast production. In this context, some of Mukbang BJs intentionally struggle to catch up on topics such as a glutton, which quickly and mechanically devour food to survive in the competitive environment of an attention economy formed already on the Afreeca TV according to the interviewee Ji-Min.

Besides, even if the same content is produced by the same person, the video on YouTube is relatively misleading as having eyes bigger than that of Afreeca TV's stomach, due to the differentiation in its main service. In the process of remediation of its format from 'live video' of Afreeca TV to 'on-demand video' on YouTube, even though the BJ does not intend, as its live video is being edited and cut into clips in the process of the format transformation, the traces of dialogue with the audience in the original live video disappear and only exciting and sensational scenes are left to stimulate the interest of audiences who have not seen the whole process of full meal eating. Especially in this case of the short videos on YouTube that contain some parts and highlight scenes of the live Mukbang have a tendency to be exaggerated in their perspectives as a kind of gluttony eating competition show (Gibbs, 2015), as I revealed in further textual analysis. For these reasons, the notoriety of the Mukbang, which never would seem to be disputed in the high culture of gastronomy, has spread rapidly in the Western Web. In this trend, Western news media has started to describe it as the 'binge-eating junk foods in front of the camera' (Bryant, 2016) against the typical 'gastronomic voyeurism' (Vincent, 2014). And some report that most of the amateurish Mukbang content is a new kind of food pornography (Martin, 2015), full of images of food and eating, in which the food depicted is sexually desirable or is depicted in a way that makes it desirable sexually.

The reaction of the foreign audience and other UGC producers has been similar to that of the media. Especially the popular Mukbang videos of YouTube produced by broadcasters who were not Korean tend to exaggerate the overeating behaviour. In fact, most of them are short-lived videos of about 10-20 minutes and consist of contents such as eating unusual materials (MV13), and trying to react the human body (MV10), or challenge

oriental or exotic foods (MV17).[53] Moreover, since most of the Korean BJs have become famous for their binging, in this trend, Mukbang gets used as a word that describes interesting content about eating a lot of food in a fast way, mainly spicy food, while similar contents are produced and consumed extensively by overseas amateur broadcasters and audiences. Given this situation, the whole meaning of the original Korean Mukbang is obscured by substituting figures on YouTube because some of them are mimetic, exempted text that processes without a real-time conversation with the audience through a chat window, being deprived of the most irritating factors of the original Korean real-time Mukbang.

When we deal with the Mukbang produced in real-time, it should be stressed that unlike YouTube's on-demand videos, it does not only focus on showing the act of 'eating alone' but also streaming and recording the act of 'eating together' with a number of the audience who have a strong presence in the chat window and comments. Although each consist of eating, the show is genuinely constituted by the daily activities of the individual broadcaster, it is completed as a digital text depending on complex interactions with them. As the popularity of Mukbang has increased, Twitch TV, which also specialises in the real-time broadcasting of games similar to AfreecaTV, has also launched a service called "쿡룸: Social Racing" with similar real-time contents showing up in overseas markets (Twitch TV homepage, Accessed 13 July 2017). With this change, even in the Western media, they started to note not only the commercial value of the Mukbang but also the value of its technological imperative that mediates social interaction (Spence, 2017). Of course, since commerciality and sociality, which are essential characteristics of Mukbang, are mixed in real time, we need to examine both.

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[53] In MV10, two of the Mukbangers are challenged to eat super spicy and super sour food after applying a special medicine to their tongues. Also, in the MV24 show, titled "Eat a Lot!", a slender girl is challenged to eat six servings of Mi Goreng, which is counted to be about 5,476 calories. In the MV13, the same Mukbanger, appeares and eats a huge gummy bear jelly (6880 kcal) that reaches 2KG.

5. Mukbang as Self-Organised Food Porn

So far, there has been increasing interest in commercial and social branding projects of this new form of the amateurish Mukbang eating show that is understood as a modified genre of food porn with the consumerist food culture in Korean sub-culture and digital culture studies (Na, 2015b; Kim, 2015b). It is true, in the introduction scene in which amateur broadcasters introduce and highlight foods, they tend to enforce and reproduce the value of tactile and visual aesthetics of the food image, which is set on profit-making. During the textual analysis, it is confirmed that Mukbang has a close relationship with the industrialised food culture of mass consumerism. In most Mukbang videos, BJs usually spend 3-5 minutes before the start of "eating," to introduce the food that will soon be consumed by them. In this introductory section, they not only emphasise the 'ingenuity' of the food, but also introduce the menus, giving information about specific food products, brands, manufacturers, and shopping malls, even if they did not intend to do so.

However, unlike television cooking programmes, which have information delivery as its central role, Mukbang is mainly focused on individual eating habits itself, so their "honest" (Banzz in MV4) critique and interpretation of foods while the sound related to the mouth (eating, slurping, and chewing) is emphasised in the broadcast (DDunggae in MV7, MV21, and MV28), rather than any criticism or detailed introduction of the food. "I do not lie about food," (Banzz, in MV4), "Why do I tell you if it is not delicious?" (Wangju in MV19). Some even insist that their broadcasts are made from an honest amateur perspective, and they have not been sponsored to prevent them from being seen as a slave to consumerist capitalism. However, the 'honesty' of such a commentary is a typical trait of cultural productions based on amateurism, and we should look more closely at whether their broadcasts are resistant to the development of the excessive consumerist food culture characterised by overeating. In fact, as some Pro-Ams BJs tactically use the pornographic camera techniques (for example, a close-up of a specific area in an overly detailed manner), thus their shows share the typical characteristics of food pornography, which can refer to a way of visual presentation of eating and cooking. Like other visual media

of food porn, Mukbang, in this way, closely reproduces the tactile and visual aesthetics of the food. Regarding this issue, away from TV, among the diverse genres of food porn, we may compare its major feature as food porn with that of digital images produced by amateurs as well, often seen on other UGC platforms such as Instagram and Flickr.

Previous studies argue that a kind of 'organisation porn' is found in these digital images, which consists of "stylised images of everyday objects stacked, laid and arranged in a neat, visually pleasing way", as the hyper-organised environment in the images could give a sense of calm or release.[54] The usefulness of this concept to food porn is that it allows the exploration of its two-sided relationship with consumerist capitalism because it represents "the battle between chaos and control that accompanies boundless consumerism", as it shows the double pleasure derived not only visually, but also spatially "curbing this consumption" (Dejmanee, 2016: 430).[55]

Then, how about Mukbang's contribution to food porn via the stimulation of appetite? We also find food images in Mukbang videos, which create the aesthetic of the stacked, especially when we look at the way that the broadcasted materials such as night-time meals and convenience foods are styled. As seen in Figure 11, an introduction scene in Mukbang, half of the webcam's screen shows the Mukbanger's upper body and is devoted to showing him or her eating, while the other half of the screen displays food on a square (dinner or coffee) table where they are presented in a straight line and stacked. Food is randomly placed on one or two large Western plates to emphasise its richness, but also to show that a variety of foods are available (especially in the case of take-out meals delivered in several one-time containers) which are often seen lined up in several white colour containers.

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[54] In an interview with CNN (Alleyne, 2015), the psycho-analysts looked at the "organised" nature of the food-porn images on Instagram, claiming that people could get a sense of security where "everything would be okay" if they "follow the rules."

[55] Ibrahim (2015), thus, proposes that the term 'food porn' can be used to describe "the act of styling and capturing food on mobile gadgets, eliciting an invitation to gaze and vicariously consume, and to tag images of food through digital platforms." By the extension of the use of the term, Mukbang can also be seen as a varied genre of these online food pornos, showing in detail, sometimes exaggerated, but also playful and creative ways of eating convenience food with pleasant conversation with the audience in real-time broadcasts (c.f. Ibrahim, 2015: 2).

Then the question is, is there the same psychological effect in such Mukbang displays of food stacking, well-organised and laid out as seen on Instagram? In the case of Mukbang, especially in the process of introducing the menu, until the commencement of eating, the audience looks at how the various foods are arranged on the table following the Mukbanger's animated hand gestures while listening to his or her excited voice. Occasionally, the Mukbangers plate the food and show it to the webcam. Some might feel a sort of catharsis while seeing the neatly arranged food on the table. However, unlike other 'organisation porn,' the food images in the Mukbang show will be eaten soon, and everything will fall into chaos at last since they are moving and alive. In the process of overeating, that is, destroying the aesthetics and stability of 'food porn' images well organised in digital photos, rather than balancing in chaos and control, Mukbang only leads to chaos. Meanwhile, it provokes various emotions such as the joy of watching the process of consuming, as well as the uncomfortable by embracing the feelings of the bitterness of overeating.

The activeness of Mukbang as a 'live' text is revealed further when the Mukbanger begins a sort of role-playing on behalf of various groups of the audience. During the real-time broadcast on July 20th, 2015, *Jokbal Bossam MukBang,* Banzz (2015a) in MV4 wrapped up the noodles with vegetable wraps in the name of the vegetarian audience, and for the meat-eaters, he grabbed the pig's foot bone with both hands and bit the meat from the bone (borrowing his expression "like a dog"). In this process, his groaning and whimpering sounds were transmitted through a professional microphone, which stimulated the audiences' appetite. The eating process lasted for about two hours, and by the end of the show, the viewers' can have a severe appetite. Banzz also used shots in the middle of a role-play, stopping to show food on a fork or chopstick, swaying near a webcam. Just like in sexual pornography where certain parts of the body are cut into fragments and shot up close, the food shot in Mukbang also stimulates certain excitement in an erotic fashion. In such a situation, the effects of food images that stimulate the appetite with the theme of overeating in Mukbang may be more than those in traditional food porn media such as advertisements, magazines, and lifestyle TV. But, at the same time, it can be irritating because it is not constrained by media expression, just like what happens to amateur pornography. The erotic impression or sexual value of the food in the

show is not just beautifully delivered to the audience, unlike the expert's media, or amateur food, or eating images of social media.

It is not uncommon for Mukbang BJs to play such a role-playing game whether he or she is good at acting or not. The reason is simple. Here, eating bodies are most importantly communicating with 'others' who watch the eating, so naturally, they must react in some way to emotions coming and going in the communication process. In the case of Banzz (2015b), when he eats three chickens for about 30 minutes in the live video, "*Three Boneless Chicken Mukbang*," which was broadcast live on January 25th, 2015, at 3 AM, I was able to examine various emotional expressions resulting from this short streaming video in the chat window. The most commented comments from viewers on the chat window were about the 'overeating' and the 'eating body' doing it, such as "aren't you stuffed to have all three chickens by yourself?", "How many meals do you eat per day?" and "you seem to have lost weight?" or "you seem to have gained weight," etc. However, above all, what this study observed most interestingly is that many of the comments mentioned the changes of the 'watching bodies' that watch the live show. Also, "your Mukbang makes me hungry" has repeatedly appeared in the chat window with comments that "I would deliver the same food. (Even it was 3 AM)", While in the middle, one of the viewers offered a solution saying, "I would eat mandarin oranges instead of chicken" to appease hunger. "Please, drink cola for me," has also appeared many times. Banzz, who read another viewer's comment, "I think my throat is choking up (with chickens), please! Drink Cola", drank a 1.5-liter bottle while saying "You want Coke?" on the screen. There have been several comments about eating a side dish called 'Pachae' (Korean spring onion salad) delivered with chicken, which is interesting as well, "Please eat it so I can get vicarious satisfaction!" Most interestingly, a user, who was watching Banzz' live broadcast in Australia, expressed the most dramatic immersion to that, saying "Ah, I licked the screen." We have already talked about the issue of the audience adjusting the BJs' bodies as if they were fiddling with the 'controller of the FPS' in the relay of the candlelight rally.

It is also possible to examine the 'eating bodies' of BJs who become media - not only mediated by food porn. Their bodies are on the monitors of smartphones, laptops, and

desktop PCs. Thus, the materiality of the body exists virtually- outside where the audiences exist, in their daily life. However, because the presence of the body that speaks devours all the food on the table in real time is revealed moment by moment (in the case of Banzz, the disappearance of the food that fills the half of the picture visually confirms the change), the materiality of the eater's body is intensely perceived. The most important thing is that the bodies of 'audiences' who are asking for eating are also a virtual body that is present and strong to the BJ, as it constantly appears through dialogue requests and wishes. These living bodies suffer when Banzz is swallowing chicken, projecting the pain in the throat, spewing out the desire for Cola and salad, eventually licking the monitor. In this respect, live video functions as a form of affective symbiosis in the process of the integrated exchange of those bodies. The emotions and desires that result from the images of food and eating in the Mukbang show are entangling with the eating body and the viewing body. Thus, both the eaters and viewers are reaching to the "psychic dynamics of sociality and subjectivity" that "circulate intergenerationally and intracorporeally" (Blackman, 2012: 130). The discussion so far confirms that Mukbang should be interpreted as a social relationship between people mediated by eating and food images, rather than a collection of the images (c.f. Debord, 1983; Lavis, 2017).

However, we should be reminded of a technical problem of using such a term, in this case, food porn. The use of the term 'food porn' unintentionally can draw our attention to the relationship between the physiological hedonism of food and visual representations of it in media. As the term "pornography" tends to be used as an obscene word, the term, food porn, leads to widespread interest and thus ends the moral blame for the social understanding of the phenomenon that does not allow for further constructive discussions and critical understanding of it as a cultural, political action (Na, 2015b: 200). We so far discussed that Mukbang does not emphasise its aesthetic merits for the purpose of promoting the consumption of certain food products, unlike food pornography in other mainstream media. Instead, in it, in the process of competitive overeating, the act of consuming/eating becomes a fascination, and thus, becomes a movement of the profane that resists the absorption of the value of eating as a daily act into the capitalist system. We want to study more than one subject of Mukbang culture with the help of preceding arguments from culture studies and sociology, and develop it productively. Therefore, we

want to discuss not only its excessive destructive consumerism but also its double effect, the pleasure of consumption as well as social exchange in South Korea's socio-cultural context in more detail, as stressed in another Western expression of "social eating" that depicts Mukbang.

6. How to Live Alone but Eat Together

If we understand that the individualised, self-organising activities in producing, consuming, analysing and synthesising food images of Mukbang are essential for achieving social bonding and other social interactions there, we at a glance need to look at whether the foods - the menu of Mukbang - chosen by the constituents are related to any specific social and economic conditions in a certain context. According to Lupton (2006), the pattern of eating food choice is influenced by the inequalities of social class. The lowest level of the socio-economic strata experiences financial deprivation and difficulties and consequently they have limited access to a wide range of food selections and the rest of the food supply. However, working with reference to the sociological ideas formed by Bourdieu (1984), we find the differences in nutrition among the social classes are not only a reflection or manifestation of economic and cultural inequalities, but also reinforce the interlayered differences of social hierarchy in the form of sophisticated tastes and cultivated preferences. This is a subject that can be examined in terms of media and cultural studies in the sense that this distinction in food consumption may have been reproduced by the traditional media which disseminates the ideology that makes audiences and their dietary life dependent on a particular position in the social and economic order.

What we see here is that the common change in food culture of recent years in the Westernised society has been the increase in the demand and supply of convenience foods and fast food (Featherstone, 1982; Beardsworth and Keil, 1997). This is largely due to the increase in one-person households and the increase in women's participation in the

labour market (Lupton, 2006). As women are liberated from housework and put into production at the end of capitalist modernisation, the absence of physical and intellectual contact between women and children (Berardi, 2010: 85-86) has become evident in the generalisation of the culture of 'eating alone'. Furthermore, the technological innovations of food manufacturing and food preparation processes (e.g. the universalisation of microwave ovens) and the delivery of food industry growth have led 'solo living' individuals to choose their own unique foods while they are prioritising personal tastes. Such changes imply that new elements penetrate from the outside into the family-centred dining culture, where the husband's tastes used to exert a dominant influence. For example, outside agents such as advertisers, health educators and food companies have started to have an influence on individual menu composition and food choices (Lupton, 2006). Even in South Korean society, the spread of consumerism and industrialisation throughout the whole food culture has been accelerated. With the increase of people living alone throughout big cities, the traditional culture of sharing food with family members has disappeared and the so-called '혼밥' (Korean, *Honbop*: eating alone or solitary dining)[56] culture has begun to develop over the last decade. Meanwhile, the increasing popularity of convenient/fast food such as a lunch boxes that can be bought at a 24-hour convenience store and the night-time food delivery service where ordering and payment are performed through a mobile phone application, have supported the development of this culture. In addition, where cooking does continue, the time spent on this activity has decreased. Indeed, according to a study by the global market research firm Gfk, South Koreans cook the least, averaging less than 30 minutes a day cooking for themselves. Meanwhile, the global cooking average is under 6.5 hours a week (Na, 2015a).

The characteristic of such mass consumerist food culture emphasising efficiency is that people do not regard food or eating as a component of social exchange, one that involves sharing and communicating. Rather, it tends to commoditise food much like disposable or one-off goods and services. In fact, in his book, *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (1995) said that the decline of social capital such as "features of social organization such as networks,

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[56] 혼밥 (Eng. meaning: Eating alone) is one of the latest phenomena in Korean society that ordinary people prefer eating alone to eating together with colleagues or family members for various reasons (Lee, 2016c).

norms, and social trust that [can] facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1995:67) has been accompanied by a decline of the 'dining with our families' culture that would eventually change the form of social cohesion and would thus cause 'the collapse of American community'(*Ibid*.). Similarly, it could easily be predicted that the increase in solo living within Korean society will lead to the dissolution of traditional family forms and the weakening of collectivist values. However, we must investigate further to see whether the decline in cooking time and sharing food and the formation of a culture that eats convenience foods alone may have been associated with other social, economic and political elements of the society.

We firstly notice that, as mentioned above, the 'bang' from the word Mukbang means a 'room' where people eat alone. The small rectangular space that matches the screen size of the webcam resembles the space where young Koreans live now. These young Koreans of today – generally those in their 20s and 30s – are often called the 'Sampo' (Korean: 삼포; meaning: giving up three things) generation. As the current economic recession in South Korea has made it difficult for young people to find a job, they have given up the major events of life such as courtship, marriage and childbirth. These members of the Sampo generation, desperately searching for jobs, prefer to live in Seoul, where large corporations are crowded. However, they often cannot afford deposits and rent fees even if they earn a certain amount of income and thus often live in extremely small houses that are below the national standard of housing conditions. Since soaring prices do not allow them to live with their families, they accept the only option available to them, that is, living alone.

In fact, the ratio of housing poverty among single-person households in Seoul has now reached 36.3%, which is more than twice the national average (14.8%) (Hwang, 2015). Specifically, 21.5% of women in their twenties and thirties record their residence as being 'Gosiwon' (small ensuite room in dormitory accommodation) or 'One-room' (small studio), which is smaller than $14m^2$ per person, under the minimum standard set by the government for comfortable living (Choi, 2016). In fact, the problem of housing for the younger generation has ultimately amounted to a question of survival. For example, a 20-

year-old man who lives in a Gosiwon and who was shown in the documentary, *Hell space – the room for youth,* produced by the South Korean public service KBS (2016), replied to a TV journalist's question "What are you doing in the room" with "Just sitting. It's a feeling of being raised in a small room to get a job".[57] In such narrow 'matchbox' spaces, young Koreans tend to look at only the computer screen to get job information while being disconnected from society: they simply 'sit down'. As they are isolated from society, they sometimes fall prey to loneliness and can suffer from mental illnesses such as depression. The joy of communicating with a 'living person', which is impossible in daily activities for those who are isolated from the habitable environment, is always unavailable to them. It only exists in the smartphone-like 'dreams of dreams', as in the dream homes. Since it is also impossible for them to eat a full meal with someone, it is not hard to imagine that having a feeling of actually eating with someone (a Mukbanger on the screen), could be of great comfort to them, as clearly shown by 'I ate well, too', a typical comment in the chat window during or at the end of the Mukbang broadcasts.

Besides, one of the characteristics of the younger generation in Korea is to overcome the difficulties of 'eating alone' through technology. In an article on the culture of the Korean '혼밥'(*Honbop*), a young male interviewee said that he looked at his smartphone when eating outside in an attempt to 'look very busy',[58] rather than to appear as a 'social outcast', as someone with no close friends or colleagues. The Mukbang in young peoples' smartphones will be the technological apparatus for 'eating together', perhaps the only option that remains for them. 'Kimchi Crazy', which is a documentary on the theme of the 'Mukbang syndrome' created by SBS in Australia, argues at one point that audiences who watch the shows 'feel comfortable' and that 'food is a kind of escape from [their] real life' (Ambrose, 2015). However, is Mukbang really beneficial to Korean society?

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[57] KBS (2016) broadcasted the documentary, "지옥고 – 청년의 방," (Hell space – the room for youth) that refers to three representative lifestyles of the youth generation. Because of the problem of youth unemployment, it concluded that it seems impossible for young people to have their own houses in Seoul.
[58] *Korea Herald* describes the rise of the Honbop culture in South Korea and why more Koreans are eating alone as commenting one citizen's case (Lee, 2016b); "there is a reason why Jang (citizen interviewed) prefers boxed meals over dining alone at restaurants. He said he gets self-conscious when he eats alone in public, thinking others may judge him or think he is a 'social outcast.' He often plays with his smartphone while eating at restaurants, in an attempt to 'look very busy' rather than appear to be someone with no close friends or colleagues. 'I think there still this public notion that if you are eating alone, there must be something wrong with your social life,' he said."

For certain, the younger generation - which is becoming increasingly economically marginalised in Korean society - are expanding their strategies for survival and collectively reconstituting the forms of technological life through it. It is also important for this younger generation that everyone - regardless of their status or rank in the Mukbang field or whether they be producers or audiences - can use the techniques of communication. Furthermore, much like on the other UGC platforms, on Afreeca TV, which has been praised for its ease of use in daily newspapers ('anyone, even a 74-year-old man can do it'), the members of the platform can change their roles freely between a producer and a viewer at any time. It is also common for fans to become managers and managers to become Mukbangers again. Indeed, as was shown by the case of Tae-Yang who was a fan of a well-known Mukbanger and started broadcasting on the idea that "I can eat that much", the position of the producer and the viewer is always non-determinable and can be overturned. In short however, the motivation for such status in conversion is always the desire to communicate with someone.

One of the interviewees whom I met, Tae-Yang, had serious difficulties in communicating in everyday life due to his language disorder. However, his life has been changing since he started to broadcast his eating show. Indeed, he relates how he has "a feeling of satisfaction" since previously he's been asked, "whether I'm a foreigner because I cannot speak well". In fact, people asked whether he "came from another country". He continues, "I have a language disorder. People cannot understand me ... [Is there any speech trouble when broadcasting your 'eating', I mean, because of the issue with the language disorder?] It was a problem when I was in other [non-Mukbang] broadcasting." After having debuted on Afreeca TV with a real-time 'music broadcast' that broadcast his favourite music live, he realised that his language impairment was still a serious problem when talking to audiences. Since then, he has produced only Mukbang shows in which he can communicate emotionally with the audience, even while they do not have any language activity.[59]

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[59] As a result of having watched two-week live video clips streamed by Tae-Yang before I met him, it has found out that, on the actual live show he barely opened his mouth except when eating. When he needs to tell something to viewers, such as "thank you" to the fans who send 'star balloons' to him, he uses a 'chatbot' feature embedded in the Afreeca TV so it talks with others on his behalf.

With his critique of semiocapitalism, which is based on the explosion of immaterial labour and information technology, Berardi (2010) has come to the conclusion that the proliferation of devices that reduce the complexity of human relationships today, such as digital network interfaces, have simplified our relationship with others. Therefore, when someone appears "in flesh and blood", it is now argued that contact with that being makes us distressed because "it hurts our (in)sensibility" (Berardi, 2010: 85). Is there no such wound then in the room located in the cyber space of Mukbang? For certain, while the city used to be a place where the human body meets another human body and was a site for gasing and making contact for slow emotion and pleasure, according to Berardi (*Ibid*.), in the post-urban dimension of the 'cyber sprawl', contact with others becomes impossible and is replaced by 'precipitous forms of experience' such as a pornography that is often bound to commodity and violence. Indeed, any 'real' contact with other people is becoming uncomfortable to the youths who are trapped in a room in Korea and the nostalgia for a table with someone who is 'intimate', such as family member or friend, increases. In such a small room, the only thing that allows them to 'eat together', in safety, is Mukbang. Here they get in touch with others through the medium of live streaming services. Imagine, there are 'eating' or 'watching', 'chatty' bodies, and, of course full of food, but most importantly all of them are immaterial thus never able to hurt me; and never condemn the poverty of my table. Mukbang is the wisest, safest life-tactic that the young generation of Korea today has chosen for their solo living in a desolate city.

7. South Korean Pro-Ams as Eating Labourers?

If we understand Mukbang as the necessary technological approach to adapting to how life in Korean society has evolved, we may need to examine whether Mukbang can become a common project, one which is supported by a cooperation between producers and audiences on a public platform, a means of defiance against society and [food-based]

culture around them. As has been discussed before, Mukbang exhibits different characteristics to those seen in other media forms of food porn, although it creates the same media environment in which surrogate consumption can be realised and, additionally, it becomes a project that is co-created by both broadcasters and audiences through a digital interaction using technology. The Mukbang broadcasters are often regarded by Mukbang-viewers as a conversation partner, as much as (or even more than) a family member or friend (Ji-Min; Jung-Woo), according to interviewees. Unlike family or friends (who might scold or nag) Mukbangers never reproach viewers (at least, not about over-eating). Rather, they are willing to fill the role of the "over-eating" food fighter for the viewers, who may be reluctant to do so as they worry about their healthy diet. Thus, the pleasure found through these amateur producers and their audiences lies in the fact that they differ from traditional media; this can sometimes lead to acts that resist the patriarchal food culture prevalent in Korean society. In most of the Mukbang videos (both on-demand and streamed) analysed, the old customs and social codes of Korean dining (for example, "children cannot eat food before the father has lifted his spoon" and "young people should not talk about anything at the table" (Jung-Woo) are destroyed in real-time. For instance, as seen in Banzz's streamed Mukbang, *Jokbal Bossam MukBang* (2015a), he can be seen chewing food with his mouth wide open and banging pigs' legs together with both hands. Additionally, talking with the mouth full of food can be frequently seen in the same video, which highlight another typical characteristic of Mukbang, that of eating gluttonously.

> "Foreigners may not understand [why Koreans watch Mukbang]. In Korea, it is said that you cannot talk atone the table. Not in front of the grown-ups. But all of these things are possible in the air of it [Mukbang]. [….] I eat quietly when I'm not broadcasting. But you know, it's broadcasting, so it should be exaggerated. In the broadcast, I pick food up with my hands and eat it roughly. I do not usually do this. But I have to do this when communicating with them [during Mukbang]. So, people say, 'you eat well, it looks delicious…' That's what Mukbang's about." (Jung-Woo)

In a country with a developed food culture, table manners match the cultural context; thus, they can be a crucial criterion when judging how civilised individuals and groups are.

Elias' (1978/2000), *History of Manners* traces the historical development of the European habitus as part of the civilising process. Both Mennell (1996) and Lupton (1996) argue that restraint in terms of overeating is embedded at a strategic level, as a "practice of self-control and moderation" in order to avoid being overbearing (Mennell, 1996: 135-8; Lupton, 1996: 21). Lupton also believes that "civilised" behaviour around [over-] eating and table manners expresses a desire to evade the animalistic nature of the human being, and, in its turn, stresses the importance of culture over nature (*Ibid*.: 22). The various gestures and emotions that are presented during the animalistic [over-] eating of the Mukbangers offer positive affirmation to something that would have been disgusting to such well-mannered societies.[60] In addition, the pleasure that is shared by the producers of Mukbang stems from the process of destroying the "aesthetic form" (unlike other food-porn media), and a consequent induction of heightened "emotional states" associated with togetherness (c.f. Coward, 1984: 101). If we find pleasure in Mukbang and share it through the betrayal of the social meanings and cultural expectations associated with food and table manners, and at the same time, we can reconsider the relationship between amateur producers and their audiences; although it is based on the equal relationship, there can be a 'immaterial' power formed by viewers in that the emotions expressed by them are transmitted to the eating bodies smoothly and adjust its way of eating, as mentioned by Jung-Woo above.

This duality of Mukbang's power relation - equitable but, on the other hand, hierarchical, is not seriously perceived by BJs, for those who make a living based on the support of multiple viewers, who must always be the weakest in the relationship. While the value offered by these intimate relationships with the audience is better known to producers than to anyone else, the role of a Mukbanger is often considered as a great job opportunity for jobseekers or for those who are not satisfied with their current job. This is because eating, which is a natural activity, can thereby be not only a method of communication but also a piece of commercial broadcasting content. "When an ordinary person switches on an Afreeca broadcast, it's a broadcaster. That's personal broadcasting" (Jung-Woo).

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[60] For example, in Victorian times, according to the dictates of bourgeois manners ruled against 'eating in public', 'to eat or be forced to see another eat promiscuously or immodestly' was considered as an act worthy of asceticism like other social obscenity (Kasson, 1987; 130 as cited in Lupton, 1996: 22).

Whether via a cell phone, a computer, or a laptop, Afreeca TV can be accessed without any difficulty. In fact, many of the famous Mukbangers interviewed were initially fans and managers of famous BJs on Afreeca TV, but they soon realised that they themselves had the same technology with which to communicate with viewers (Tae-Yang), and so they started broadcasting Mukbang as a professional or semi-professional activity.

This reminds us that, we have already discussed the cultural-political role of real-time live broadcasts as the new technological form of living labour in the previous chapter. The monetary support or patronage for amateur broadcasting on the Afreeca TV platform is provided by the producers' fans, intermediated through a virtual money system (the 'star balloon' system). This allows the amateur producers to make a living without having to undertake other vocational activities (Ji-Min; Jae-Sang; Jae-Seoung). Even in the case of some producers who have other jobs (Tae-Yang; Jung-Woo), the financial support of their fans is the driving force behind their decision to continue to produce broadcasts as a semi-professional activity. They have been described as 'amateurs' who participate in 'serious leisure' (Stebbins, 1992, 2009) who exhibit 'high levels of perseverance' (Knott, 2015: xiv) and who constantly show their affection for this amateur activity. For example, Tae-Yang spends all his time on Mukbang production, except when working at a machinery component manufacturing company during the day. As soon as he leaves work, he spends about two hours on miscellaneous work for pre-production (such as considering today's menu for the Mukbang and gathering some ideas on how to eat that day). He then broadcasts his lively eating show from 9 to 11 pm. He usually spends an hour just showing him eating the 2-4 servings, with another hour reserved just for chatting with viewers. Even after finishing his broadcast, his enthusiasm and appetite for Mukbang does not fade away; he usually reviews that day's show by 1 am, collecting highlighted scenes and uploading edited footage to YouTube or Afreeca TV. In general, other BJs go through a similar production process; however, the amount of preparation time required by production veterans is significantly less. For example, Jung-woo only invests 30-40mins in pre-production, while spending more than two hours eating.

When eating becomes eating labour seriously, a Mukbanger's diet is strategically reconstructed and well-planned. The daily intake activities are entirely steered to the

needs of the audience. Some choose to eat alone in the room even though they live with their family (Ji-Min; Tae-Yang) and some eat only one meal a day so as to consume larger quantities all at once during the broadcast (Ji-Min; Jung-Woo). What is interesting is that the moment they realise that their Mukbang broadcasting is not a mere amateur's patronised activity is when their investment in terms of their personal spending on the broadcast production increases. Jung-Woo says, "Mukbang is different. Broadcasters of other genres are just sitting down. But Mukbang is costly to do [since I have to eat something.]". Like he says, when compared to other types of broadcast on the same platform, Mukbang investment costs several million won (in the case of Tae-Yang and Ji-Min, more than 2,000 GBP) are required. This is because, for a minimum of one hour of broadcasting, more than 2-4 servings of delivery food are needed generally. As they broadcast more regularly and repetitively, it costs more and more. Tae-Yang, who is said to have a relatively smaller stomach compared to other Mukbangers, has spent an average of 20 – 50,000 KRW on the delivery food for his daily broadcasts. In order to recoup the investment costs, Mukbangers formulate strategies for each struggle, so as to receive more of the audience's limited attention and thereby receive a greater amount via the audience's voluntary patronage.

"I have less time to eat. What I mean is that people eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I ate in the late evening to broadcast it (usually at dawn), and the next day I woke up, I realised that half of the day had already passed. What can I do except eating one meal or two? [Your daily life routine depends on the schedule for the Mukbang broadcast, you mean?] I have to eat a lot of something again [in the Mukbang], so I'd rather eat just once all in one meal, than two or three meals. You know, it's enough, to live myself. It must sometimes be at dawn, [if not] at least later than 9 o'clock." (Jung-Woo)

Initially, Mukbang was a voluntary initiative for these producers, but as they have become famous and now act as the instigators or protagonists of the Mukbang trends on their platform, their activities have become more elaborate. At the same time, they are analysing their broadcasts and building and internalising tactical know-how (in terms of Mukbang manners), such as how to gain their audiences' attention. When choosing a

menu to be broadcast, they consider not only their own preferences but also their fans'. Some veterans set the broadcast time at dawn, when insomniac audiences might feel the hunger most, preparing to broadcast with the delivery food that is the only option for both them and their audience. The preferred menu at this time is hot and spicy or sweet noodles (Ji-Min) with a large piece of meat that comes with various sauces.

> "Mukbang should be broadcast late at night, when people are hungry. When it's late-night meal time!" (Ji-Min)

> "Even if I want to have something else today, the restaurant business hours are over for the day already. I have only one option – that is, delivery food. I should eat it. It's midnight. I'm just eating it." (Jung-Woo)

One of the most exciting cases is Tae-Yang, a "newcomer" who has produced Mukbang broadcasting for two years. He believes that continuous broadcasting is a necessary condition for becoming a "famous Mukbanger" and binges delivery foods that he does not like every day. He dislikes salty foods and carbonated beverages such as Coca-Cola, but repeats the harsh task of eating and drinking these daily because, in order to diversify his Mukbang menu, he cannot eat the same food every day. Upon meeting this interviewee, it is apparent that he has serious ulcers as a result of eating four serving of spicy fish soup the day before; he could not even open his mouth properly. And, another signal for Mukbangers that their amateur activity has becomes labour is when their meal portions are adjusted to the broadcast volume duration. These people know that they have to eat at least four to five servings in order to fill up a two-hour show. Jeaseoung said that the distinctive feature and the greatest disadvantage of his broadcasts is that he only eats two or three servings within 20-30 minutes. As the amount of food eaten is smaller, thus the length of the live video becomes shorter, and so it becomes harder to make a living through sponsorship on the Afreeca TV platform alone. To survive as a Mukbanger, it is necessary to eat more and for longer. That is the basic rule of labour time composition in the Mukbang world. Mukbangers that are widely known through the press possess a representative image as 'food fighters,' the winners of all the overeating struggles. The more audiences that hear about these producers' reputations, the more they will watch

their broadcasts. In the trend, the Mukbangers' overeating will be justified as being the very condition that underpins their eating labour.

8. Keep Mukbanging!

According to the BJs interviewed, there are two main reasons why audiences watch Mukbang. Firstly, there is the emotional satisfaction of eating together, which has developed already. However, there is another pleasure for viewers, which comes from the satisfaction of just being there, thus, feeling "fake full" – that is, like having fully eaten without eating. This comes from seeing the Mukbang BJs eating suppers on the audience's behalf. Of course, for the audience, these two pleasures are complexly intertwined and thus cannot be considered separately. From now on, however, we will be focusing on the latter pleasure from the desire to be fake full; namely, the aim is to find out whether the broadcast materials needed for the Mukbang (mostly consisting of night-time snacks, fast food and delivery food, usually spicy, sweet and salty) are related to criticism or the general acceptance of Mukbang culture. The question we are going to look at first is, what is the most popular menu that actually appears in Mukbang, the very object that must be satisfied even if it is fully-fake.

This research found that when searching for "Mukbang" on YouTube (as of July 16th, 2017), out of a total of 1,350,000 videos, chicken appeared as the main menu the most, more about 60%. BJs interviewed by researcher were eating fried chicken about 1-2 times a week as well. In this sense, it should be pointed out that the title of the Australian documentary *'Kimchi Crazy'* about Mukbang mentioned before should be renamed as *Chicken Crazy*, to make it more precise. '*Chicken is love,*' as seen in a buzz word on South Korean Web, the consumption of (mostly fried) chicken has increased largely. According to KB Financial Group Research conducted in 2015, the total number of fried chicken restaurants in Korea outnumbered that of McDonald's global outlets (Sang,

2015)[61]. What we need to notice is that, in the background of the popularity of chicken in Korean society, special social and cultural circumstances have associated, especially in relation to the rapid growth of nightlife delivery industry for 20 years. After a financial crisis, honorary retirees have become self-employed, which is why they started to open fried chicken places which takes relatively low skill to operate (*Ibid*.), and 24 hours and night-time delivery service has increased as competition intensified by such mass entry of new suppliers. In 2014, the fast-growing Korean late-night meal market was estimated at 10-15 trillion won, which is 12-19% of the total food service market (Kim, 2014a), and chicken was revealed as the favourite night-time delivery menu (Son, 2017). Interestingly, approximately 50% of the total order volume comes from 8pm to 4am according to the research, and it coincidentally covers 11pm-1am, the time when the Mukbang broadcast is most active. Korean "Chicken", which is spicy and sweet with hot pepper paste and sugar, has been soaring in overseas sales thanks to the demand of foreign audiences who are curious about the food that so often appears in K-dramas, as South Korean dramas according to an article *South Korea's Fried Chicken Craze Sparks Battle for Market Share* in *Fortune* (2016), exports to East Asia have increased sharply from early 2000s.

Although we do not have to know anything about the food science or cytology of the Mukbangers' menu choices, we can easily assume that the high-calorie night-time foods such as chicken used in Mukbang productions are often regarded as the cause of obesity and of eating disorders, and are thus regarded as "bad" foods - often been brought up in both media and medical discourses (Lupton, 1996: 27). Here, the "bad" food is not only bad for one's health, it also can be seen as "a sign of moral weakness" (*Ibid*.: 27). For example, according to Beardsworth and Keil (1997) fast-food dining where families can eat without anxieties about cutlery, tableware and the disapproval of other customers is, in Elias' (1978/2000) terms, a typical example of 'uncivilised' form (Beardsworth and Keil, 1997: 121). Additionally, the food that is served is criticised by nutritionists as being high in calories, fat, salt and sugar. The Mukbang culture has been criticised and ridiculed

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[61] According to the same research centre, there were 22,529 franchise-based fried chicken restaurants in 2013, including over 30,000 independently owned fried chicken places and local bars selling fried chicken. In the same year, the number of McDonald's stores recorded was 35,429 globally (Sang, 2015).

as the "ill-being" culture, being the opposite of the healthy lifestyles and well-being discourses produced and promoted by the mainstream media. Even one medical specialist insists in his column of *Chosun Ilbo*, that, "in relation to national health", "the threat posed by one hell of the Mukbang show becomes serious." Thus, he concludes by saying, "considering the adverse effects that adolescents like to imitate it, it should be rated as NC-19 (no children under 19)" (Kim, 2016a). In this sense, the Mukbangers who eat too much food are compared to those who routinely committed the sin of gluttony (one of the seven deadly sins) in 18th-century Europe (Park, 2016a). During this time, food was scarce and its abundance was a sign of wealth and high-standing, so gluttony was regarded as the primary form of lust and the sharing of food with a stranger was a sign of generosity (Lupton, 1996: 132).

Since then ironically, predominantly in the capitalist food culture, where mass-produced food is abandoned and overflowing, gluttony is still regarded as a subject that should be criticised from an ethical standpoint. Most of the experts in food science, or in the mainstream media, argue that proper self-starvation and educated eating are necessary in order to promote 'good' health in consumers. Thus, achieving a slim body represents "the privileged values of self-control and self-denial" (Lupton, 1996: 137). The view of these professionals is that Mukbangers are deplorable sinners, wolfing food greedily and thereby earning thousands of pounds. For similar reasons to those given above, we have often seen rich people appear in the media as skinny, while poor and uneducated people (the underprivileged products of fast and cheap food) are represented as 'fatsos' (c.f. Featherstone, 1991). We may wonder whether the fashion for Mukbang might be the by-product of a resistance to the asceticism extolled by mainstream media; in other words, whether it relates to the desire to consume prohibited food and to destroy the 'well-educated' disciplined bodies praised by mainstream media. Overeating, enjoyment and unlimited food purchases contrast with the values of ascetic activities, such as fasting, labour and saving.

In the *Dong-A Ilbo* article, which mentioned the relationship between the development of night-time food industry and Mukbang, it was pointed out that enjoying night-time meals in South Korean society brings out a kind of 'guilt' in the members of the society. One of

the citizens who ate the snack at night whom a reporter interviewed said, "I should go on a diet later", although "I feel okay for now." "It is because, I'm with other people, sinning together with me." We can see that when 'eating a night-time meal alone', this citizen is more negatively self-perceived by the fact that he or she does not manage his or her body. As a result of analysing 14,337 articles related to night-time meals on the South Korean web, the main words related to 'night –time snacks or meals' were diet, exercise, health, worry, regret, anxiety, stress, and burden (Kim, 2014a). 'Late-night meals' may be a matter of survival for those who are too busy to eat during the day, but the risk of eating at night is always warned of by medical discourse and the media that reproduces them. If failure to control the desire for such so said harmful eating, it invokes fear and guilt in some people, leading them to expect from Mukbang a performance to eliminate those negative emotions through the act of watching it. The well-organised, artfully composed food images in other types of food porn are believed to be consumed imaginatively. As such, seeing does not damage the audience's well-being. In addition, Mukbang goes one step further by showing that many people are participating in the process of consuming these food-based images, giving the audience the comfort that "I am not the only one to sin." It allows audiences to control the process of the ingestion of the image through the chat window, through which the audience can give its opinions in real-time, along with any monetary donation. This suggests that not only can Mukbang be a social activity to establish human relations through midnight eating, but also an economic activity where all the emotional and immaterial inputs, such as satisfaction and pleasure involved in such a new relationship, and the psychological sense of security and comfort coming from just observing other people's overeating, is transformed into monetary inputs to BJs who directly practice over-eating on behalf of viewers.

When the eating show becomes a career activity, how much is the compensation? Among the BJs that researcher met, Ji-Min's who holds the record for the total number of audience members at 4 million, earned 23 million KRW in a month in 2015, when the revenue of star balloons was the highest. Thanks to the support of his fans, he even moved to a new home with his mother, but he still worries about his future while expressing anxiety, "I do not know when fans leave me for their personal reasons." Luckily, when I watched another of his live videos on the day that this sentence was written (July 14th, 2017), he

seems fine. At least in front of the webcam, he laughs, and told the viewers that he is very satisfied with the menu of the day – 3-4 servings of spicy noodles and fried chicken with spicy and sweet sauce (although he told me that he had serious stomach pain because of eating too much noodles before) but still behaving as if overeating is just one of his daily activities.

Of course, there is not only (potential) pro-anorexic patients who try to feel the surrogate satisfaction of watching food porn images (Lavis, 2017) such as Mukbang. According to Jung Woo, who had frequent meetings with his fans, half of the fans he met said, "I ate at the same time as watching you eating and gained a lot of weight." Then, the question is why such people were awoken until that late at night and felt hungry? The reason may be found by looking at Korean corporate culture, where late-night meals are not an entirely voluntary choice. By growth-oriented competition, the overall social atmosphere that one "must finish work, even till late night" has also affected private outings and changed their lifestyles to eat snacks. According to a survey (Kim, 2014a), only 27% of respondents said that "there was no specific reason for eating late", the others responded that they had to do it to study, to watch sports and movies, to relax, or to socialise. In other words, "late time eating" in Korean society is an indispensable element for Koreans who need to 'do something' until the night.[62]

Ironically, on the contrary to such labour culture and social atmosphere, the risk of overeating at night is always warned about by medical experts and the media represent it visually. In them, night-time meals are said to be the cause of a variety of health problems, such as obesity and gastrointestinal disorders. The so-called "night eating" syndrome even refers to a mental disorder that is defined by an abnormal eating habit, where more than 50% of the total daily calories are consumed after 7 pm, following which the sufferer

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[62] The researcher has found interest in the article in Donga ilbo that NHN Entertainment, a leading Korean game company, hires a chef for game developers to provide midnight snacks from 10pm to 2am. An official of the company said, "If you have to stay overnight, do not eat outside but try to eat for free in the company." By doing so, the company want these workers to "save time and improve the efficiency of work" (Kim, 2014a).

has difficulty falling and/or staying asleep (Gluck, Geliebter, and Satov, 2001: 264)[63]. However, rather than getting involved in such medical discourse with late-night eating (for instance, as a full cycle of stress, increasing night appetite, parasympathetic activation, fat accumulation, induction of obesity (Voelker, Reel, and Greenleaf, 2015)), we here want to just confirm that psychopathological symptoms crossover with other addictive physical changes due to the effect of Mukbang.

The warnings and concerns surrounding the menu composition filled with Mukbang's overeating and snacking can be deeply related to this medical discourse in the case of South Korea. These warnings are directed not only at the producers but also to the viewers who appreciate food porn, including Mukbang, for example, *'you can get fat just by looking at it!'* it is said, not only BJs, but the audiences who watch BJ's Mukbangers meet their appetite virtually so are also heavily susceptible to similar health problems caused by these eating disorders. According to a study by Oxford University researchers (Spence et. al., 2016), to which Korean newspaper articles refer to, to explain the harmfulness of mukbang, virtual food images were shown to the study participants and a magnetic resonance image (MRI) of the brain was taken and analysed. The results of this analysis confirmed that the participants' "greediness" centres were stimulated, leading them to feel gluttonous. The study observed that the act of regularly looking at virtual images of food can affect "the array of neural, physiological, and behavioural responses linked to" food images", which may lead to actual physiological responses (that is, "physiological hunger") (*Ibid.*: 59).

Then, what about the BJs and viewers' response to the medical discourses surrounding Mukbang production and consumption? The interviewees, who are more aware of such problems than anyone else, report that they are closely monitoring the changes in their own bodies. Tae-Yang and Ji-Min were relieved after a medical exam that showed "there

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[63] Night-eating syndrome is considered to be a contemporary adult disease, because during the day, the metabolism is well able to consume energy in the direction of the sympathetic nervous system; however, at night the parasympathetic nervous system is activated: The metabolism is inhibited by the body's resting facilities, causing less energy to be burned off after eating and making it easy for that energy to be stored as fat. Experts point out that depression, anxiety, and a distorted perception of body image are all related factors that trigger or promote this symptom (Voelker, Reel, and Greenleaf, 2015).

has been no change in my body (since the Mukbang was made)" (Tae-Yang) and "have no problems with it" (Ji-Min). The Mukbangers manage their bodies by borrowing the power of medical expertise; at the same time, they try to improve their physical strength while thinking of Mukbang as a bomb in the body that may someday explode: "I can continue eating only if my body strength grows more and more" (Jung-Woo). Some adopt a strategic way of thinking, such as routinely undertaking "10,000 steps streetwalking on the street after Mukbang shows" (Jae-Seoung). Unlike other genres of BJs who are proud of their expertise in particular subcultures, and are supported by a subcultural fandom, these Mukbangers recognise the importance of "the care of the self"; that is, the act of managing and disciplining their bodies and thereby facilitating limitless ingestion (at least on a standard screen), which is regarded as an essential technological factor in these broadcast productions.

> "I think I need to take care of myself. The thinner I am, the better I eat. I eat more now than in the early days when I first started Mukbang. I have eaten more than four or five chickens [at once]. I have to manage my body to be that thin so that I can eat that much. [How do you feel about the media coverage dealing with the overeating problems of a Mukbanger?] Even though I'm not sick, I feel like, I want to have healthcare [looking at that]. I will have to go in the long-run." (Jung-Woo)
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> "I say, 'this is not delicious' if it is not. Most of the other BJs eat it even it is not, saying just 'delicious' because they want to make a video. But, in my case, if I do not think it tastes good, I drop the video. Other people say because the video is money, 'it's just delicious,' and even if they're not hungry, they just stuff food into their throat or throw it away." (Jung-Woo)

There are many ways in which Mukbangers keep their body slim and healthy while overeating (for example, in various interviews with the press, well-known BJs say they work out a few hours a day and argue that exercise is the secret to maintaining a slim figure). However, one of the more controversial ways well-known among BJs is to "vomit things after the broadcast is over" (Ji-Min). In fact, one of the keywords in "searches related to Mukbang' when searching with the name of a famous BJ using Google is *Mukto* (Korean: 먹토, meaning: vomiting after eating).

"I used to vomit, and my body was not so good after that. We BJs say, 'pull out the aggro' [meaningless behaviour or talking just to get others' attention] to describe the behaviour of vomiting after eating. I did it in the old days." (Ji-Min).

"I do not eat till I puke. I am digesting whatever, however much I eat. I didn't exercise that much, so I finally got fat. I was initially slim. I think the BJs who eat then vomit think of Mukbang as a professional activity. They have to keep doing so." (Jung-Woo)

If repeat eating and vomiting becomes an everyday labour, there is no more dangerous a career activity than the everyday labour of repeatedly eating and then vomiting food. At first, it might be thought that at least the problem will never be known to the Mukbangers' audiences, because such vomiting takes place away from the screen. However, this is in fact why this activity becomes an even more dangerous game of life or death. The sponsorship given by the audience springs from a benevolent place; the donors assume that their actions are good. Thus, the dangerous labour that slowly destroys life itself must be hidden. For the broadcasting to continue, it must be packaged within a positive image; thus, all the negative factors such as compulsive exercise in order to control the weight and repetitive emesis and sickness (until not only the food but also blood is thrown up) must be concealed. Sometimes the audiences leave comments that show that they worry about the health of Mukbangers, but this is not sufficient to stop this deathly game.

"I think about the duality of audiences. They worry about my health, but they like to watch it [over-eating] with enthusiasm. It's a duality. They worry, but still like it. Eventually, they want to say that I should continue it. That's what it's like." (Jung-Woo)

What is interesting about Jung-Woo's words is that both he and the audience feel "seeing through" Mukbang critically, but still cannot help keeping in production or using it. Illouz (2007) explains this through the notion of 'cynicism' as an example of emotional organisation of experience commonly seen in a post-capitalist society. This peculiar

structure of feeling appears when consumers feel compelled to buy and use advertising products, even though they have penetrated the ideology under them, thus compelled to do the same 'thing' repetitively. Explained by that, the compulsion to keep mukbanging - even if one sees through it -, may be left those immaterial bodies in the logic of the platform, dreaming a vain dream full of 'fake full' food images.

The production and consumption of late-night eating images through Mukbang and the associated social interactions result in opportunities for Korea's young people to deviate from the spatial suppression of their bodies and the media discourse about wellbeing and diet. However, at the same time, the temptation to stimulate the colourful desires surrounding Mukbang is continually growing, just as images that are consumed by the audience's imagination are amplified through cyberspace. Eventually, until the physical bodies that consume all the food are destroyed, the trend will run forever, as if the brakes were broken. In the worst case, the collective 'slow suicide' of a capitalist consumer society, which can be described as another psychopathological symptom caused and mediated by Mukbang, can never be stopped unless all the bodies on the screen are eaten away. Most importantly, the food phenomenon starting from South Korea, which is represented by Mukbang, is not only based on consumerist food pornography, but also hides the complex nature in which emotional inputs are transformed into real-time social and economic capital as well as physical changes. And this growing trand towards Mukbang is mimicked in the most irritating form and extracted by the on-demand video, becoming popular even on the overseas web. In this sense, Mukbang becomes "the illusion" in Zizek's term, "not on the side of knowledge, it is already on the side of reality itself, of what people are doing" (Zizek, 1989: 29-30; Illouz, 2007: 89). To get out of the illusion, the reality must thus be transformed. *So, how is your Mukbang life*?

Chapter Six. Amateur Competition and Compensation in Webtoon Production

1. Introduction

The unpaid activities of amateurs who enter the realm of online cultural production taking place on a platform provided by digital capital like other users have been studied by focusing on the economic value it creates. It is noteworthy that amateurs who have made more devoted contributions to the platform receive not only symbolic gifts such as fame but also monetary rewards like online advertising revenue more than ordinary users, as discussed in Chapter 2. Some amateurs who are proud of their work try to develop the labour powers latent within themselves in the recently developed crowdsourcing competition and labour platform which encourage competition among users and form a virtual labour market mixed with professional and amateur on-demand labour (c.f. van Dijck, 2009). It then raises a question about the general perception that defines an amateur activity being noncompetitive. Can it be assumed, at least in digital work domains, the creativity and ideas of amateurs are now becoming an important productive labour power (Kostakis, 2009; Kostakis and Bauwens, 2014; Andrejevic, 2009)? If so, how are competition and reward surrounding the activity changing the nature of the amateurs' activity? At least, Professional-amateurs, who make a living like a professional in the cultivation of digital culture, might be understood as a new type of 'creative worker' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2008, 2013) or '(cyber)-cognitariat' (Miller, 2016: 40) using the terms of human resources of the digital creative industry today. The reason why they are considered creative workers is not only that they are engaged in the same kind of 'creative' work, but also that their artistry and productivity as a freelancer are evaluated using the same criteria in the digital labour market.

In this respect, discussions on creative labour accumulated from British academia in the late 1990s may help here to understand Pro-Ams as workers. Its approach has criticised national policies such as the 'creative industries' developed by the British New Labour government that covers almost all cultural sectors like film and television, design, advertising, software, publishing, fashion, the visual arts, and so on (de Peuter, 2011: 418). According to de Peuter (*Ibid.*), the creative industries are powered by "individual creativity, skill and talent with the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property" (British Arts Council, 2011: N.pag., cited in de Peuter, *Op.cit.*). In this trend, new types of occupational groups such as the 'creative class' (Florida, 2005) and 'neo-bohemians" (Lloyd, 2002) has been gaining attention as the primary labour resource. However, such governmental policy has been criticised for focussing on "privileging the capture of collective creativity as intellectual property" to add the value to industrial symbolic production, since it may contribute to the neoliberal subjectivisation of individual worker such as "subcultural entrepreneurs" in "urban cottage industries" (McRobbie, 2011: 4) who are taking "an entrepreneurial approach" to promote innovation on the micro levels in the industries (de Peuter, *Op.cit.;* see also McRobbie, 2016). However, as a result, the so-called the 'neoliberal self' with a 'cool' posture that symbolically derives from the culture of disaffection, who are skeptical of redistributive justice are idealised as the preferred form of life and who fits well with the logic of classical economics and neoclassical economics which emphasise the qualities of citizens as "successful entrepreneurs, sovereign consumers and hardworking taxpayers" (McGuigan, 2014: 225; see also McGuigan, 2010).

This chapter further looks critically at neo-liberal approaches rapidly spreading in the present-day developed and developing digital cognitive capitalism, in which all the pre-individual elements that we have such as every users' creativities has transformed into a digital labour force (Dyer-Witheford, 2005a; Moulier-Boutang, 2011; Scholz, 2012). Theorists of cognitive capitalism insist that it successfully facilitates the combination of the spiritual, cognitive, and emotional potential that results from the congnitarian subjectivisation of 'mass intellectual' rather than abstract and general driving forces (Berardi, 2009: 94-5) which used to be described as the wisdom which contributes to create public engagement to the commons, as discussed in Chapter 2. According to these

theorists, certainly such changes have adapted to the capitalist mode of production and have been further applied to the digital sector.

In the digital creative economy, the content production is not just the preserve of experts or vocational groups such as the media/creative workers and even the daily activities of networked users have successfully converted into it (Terranova, 2000; Andrejevic, 2009; Scholz, 2012; Dyer-Witheford, 2005a). For the concrete example, in the Web 2.0's friendly environment, the activeness of an Internet user has become a norm and common slogans like "are you a creator?" (Tapastic.com) are found. Besides, all the outcomes the user produces in immaterial forms such as likes, comments, and Emojis pass through the digital platform, and are measured as the surplus value of the platform and determine the size of the platform and online advertising revenue (Kostakis and Bauwens, 2014). In this trend, all the creativities are evaluated by how much it draws the attention of users and accumulates progressive values on that platform implicitly and ideologically (c.f. Terranova, 2000, 2012).

What Berardi (2009) then points out is that the very consequence of such changes would be the generalisation in the cognitanian subjectivisation that makes us feel that such labour is a part of 'self-realisation' so that we do not feel that it is real labour. According to him, although self-realisation-related labourers and capital have a different outlook, they all were welcomed by the digitalisation and fragmentation of labour to reduce labour hours at the workforce (*Ibid*.: 94-95; see also 76-79). While capital tends to absorb individual creativity and desire as well as absorbing individualistic and liberalist drives for self-realisation of social labourers, passion for self-realisation among individual labourers are moving toward the core of 'general intellect' (*Ibid*.: 94-96). The most prominent example thereof is that "proletarians of intelligence", such as creative engineers, libertarian programmers and artists, who do not own anything other than their competence as a creative worker, tend to have an illusion that they could lead the initiative of composing an independent corporation with "adventurous spirit" without noticing that

they actually spent their energy on the speculative web space (Berardi, 2009: 96-7).[64] As labour realises the '*liberal state*' (Greek *récré,* root origin for 'recreation') from this huge shift in subjectivation of labourers, it disguises itself as a part of social life - Therefore, it may be mistaken that we realise ourselves by achieving "happy singularisations" (*Ibid*.: 17) through working. The noteworthy point is that the masks for such disguise have the same shape as those features deemed as a unique advantage of amateur activity in general. Traditionally, the cultural production of amateurs is distinguished from the conventional wage labour model due to the following reasons: as it is a non-wage activity based on self-realisation to find its fulfillment in itself with '*virtuosity*' (art, work, speech) that is not objectifying itself into an end product, without settling into a finished product of commodity (Virno, 2003: 52). However, labour, as in cognitive labour, absorbed the unique features and advantages of unpaid labour as already discussed. Thus, it becomes difficult to argue that amateur activity is irrelevant to productive labour; for instance, a variety of the studies mentioned in the preceding chapter has pointed out that amateur production generated a new digital labour culture mixed with wage labour. In these circumstances, amateurs who actively participate in semi-professional culture-making have come into the spotlight as playing the role of the avant-garde for such trends, although as indicated by the word origin, amateurs commit themselves to self-performing and self-fulfilling activities rather than vocational activities in an area close to intellectual and creative labour, without any condition (not demanding any monetary compensation) while leveraging 'love' for culture as a driving force (Stiegler, 2017a, 2017b; Barthes, 1973, 1978). From the process thereof activities, they were supposed to form a community with other people who have the same interest and also wish to create a new kind of life in that process.

In a way, amateurs who are working on self-realisation and networked activities harder than anyone would be an ideal figure of labourer that would be welcomed by a new cognitive labour model (c.f. Kostakis, 2009; Miller, 2016). For instance, there are

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[64] Miller (2016) elaborates this concept 'congnitatiat', referring to "people undertaking casualised cultural work who have heady educational backgrounds yet live at the uncertain interstices of capital, qualifications, and government in a post-Fordist era of mass unemployment, chronic underemployment, zero-time contracts, limited-term work, interminable internships, and occupational insecurity" (:26).

amateurs who are considered as an advance guard in many aspects of the digital cultural industry such as hackers and content creators dedicated to the Creative Commons projects (c.f. Kostakis, 2009; Kleiner, 2006, 2010; Bollier, 2014). It must be relevant to the reason that the platforms of 'gift economy' in the early days were developed thanks to the creative ideas and technologies of such amateurs (Terranova, 2000; Dyer-Witheford, 2005a). However, their contributions have been converted to the developmental process of digital corporations. In fact, these cases are often found in those countries having the advanced IT industry. A typical example in South Korea is a Webtoon industry that has gained benefits under the banner of South Korean 'Creative Economy,' in which governmental policy can be summarised in short as the "fusion of culture with industry, and the blossoming of creativity in the very borders that were once permeated by barriers" (Park, 2013), that is emphasising 'creativity' as the key priority in the work of all individuals beyond the boundaries between industries.

This chapter focuses on the fact that, after the Web portals had started to distribute Webtoons free, the production and consumption of digital cartoons in South Korea expanded faster there than in most other industrialised countries (Song, Nam, and Jang, 2014: 360), due to the 'infinite cartoon pool' supplied not only by commissioned cartoonists but also by the vast number of amateurs who upload their comics for free on such Web portals (*Ibid.*; see also Song, 2012a). Moreover, to promote more amateur-based productions, major South Korean Web portals such as Naver and Daum have established a unique 'Webtoonist promotion system' since 2006, that set up a long-term upgrade panel in which audiences are invited to participate as members of an evaluation group. Anybody can enter these competitions, as long as he or she has the desire to create Webtoons, as well as the necessary skills required to use digital image editing devices and digital graphics software. As a result, they have enabled the industry to increase its supply of human resources indefinitely. Since then, in terms of the precarious labour conditions of the neoliberal 'creative economy', the young South Korean 'reserve army of labour' (Green, 1991; Kostakis, 2009) who are the unemployed or under-employed have spontaneously flocked to online amateur-oriented contests and compete with other amateurs, while dreaming of breaking into the creative industries. Naver has even implemented an effort to set up a similar labour supply system on their global Webtoon

platform, and aimed to gain attention from both amateur cartoonists and audiences around the globe. There are several reasons why these portals make a serious effort with such initiatives, such as to secure original cartoon works of high quality, to generate further additional profit from secondary or tertiary sales of such cartoons through sales of intellectual property rights to the film and TV industries, and companies designing products targeted at increase in global popularity of South Korean culture (KOCCA, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d). In this sense, the process of fostering amateurs into professionals is linked not only to the financial value of the platform but also to innovation and invention in the K-comics wave. In this regard, the South Korean government expressed its expectation that Webtoons will be the core export of popular culture, while stressing it as the original 'source' for multi-use that has generated and grown itself in the unique context of South Korean digital culture, and promised to the Web portals to provide governmental supporting policies to increase the soft power of the nation in the future (Kim, 2014b: 2-3; KOFICE, 2014: 144). However, we are reminded that, in the background of this rapid growth, those nameless amateur cartoonists, arguably the most significant contributors to the development of these platforms, are divided into different ranks, while 'some' of those skillful professionals or Pro-Ams *selected by* capital are given a more privileged status and much greater visibility through hierarchisation of the space.

2. Amateur Competition on the Webtoon Platform

With the fast penetration of high-speed Internet at the end of the 1990s, Webtoons became gradually known through personal websites or blogs of amateur cartoonists (Song, Nam, and Jang, 2014: 359). Webtoon (Korean: 웹툰) is a term used to describe South Korean Webcomics or manhwa that are published through online media. At first, it was popular among only a handful of hardcore enthusiasts (Song, 2012a: 134) and created by amateur

cartoonists able to use web technology, such as students studying design or cartooning and layman who conducted many experiments breaking the mold (c.f. Park, 2009: 131; Baek, 2004: 188). During this process, Kang Full, a former social activist, adopted an image production method borrowed from the traditional boards often used on college campuses (Wee, 2013; Kim, 2007). Kang Doha and Yoon Taeho took various production methods evoking styles of film directing, which led to a movement of eradicating the frame that was unique to cartoons (Kim, 2007). Since then, Webtoons have become known as 'scroll cartoons' as it used the scroll method as one of the primary directing methods such as the arrangement of the vertical images that combine both visual and tactile stimuli. It not only redefined the genre of Webtoons but also served to distinguish it from other 'Webcomics' that were merely a transfer of traditional comics moved online (*Ibid.*). Comparing Webtoons with Webcomics produced in the markets of the US (91.1%), UK (87%), Germany (92.3%), France (90.7%) or Japan (89.9%) where printed comics still account for about 90% market share in 2015 (PWC, 2016; ICv2, 2016, cited in KOCCA, 2016a), there are distinctive differences from the South Korean Webtoon as shown in Figure 12 and Figure 13.

From 2003 and 2005, major Web portals such as Daum and Naver respectively started to use a platform dedicated to Webtoons, as part of a strategy to attract users to its news services (Park, 2009: 139). With this launch of 'free service' for the general public, Webtoons became known quickly. Professional Webtoons were commissioned by the Web portals (*Ibid.*: 128) covering almost every genre including romantic comedies, horror, historical epics and crime stories. And most Webtoon serials featured on such professional daily service published once or twice a week (DIGIECO, 2015). To increase the use value of the platform, these Internet portal companies employed a cartoon-wave strategy, having flooded the market with high-quality products –Webtoons produced by professionals at that time. However, according to Yoon*, et al*. (2015), the total number of Webtoons commissioned by all South Korean Web platforms between 2001 and 2013 has increased up to 1,928. And 48% of them were hired by two major portals, Daum and Naver (KOFICE, 2014: 182). For instance, the Seoul-based search giant, Naver commissioned 455 Webtoon serials for 'daily cartoon' service in 2013 (*Ibid*: 184). As a result, these portal companies have begun to exert a great influence in South Korea

cartoon consumption twelve years after having started the Webtoon service. According to *AFN* (2015), a Seoul-based technology think-tank, the market for Webtoons reached around 420 billion won (USA$368 million) (*Ibid.*: 14),[65] while the consumption of Webtoons on Web portals was recorded at 70.1% in 2015 (KOCCA, 2016c). Then, taking the case of production issues further, it would be worth investigating the question, how could these portals have continually dealt with their human resources management and product supplements? The more accurate question would be, how could these portals find so many, talented, professional cartoonists?

At first, major Web portals regularly serialised professional Webtoons centering on cartoonists who are familiar with cartoon creation work using digital authoring and editing tools and who did not have a great dislike to distribute cartoons on the Internet (Park, 2009: 131; c.f. Jung-Hwa, 2015; Hee-Jin, 2015). However, as the social awareness and preference for Webtoon increased, Naver, the biggest Seoul-based Web portal allowed amateurs to upload and share their works freely with other users without any censorship or deliberation for the first time in 2006, while they are serviced with professional Webtoons together - a kind of UGC channel specialised in cartoon distribution. Just as YouTube did, its PR slogan said that "this (competition) is for everyone!" (Naver), where amateurs can upload their cartoons, while other users can consume and evaluate them. In this context, this portal's UGC platform might be shown at first glance as typical of the Web 2.0 platform, where "the practice of getting users to add value to a website by having them build its content, thus accelerating the cycle of media production so that sites become dynamic, regularly updated sources of new material" (O'Reilly, 2005; Gehl, 2011).

In the past, when amateurs and talented Pro-Am cartoonists were distributing their work through their websites, individuals had to pay to host the site. However, when they used the 'Webtoon' service, it cost them nothing. Also, it displays their works to users who have been introduced to the various other services provided by the portals as well as Webtoons. Active users of Web portals not only appreciate the Webtoons but also leave

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65 It was also expected almost to double to 880 billion won by 2018 (AFN, 2015: 14).

feedback and ratings and raise the commercial value of amateur cartoons as well as their platforms. This advantage of the web portal service emphasising the multi-faceted social interaction readily available to both producers as well as potential Webtoon viewers results in amateur cartoonists entrusting the distribution of their work to the portal platform. Eventually, the launch of the UGC platform to introduce such amateur cartoons became a major factor that explosively increased the number of works on the platform (Song, 2012a: 134). In this regard, Baek (2004: 187) further adds that the rapid growth of web portals was possible as it allowed amateurs to publish their work freely without any deliberation and censorship from the industry. One of the interviewees who got debuted as a professional Webtoonist on the Daum Webtoon platform after having self-published fantasy genre cartoons said, "It was possible to self-publish a serial of cartoon works on the web portal only if I had the will, even though I do not have a lot of money." (Sun-Min) Not only her, but also most of the interviewees positively appreciated the platform providing distribution channels for amateurs, which eventually eliminated the bottlenecks phenomenon of the existing publishing industry preventing the debut of amateur cartoonists. Some South Korean scholars have also agreed that the increase in comics distribution channels of Web portals, where amateur cartoons were mixed with professional cartoons and offered to the public free of charge, increased the diversity of Korean cartoons (Park, 2009; Song, Nam, and Jang, 2014), and, as a result, South Korean digital cartoons may have expanded faster there than in most other industrialised countries (Song, Nam, and Jang, 2014). That is, such infinite cartoon pools formed not only by paper-book cartoonists who previously worked in the cartoon industry but also by the vast number of amateurs with unknown backgrounds who just upload their comics via the platforms' channel became the labour force of the digital cartoon market. Thus, this can be considered as a typical example of "mass-amateurisation," (Shirky, 2008) in which amateurs with the ability to produce cartoons use the UGC platform technology to enter the distribution domain of digital comics and the economic value created by these amateurs' contributions bring economic repercussions to the existing comic book market.
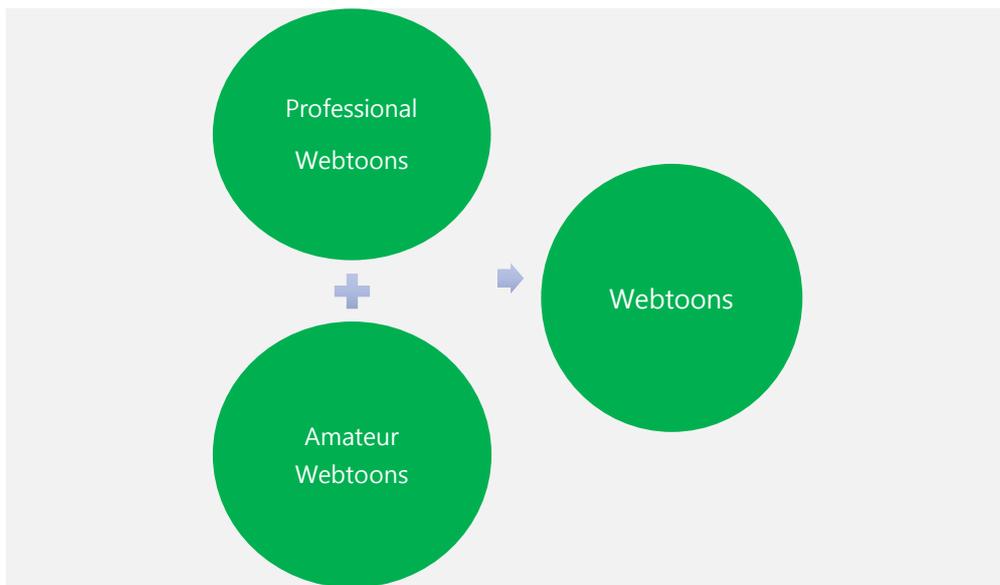
Table 2 The two-sided production model of Webtoons

However, there is a critical distinction regarding structure between these Internet portals' UGC platforms and other Web 2.0s in this case, since within the Webtoon platform of Web portals, a dual structure operates. Here, the UGC platform and professional platform are not as opposed to each other, but function like two sides of the same coin. Unlike other Web 2.0s, combining the UGC platform for amateurs with another platform for 'daily cartoon service' (Naver; Daum) where only professionals who are hired by the platform can upload their work. It means that this platform developed a new means of control of hybrid production mixed with amateurism and professionalism, the outsourcing of commissioned Webtoons to amateur works. By doing this, the portal companies were sure to succeed in adding more socio-economic roles to the UGC platform, such as professional education and training in cartoon productions. They describe it as 'a system of incubating [professional] cartoonists' (DIGIECO, 2015: 14-15), which plug into the back of the professional cartoon platform. And then, to ensure both training effectiveness and the return on their training investment, these portals set up two-stage campaigns designed to transform amateur enthusiasm into something more suitable for commercial markets. These can be called 'competition' and 'compensation,' which will be further discussed below.

What this chapter focuses on is two types of amateur-based Webtoon competitions. The first category is the domestic 'Webtoon League' on South Korean portals. There are two major amateur-oriented online competitions of Daum and Naver, Webtoon platforms that structured a hierarchical allocation among an amateur, a semi-professional and a full-blown professional in their UGC channel. This challenge Web page (which is called "Cartoon Challenge" 도전만화 in Naver and "Webtoon League" 웹툰리그 in Daum) has become a debut stage for young, South Korean Webtoon cartoonists. As it is 'open space' where anyone can participate, several thousands of amateurs compete every year, and appeal to Internet users to get 'likes.' Once they upload their cartoons, they are evaluated how popular they are, considering view counts, numbers of subscribing, and grades (called 'star' scores) given by readers. There are only minor differences in the way the amateur-based cartoon competitions operate across major platforms. Moreover, the platforms also separate the amateur competition into the top league which is the highest level of amateur competition on the platform, called "the second league" (2 부 리그) in Daum or "Best Challenge" (베스트도전) in Naver, where only a few amateurs who stand out through the first league can participate. Through this top league, amateurs compete with 'semi-pros' just like themselves.

For example, the "Webtoon League" offered by the Daum web portal is divided into two parts running all year round. On the first day of every month, some of the amateur works that get the most views, votes, and ratings in the first league get noticed officially on the platform's 'notice' menu that they are now qualified to challenge the top league. Then after a heated competition, the final winner is selected by the platform and gets a contract with the platform as a freelance cartoonist to run a series of Webtoons on the platform's 'Daily Webtoons' menu. In general, those who debut through this professional channel have a cartoon running twice a week and receive regular income. However, it has been a controversy among participants that this informal way of selecting winners on an irregular basis by the platform can not be a 'perfectly transparent way.' In fact, one of the Webtoonists whom I interviewed said that this can not be considered a "fair means of a debut," although she finally debuted in Naver in July 2017, one year after I interviewed her (Yoon-Ah).

It should be noted that some platforms are also aware of this issue, so thus have planned a regular competition twice a year (c.f. It was held four times a year until 2016, in general). In the following example, "Ranking Exhibition" (랭킹전) is held in February and September every year on Daum. This competition is limited to semi-professionals who are selected from the first league, and after a week of popularity voting among the Web portal's users, the highest turnout amateur immediately receives the "Super Pass" gift from the portal, which guarantees his or her debut in the Daily Webtoon service with the prize money, 5,000,000 Won (checked as of July 30, 2017). Interestingly then, Naver, which almost monopolises the Korean Webtoon market with Daum, had adopted this approach to the "Ranking Exhibition" to pick the winner with the popular vote when it entered the overseas cartoon market. It proposed the global Webtoon competition 'the discovery' on the Line platform which is a webcomic syndicate launched by itself. As its global service of Webtoons started in 2014, competition between the participants is getting fierce and intense around the globe. 'The discovery' is an amateur-oriented online competition of Line which is a global free digital comics service platform. According to Line, it is officially made to find a creator who wants to be connected with the new audience around the globe (Line, 2016a). A point of reference has remained same as Daum Webtoon's "Ranking exhibition" competition, regarding an evaluation of amateurs' productive activities. Once they upload cartoons, the platform evaluates how popular they are, considering view counts, numbers subscribing, and grades given by readers. The platform chooses top amateurs who were most popular during the period and gives them opportunities to be featured in its 'daily' Webtoon service once a month.[66]

An important point is that even though such competition is slightly different in terms of the size and characteristics of the platforms, the two concepts have two things in common: not placing any restrictions on eligibility to participate in the competitions at the entry, and evaluating contest entries not only by the platform but by the users who produce and consume the competition space together with amateurs. For this reason, these competitions have been appraised by the critics of cultural studies as a positive case that has democratically overcome the issues of traditional 'cultural power' relations between

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66 For example, in September 2016, amateurs Muniz and Kasper and Teo were chosen as finalists.

professionals, audiences, and amateurs in South Korean academia (Park, 2009). However, at the same time, as such competitions have been fierce on the platforms, the accumulation of amateur Webtoons in it has amased the industry. It seems obvious, the above amateur-based competitions operated by the Web portals are aimed at increasing the overall size of the platforms and improving the quality of the Webtoon service, and, these Net cognitive capitalist strategies could have successfully outsourced all the creativities and artistic capabilities from heterogeneous individuals. It should be noted that the assessment for these amateur works is left to the users as well as the owner of the platform during the competition process, that is, the evaluation is also sourced from "the crowd wisdom" and "collective intelligence" (Rheingold, 2002; Leadbeater, 2008). Both of these findings show that the Webtoon platforms owned by web portals are also solving the problem of managing the immaterial labour factors (such as creativity, mass intelligence) necessary for the continuous development and the innovation of Webtoons service by delegating responsibility for those to amateurs and general users networked on the platforms.

In this sense, the Webtoon platform can be based on a new type of cognitive capitalism that creates profits from the crowdsourced commons created by users as data providers and amateurs as content creators, which are formed in the course of the production and reproduction of the symbolic value of amateur digital cartoons. In such a mixed model of 'virtual labour market crowdsourcing' and 'competitive crowdsourcing,' competition can be understood as a mode of crowdsourcing, and the evaluation is subject to the whims of a crowdsourced public (Trammell, 2014: 64). At this point, we may notice: The fact that the total pro-activeness of the audience is what determines the market value of these Webtoons, in the end, is important. As the peer evaluation is conditioned by the platform through its codes, program languages, and algorithms (Suhr, 2014), such principles of professionalising amateurs, supported by users' peer evaluations are eventually mobilised as a profit-seeking measure by portals, and capture the dilemma that amateur 'free' production faces in the market environment (c.f. Berry, 2008; Galloway and Thacker, 2007; van Dijck and Nieborg, 2009). However, as Dijck (2009) already argued, such apparatuses of evaluations on the Web 2.0 platforms are also vulnerable to be manipulated not only by the site's owners but also users (Dijck, 2009: 45). It means that these

evaluative measures of the platform can be used differently from their original purpose, by popular demand.

However, it should be noted that in this model, the roles of the users and the amateurs are occasionally restricted by the hierarchical order established by the platforms, and the rewards are different as well. For example, this ranking is not the only evaluation element in this case of Line's 'the discovery.' According to a notification of the company that is on general release, the valuation criteria are composed of; First, popularity (70%) that is evaluated by considering view counts, 'likes,' comments, rating, and so on. Second, professionality (30%) that is assessed by artistry, originality, and productivity or any creation the Line Webtoon editorial team "just find exceedingly enjoyable!" (Line, 2016a).

It is notable, as shown in the above notification, in the case of Line, that the platform makes the final decision on the winners of such challenges in the contest, considering not only the popularity of amateur cartoons but also the professionality. It takes account of artistry, originality, and productivity of the nominated cartoon firstly judged by such peer evaluation. It implies, this Line's competition in the sense of capitalism where the logic of the market fundamentally embeds and the market has a set of rules such as those put forth by Smith (1982) relating to the "invisible hand" of capital (as cited in Trammell, *Ibid.*: 62- 64). But, it does not alter the fact that, to step off on the right foot of the competition, the popularity of amateur works on the platform must be the most decisive factor. The platform, unlike experts in the book cartoon industry, has never taught cartoon professionals, thus, professionalism is nothing more than commercialism (which will be more discussed below). Then, it would not be wrong to assume that, even though the platform has absorbed and shaped the conditions of amateur Webtoon production, in a way, it still tends to improve and deliver user satisfaction. It suggests the transformation in the evaluation basis for cartoons from critiques on artworks to populism-based on public opinions, that is, the constructive change in the structure of power relations from the cartoonist-critics dual structure to the cartoonist-platform-users multi-structure. Thus, it is crucial to understand the new features of competition and evaluation in these Webtoon platforms to investigate the power relations among multi-players. In this

complicated mood, the plain fact is that the promotion slogan that all Webtoon platforms promise is that "You can be a cartoonist!" (Naver) but those selected as a winner or partially rewarded are only those who have received much attention from users on that platform. 'Everyone can take part, but not everyone can be selected,' – When the real logic of the competition is revealed then it should be examined how amateurs respond to the logic of this type of digital capital in the experience of comic artists involved in the actual competition process.

3. Amateur-Professionalisation in the Infinite Competition

Conversion of paths from cartoonist to Webtoonist

With the expansion of Webtoon consumption, a Webtoonist has become a dream job among the young generation in South Korea. According to a survey, 10 million Koreans visit the Webtoon platform every month, and about 70% of them use the free service of the web portal (Jung and Lee, 2016). As the media influence of the Webtoon in the Korean society has strengthened, the general perception of the Webtoonists has changed. Famous Webtoonists earn billions of won in annual income and become enviable as a celebrity (Kim, 2016d). Webtoonists were even ranked as the most wanted job that elementary students would like to have in their future, according to 2016 survey (*Ibid*.). In one interviewee's expression, the cartoonist who was regarded as a dauber in the past is reconceptualised as core human resources leading the creative industry, which infuse ideas and creativities not only in comics but also in the drama and film industries.

> "When I was a middle-school student, a cartoonist was treated contemptuously. For example, my grandfather thought of them as mere painters of theater signs and my father thought of them as daubers. Now they seem to be recognised by the public as

a great job as well as deserving celebrity. I think it has been a matter of capital to have changed the perception of cartoonists in Korean society, to be honest. Webtoon is good money so that the general perception changed so successfully. South Korean society and the nation seems to encourage (everyone) to become a Webtoonist because they found the possibility of the Korean Wave (South Korean soft-power expansion on the globe) in Webtoon" (Sun-Min)

However, surprisingly, despite the immense popularity of Webtoons, there are few academic definitions and little sociological empirical research about the Webtoonist that identify their working conditions or class characteristics as the creative labourer (Park, 2014; Park, 2009). Even taking into consideration the full findings of the subsequent references and the result of the general opinion of interviewees, only a few people could define the Webtoon and the Webtoonist concretely (only noting the difference from a typical cartoon and cartoonist, that both of them are the outcomes of activities to produce cartoons consumed by using digital technologies). According to their descriptions, the Webtoonist is a Korean-style, newly-coined word which describes a web-based drawing cartoonist who prefers to work in colour instead of black and white since they draw the manuscript of comics by using digital technologies. In fact, all interviewees told that most of their Webtoons were not published in the print comics, and web-competition is the only way to become a professional Webtoonist through public channels. On the contrary, noteworthy during my interviews was that most of the Webtoonists had been interested in cartoon careers since childhood so that they could describe the general perception for cartoonists in the publishing industry in more detail than the average person. Some interviewees said that they were enthusiastic fans who attended autograph signings of famous comic artists and participated in comic festivals and had face-to-face conversations with them (Jung-Hwa; Hee-Jin; Sun-Min), which made them dream of being a career cartoonist.

The paper-book cartoonists of past generations are described as 'solitary artisans' who work alone or with a few assistants at their home (their workroom) and are often chased by the publisher's deadline call. As such, creators work as freelancers where employment conditions are flexible and floating according to the popularity of their publications. But,

surprisingly, all of the Webtoonists whom I interviewed said that they sincerely wanted to be such a person who can only concentrate on making cartoons, although they knew how lonely and hard it was to work like that. It seems obvious their love for cartoons has been a driving force to have succeeded as a professional Webtoonist eventually. Throughout my interviews, what I was wondering was why these winners of the 'Webtoon Competition' and some of those close to the championship on Web portals whom I met had failed at published comic book contests before. Most of the over-30s interviewees who had produced intensively amateur comics in their 20s, before the advent of Webtoon, told that none of their work was accepted at the comics competition. One interviewee, thus, introduced herself as "the figure who carries the sad history of a failed amateur" (Hee-Jin) When compared to Webtoon making, was the quality, craftsmanship, techniques, and artistry required for the creator of a published comic book different? If so, how and where did the amateur creators of the print cartoon who participated in the publisher's comics contest get any training and educated to increase their production capacity?

In connection with these questions, studies in academia have accumulated to some extent in South Korean cartoon publications (Yadao, 2009; KOCCA, 2016a). According to them, in general, South Korean comics, called "Manhwa" (만화), exercised a strong influence on the Japanese Manga in post-war South Korea, and it has been classified as a non-mainstream cultural genre (Yadao, 2009). Particularly in the 1970s, it faced discrimination as a harmful youth culture, full of violent and sexual materials, which might cause bad educational performance (Lent, 1999). Accordingly, the South Korean government aimed to make codes and guidelines for excessive and explicit portrayals of sex and violence in cartoons. This measure was also focused on the protection of national security and indigenous cultural forms and values, with regards to social concern about the popularisation of Japanese manga. Under this historical background, institutional education or social certifications for a professional cartoonist could not fully develop until the early 2000s. Amateurs should win an annual competition that is conducted by publishers of comic books or magazines (KOCCA, 2016c, 2016d), to take advantage of only a few chances to become certified as a professional cartoonist. Such an amateur-

based competition is regarded as almost the only valuable symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1991) that amateurs can hold within the industrial area. Rarely has an informal debut received the professional help of a cartoonist who teaches amateurs as an apprentice or an assistant, just like the way that the community of craftsman waned with the advent of the industrial society (Sennett, 2008). For this reason, before the emergence of Webtoons, young South Korean amateur cartoonists often believed that a settled way to enter the media job market was by accepting and serving a temporary or unpaid apprenticeship with a professional, even without any promise of debut, which was regarded as informal (professional-directed) work training necessary for professional knowledge and techniques. However, this experience as a pupil or personal assistant has no meaning beyond working to meet professional demands.

In particular, since the student, "Munhasaeng" (문하생), which originally came from Chinese (門下生) usually lives in the house of a cartoonist who is their teacher and learns the know-how required for the job, tacitly, their teachers are not obliged to compensate for his or her of work (KOCCA, 2016a: 106-111). For that reason, providing room and board for free is the only requirement, and the copyright of co-worked products a small entry with the pupil. And, even after the debut of the cartoonist, amateurs who become professionals are struggling with wage issues because most are working as a freelancer without long-term publishing contracts (*Ibid*: 108). Ever since the job of cartoonist has existed, these senseless and precarious working conditions attract voluntary participation in the role of self-enterprise-artist or self-employment-producer (c.f. McRobbie, 2016: 15) among cartoonists and make them keep searching for a living to overcome insecurity. Under such precarious working conditions in the South Korean cartoon industry, unemployed or uncertified cartoonists who cannot be called either professional or a mere amateur remained at the periphery of the media industry. They remind of the so-called 'creative precariat' who are "self-reliant, risk-bearing, non-unionised, self-exploiting, [and] always on flexibly employed worker in the creative industries" (de Peuter, 2014: 263).

Surprisingly, this 'old' figure of cartoonists, whose position alternates between an amateur and a professional, is still found in the media industries of today's developed countries, who are mistreated without any payment within a period of receiving non-institutional training. Such internship schemes, systemically justifying unpaid or low-paid labour, could be maintained since the number of young people who want to enter the realm of creative labour somehow is more than the needs of the industry (Hesmondhalgh, 2010: 279). Hesmondhalgh (*Ibid*.) criticised the internships, arguing that the media company have "lent" the workplace to such young, inexperienced workers and get the extraction of billions of hours of their 'free' labour (: 279). The by-product of this scheme is that it has offered the opportunity of gaining entry into the internship only to those who can afford the time and money (*Ibid*: 279). Just a decade ago interviewees were in a similar situation. It is noteworthy that what these over 30s interviewees have in common is that they have the pre-Webtoon experience, having prepared for competitions led by publishers, while they exchanged experiences with their peer group or took education courses or professional training in the animation and design department of the universities. At the same time, their works were considered at professional levels in various assessments in peer groups such as an amateur club and an amateur cartoon society (Su-Bin; Jin-Ah). Two of them also said that they had received an intensive training for a long time from the publication cartoon magazines (Jin-Ah; Mi-Soo; Hee-Jin; Sun-Min). However, they all became losers who could not penetrate the tough print-cartoon competitions, even though they tried very hard considering all the possible ways-for example, by quitting their job or cutting worktime; by drawing illegal adult cartoons to get skilled; by dropping out of college or university, even though parents disapproved. In this process, many suffered economic hardship. The most heartbreaking example, one of the interviewees said: she lived without a penny in her pocket while she had prepared for the competitions and almost tried to give up the activity of drawing cartoon in extreme despair of ever earning a living (Jin-Ah). Another interviewee also says,

> "Drawing Webtoons in the competition is intense. Indeed! Amateurs can feel as equals when competing. It (the platform) provides a low entry barrier. Meanwhile,

for the competitions in the print cartoons industry, […] only a few who already took specialised training applied for cartoon competitions in the old days. Probably, like amateurs who have spent a lot of life energy already. At first, I had prepared for it, too, without knowing much about it, but later I realised, 'I ain't ready.' So I dropped out of college and went to a private institute. I bulldosed through ... just dreaming of [sic.] a professional cartoonist freed me to draw cartoons every day, almost for one year. And then I took a break and went into the Korean army, but after one year, discharged from the service due to illness – intervertebral disk. I still have some back pain; even I had an operation for the disc" (Su-Bin).

In the print era, because such cartoonists have not published a print cartoon publically, and they were not accepted into the institutional field of print comics, there were no official critics or public opinion before the advent of the Web. Thus, as the cartoon industry's reserve forces or losers falling behind in the competitions, they spent their whole youth, while their comics, the artwork of their youth, were only evaluated as better-than-amateur. However, like every dog has his/her day, fortune finally knocked at their door in turn. Since the advent of the Webtoons, these interviewees, who were regarded as a little comic geek or a serious fan of 'participatory culture' (Jenkins, 2006) have started to gain attention at relatively fast speed in the Web space, compared to the general user.

Besides, with the emergence of Webtoons, which are provided free of charge by web portals, cartoons have become recognised as 'free content' in Korean society. Since most Webtoon readers who are accustomed to free comic services will not abandon their familiarity in consumption, it led to the collapse of not only comics magazines but also comic books overall (Jung and Lee, 2016). Webtoons is sometimes published as a comic book, but there are only a few examples. Thus, the risk to the existing business base is also continuously increasing (Han and Jeon, 2011: 84). However, what is more noteworthy, as interviews also point out, is that after Webtoon become popularised, comic magazines discontinued one after another and only one magazine is left now. Since most of the publishing comic book contests were conducted by those magazine publishers, the contest based on paper comics has disappeared (Su-Bin; Mi-Soo). It left the platform as the only way to make a debut as a cartoonist. Above all, since portal platforms were

monopolising the distribution of Webtoons by 2015, thus winning the portal competition has become a symbolic capital necessary for a bright future as a Webtoonist. That is, in the situation in which published book cartoons are diagnosed as 'dead,' the only opportunity to become professionals (not only for amateurs but also for apprentices of the cartoon industry) is to participate in the online contests of Web portals. In other words, even the professionals, who have previously signed a contract with publishing companies or other cultural intermediaries to work as a paid labour or as a freelancer, must compete against amateurs in order to become a new creative labour force – now called the 'Webtoonist'. By the same token, generally over the course of this competition, and specifically during their participation in amateur-oriented Webtoon contests, those professionals are also expected to respect and comply with the rules and beliefs of new amateurism, such as the 'non-compensation' self-actualising character of amateur activity.

As we have seen above, Web portals give only a few winning opportunities to become commissioned cartoonists. As competition has become more intense, hundreds of amateurs now post their Webtoons online each week, "hoping to attract a big enough fan group to push them into the big time – a contract with one of the major Internet portals" (AFP, 2015). The contest even romanticises as the place of 'open' competition where 'passion' and 'creativity' of amateurs compete with each other, and such games (sometimes held with the cooperation of the government) stimulate the competitive spirit. Again, it is necessary to keep an eye on the way in which the Webtoon platform attracts amateurs. 'I can be a cartoonist, too' (나도 만화가), the catchphrase of the contest banner of the Webtoon, seems to reflect the principle of Foucault's 'government of the self' (Foucault, Davidson, and Burchell, 2010; Lemke, 2011). The sentence might mean nothing to an average user, but for the amateurs who are full of desire to express their artistic capacity, it is an important deciding factor of their future.[67] On the other hand, for a professional who has been re-positioned an amateur, the same catchphrase may also denote the goal s/he wants to attain through a struggle for recognition by the platforms.

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[67] In this sense, amateurs can be understood as 'entrepreneur of the self' that refers to the form of 'self-government.' The entrepreneurship here is not only "a mechanical process of allocation and production" but also "involves an 'element of alertness'", such as a "speculative, creative or innovative attitude" to catch opportunities in a competitive environment (Kirzner, 1973: 33 as cited in Simons and Masschelein, 2008: 53)

How to survive in the Infinite Competition

Regardless of venues, these contests and competitions organised by portal companies have common characteristics. It is an individual and self-governing project in general. During this race, since every participation is activated by the 'free will' of individual amateurs, the development of the performance (organisation of production activity) depends only on the individual's capacity. Unlike the expert/professional-centered cultural production in which the capital's planning, deliberation, and assessment decide its level and production, the cultural production of amateurs is entirely determined by an individual's capacity and effort. National 'Creative Economy' policy and the platform's marketing can stimulate them to some extent, but they are free from such hierarchy and power. In classical economics, the self-organising system has been evaluated to have negative consequences due to the difficulty of applying on it a market order such as central planning by a government. However, Krugman (1996) and Hayek (1973/2012) interpret positively the actor's spontaneity in the free market and appreciate the potential of the self-organising system which is made up of voluntary participation of actors. When it is compared with other Web 2.0 platforms, this Webtoon platform can be characterised as focusing on the distinctiveness of a single author. For example, Wikipedia has a convergent system in which random people collectively participate in one activity to perform a commons-based project with a specific purpose, whereas the cultural production of 'Webtoon' has a dispersal structure layered with an individual's 'self-organising' projects (c.f. Maturana&Varela, 1991) in a spontaneous order. Therefore, the contents of the Webtoon production vary as it focuses more interest on specific objects and on an individual hobby, principles of life and cherished values, not entirely affected by the industry's marketing trends.

In fact, the genres of the Webtoon have been regarded as even wider than published book-cartoons. For this reason, the quality of its cultural products cannot be standardised and, the quality of its evaluation cannot be processed efficiently (c.f. Park, 2009). The production of the cartoon by these amateurs is done essentially through an integration of an individual's ideas, creativity, artistry, knowledge in the image directing, which makes

the level or the quality of each project greatly different from each other. This reminds us again that we should notice, as one of the interviewees (Su-Bin) already suggests, the widespread recognition of 'Webtoon' expertise can be different from what the previous comic book industry would have had. In the process of diversifying the backgrounds of participating players, Jin-Ah, who watched "one high school student suddenly make his debut as a professional Webtoonist when he gained attention on the platform," said in the context of the Web portals, "winning" is simply not determined by ability in making traditional paper cartoons.

Being a lonely, self-taught craftsman

Of course, innovating technicity and artistry through everyday repeated production still remains a basic strategy for amateurs to survive competition. When a person keeps producing cartoons enthusiastically and puts a lot of effort into that, the technological skills and the expertise of (cartoon) directing can be improved to the degree of completion. So, the question is, how do they achieve that innovation through amateur activities during the competition? In the previous published comics industry, it was assumed for such innovations, long-term non-institutional forms of training and mentoring for apprentices and disciple practice under famous cartoonists were required. In this course, amateurs were taught how to manipulate the image-directing techniques, and the process of making cartoons required a sequence of manual labour to deal with physical materials. For example, after drawing a figure with a pencil on squared manuscript paper, putting pen-touch with a brush pen and a painting marker, and then adding screen-tones on top of them to apply textures and shades (Jeung and Yoon, 2009: 11). This work of learning the use of the materials and renewing them to fit body movements is necessarily repeated. However, as Webtoons become more popular, the skills to manipulate these tasks nonmaterially becomes important.

The computer-based production process gets simplified in many ways. For example, it is needless to purchase, store, and manage physical materials such as pens mentioned earlier,

screen tones, and so on. It also means that physical constraints in the workspace have disappeared. If you have a computer, you can work anywhere. Further, there could be a variety of ways to implement ideas into images by using various design techniques provided by computer programs or software such as the Adobe Photoshop. Best of all, the way to modify the image has been revamped. For paper cartoons, the cumbersome work of redrawing the page again or putting the cuts separately on the paper is necessary to make corrections. In the case of Webtoons, re-importing previous images stored in different layers using Photoshop's history functions is virtually effortless (c.f. Jung and Yoon, 2009).

> "In the elementary school, I drew it with a ballpoint pen in the practice pads. In the middle school, I drew it on paper. In the time of publishing Manwha, I also learned how to do it though the publishing education by the help of professionals. After the advent of Webtoon, I became a middle-aged student and to get acquainted with Webtoon, I just self-studied how to deal with those software and tablet PC. The technique of painting has evolved, but the content is the same as what I feel while living my life." (Sun-Min)

Rather than having nostalgia for the days when comics were paper-based, the interviewees tried to learn the skills required for working with computers through 'self-study.' Most of them showed positive attitudes toward technological change. Even having previously worked on drawing cartoons with paper, after the production of the Webtoon, "I do not do any analog work in consideration of the effective and cost aspects of the image production process" (Jin-Ah). In fact, since many of the interviewees in their 20s majored in fine art and design, they did not have difficulty in producing digital images using computers or tablet PCs. Rather, they have had difficulty getting used to the newness of "the media format" (Jin-Ah) and "the directing methods of Webtoons" (Hyo-Ree) which were different from existing published comics. Where the method of arranging the images vertically (called 'scrolling cartoon') is the trend in digital culture, the individual working methods of progressing, those of aligning and adjusting the image cuts to match the story, and at the same time, taking into account the characteristics of the web browser and the mobile screen have all become important. Bo-Ra, who "learned

how to draw Webtoons during the contest," says "it was not difficult to edit the cuts because I worked with the 'scrolling'," and explains that in scrolling directing the cartoonist "should not line up the cuts (like the way of the print cartoon), rather you just stretch it (Webtoon) downwards by placing space between each cut - slightly, spatially apart."

The difference between Webtoon and print cartoon production lies in how the readers take in the content. Print cartoons show two pages at a time, and the reader reads from left to right. In general, cartoonists of print cartoons lay out various cuts on these two pages to deliver their message (c.f. Jeon, 2008: 197). The cartoonists thinks carefully about the space between each box, the size of each frame and the cut right before the page is turned. But Webtoons allow one cut per to be shown on the screen at a time, with the reader reading the content from top to bottom. This is similar to a storyboard that shows the overall direction that image production should take. In using the vertical scroll method, the reader moves the screen at his will. Therefore, the effects of how each frame is laid out to emphasise certain intentions of the Webtoonists are decreased, while the participation of the reader is encouraged. To borrow the expression of McLuhan (1964/1994), it becomes 'cooler.' The scroll method which is at the heart of viewing Webtoons is a way of appreciating the work that came into being as the computer mouse usage became more widespread. As the Internet developed more applications, this method removes the need to click on the scroll bar of each text page and makes reading easier. Webtoonists spotted this and laid out the texts in a long vertical form to reduce the inconvenience of clicking to turn pages. While this is the most widely used method in Webtoons, it is still not adopted in Web comics of the US, Europe or Japan where original print materials are simply scanned, or the image 'cut' is the focus in delivery (Yun, 2013).

Where the second finger is used to scroll the mouse also brings about a change in Webtoons content. If the two-dimensional movement of the hand creates the movement of the mouse, then the vertical movement is what operates the vertical scroll (c.f. Seo and Ham, 2010: 66, 68). It is more natural and comfortable for our fingers to move up and down rather than left to right. The movement of the fingers is detected directly through the movement of the cursor, and this is where the viewpoint is targeted, making the

Webtoon be read by a 'hand-eye,' just like Barthes (1978)' ideal amateur who opens his eyes and ears. Here, Webtoon viewers also open his "senses to sense" by the way "a work works" (cited in Stiegler, 2017a: 13), thus they become the amateur who critically and practically involved in the production of sensations triggered by images of Webtoons. In other words, Webtoons allow a perceptive experience where visual and tactile stimulus become one. By operating both visual and physical senses, the images of the Webtoons are followed. This is the ontological essence of Webtoons.

Moreover, the frames for each image that was one of the defining characteristics of traditional cartoons have been eliminated and instead a blank between images laid out vertically is used (Choi, 2011b: 22, 25). When following the images, the fingers go through an individual exercise, which allows the viewer to see the content as if it were a streaming video (c.f. Seo and Ham, *Ibid*.: 68-71). What is important here is that unlike films or animated films where the producer sets the speed of movement, it is the speed of the user himself that determines the speed of flow in Webtoons. Depending on the speed of the vertical scroll and the variance in acceleration, the viewing time differs for individuals and the movement of images is also different. But the finger movements in all cases must be from top to bottom (since one cannot view the images in reverse order) and therefore this creates a one-way acceptance (c.f. Choi, *Ibid*.; Seo and Ham, *Ibid*.). One has to pull 'down' as if writing big letters with a paint brush. Given the characteristics of the medium that allows for getting immersed in the narrative at once, storytelling becomes more emphasised in Webtoons and image-showing in production is also underlined.

The Web platforms also has a role in defining the media characteristics of Webtoons as the aforementioned scrolling images production. For example, when participating in the Naver Webtoon contest, only ten cartoon images less than 20MB can be uploaded for each Webtoon episode. The horizontal size is also limited to 690 pixels or less, but the vertical size is not limited. Thus, if an amateur wants to upload a cartoon in a long length, there is no choice but to arrange long cuts in one image file vertically. In other words, scrolling production is technically presupposed in the case of contest cartoons. However, this restriction will not limit the creativity of amateurs. Considering that paper cartoons

are also produced within the boundaries of manuscript paper, the artist's imagination can be sufficiently demonstrated in the vertical direction for the scroll reading optimised for the technical condition of the media format. Rather, since such 'scrolling cartoon directing' is an easy way of arranging the images one by one in turn and adjusting the intervals of the pictures, as Bo-Ra said earlier, it is important that the creator can easily find the method of directing by themselves. Indeed, the experience of interviewees shows that these amateurs, mostly working alone, develop their way of directing their creativity through 'self-study.' This is directly opposite to publication comics where colleagues work together under the mentor or the professionals teamed up to produce individual aesthetics or techniques collectively. Thus, Bo-Ra concludes that "there is no rule in Webtoons. There is no standard way of directing, so I have to study for myself. Even after asking other writers after the debut on Daum, the production process was variable."

Drawing of daily fragments

What is remarkable about Webtoons is that a considerable number of contest entries are so-called 'daily life' cartoons (Korean: 일상툰). Some of the amateurs want to tell their own story, for instance, even strategically making self-narration and the cartoons overlap (Se-Hun; Jin-Ah; Hyo-Ree; Yoon-Ah; Tae-Ree), say that it is more convenient to make daily life cartoons than genre-specific cartoons concerning consistent cartoon production. The interesting thing it that, since amateur cartoonists become the character of the cartoon, they act out their own life in the cartoon. The '0.5 life' is a typical example, which has appeared on the Naver's 'Best Challenge' competition from June 21, 2016, to the date of this writing, August 4, 2017. The amateur cartoonist describes his intention of work as to "define happiness in 53 sq.ft. room," by drawing a pictorial diary of his daily life, whose living is in a 53 sq.ft. room in a shared house, dreaming of being a Webtoonist. Interestingly, he personifies himself as an animal (a dog or bear) and directs the whole narrative development from a first-person perspective, while being shown as the main character.

The Figure 16 is a part of the second episode that he posted on June 28, 2016, titled "Freshly-cooked pot of rice." In the episode, he cooked rice in the pot for the first time, and questioned "is it necessary to simmer after boiling? It's too boring to wait." Then he asked his mother, and his mother replied, "finishing is the most important step. You need to let the rice stand after cooking so that it makes the rice shiny." In the dialogue, he eventually realised, "there is nothing meaningless. I wish now is the time for simmering my life." For this short narration, where the amateur Webtoonist's sincere attitude toward everyday life was seen, 992 people gave a rating of 9.95 out of 10 (of August 4th, 2017), and some of the readers left comments, such as "I sympathise with the words "the time of simmering my life", "The drawing style is so cute. It's funny even though it covers a small routine of life", and "I have been living penniless for two months. I am particularly depressed today, but this is comforting me. Thank you!" Likewise, despite the fact their life is reconstructed as fiction, the emotional exchanges between the audiences and the authors are actively performed in the process of emphasising daily life as a dramatic element.

Some argue that it is unprecedented such trivial stories on one's private life and memoirs have become a popular genre in existing cartoons and point out the most obvious reason why Webtoon is distinguished from previous paper-book comics in terms of style is the appearance of these daily life cartoons (Kim, 2011b; Ryu and Lee, 2013). This new genre, the daily life cartoons drawn in the form of Korean Webtoons is the fourth most commonly produced (432 as of August 3rd, 2017), following Fantasy (648), Drama (480), and Gag (456) on the Naver's 'Best Challenge' competition; it is often referred to as 'the slice of life' in Western Web culture (Line, 2017). At first glance, for amateurs who draw the fragments of every day, creating Webtoons seems another way of keeping a diary. What it reminds us of here is then, the 'late' Foucault (1988) used to regard the journal as one of the 'self-technology,' while he found out the origin of self-technology, self-consisting of the aforementioned aesthetic ethics from the Greeks. He analysed the changes caused by the tradition of 'self-care' to subjectivity through the works of literature of ancient Greeks and Romans from his lectures in the 1980s introduced in such works as 'the technology of the self' (*Ibid*.) and 'Hermeneutics of the Subject' (Foucault, 2004). In this context, he argues that it could be a method to configure oneself by liberal

aesthetic ethics rather than the forceful way to make people dependent on some universal norms. "Technologies of the self", thus, "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault, 1988: 18). His argument suggests, questions around amateur digital production, such as Webtoon as the self-technology, can also be explored with particular emphasis given to the ethical, aesthetical, and political dimensions of amateur activity.

In the case of Jin-Ah, who won the competition through the daily life cartoon production for several years says, "I did not intend this, but I put my personal story in the centre as I talked about the cartoonist who raised a cat. I did not say it was my story. But the people who saw it, the atmosphere of the cartoon seemed blue, despite my gags in it. I think my feelings have been transmitted to it. There was also a reader who sent his personal story by e-mail that he thought about his hard time in the past while having read my Webtoons. That was remarkable. As you know, we do not like to share this kind of personal story with each other, even with friends." Her experience suggests that although Webtoon is a kind of *'mnemotechnologies'* (Stiegler*, 2010a, 2017b: 65), unlike the past diary, it allows trans-individual activities between authors and readers through the networks of communication. The "emotion" of the reader, awakened from a very personal story, is conveyed to the author through another 'self-technology' (e-mail in this case), which touches off another "emotion." These technologies that "stubbornly pushed us to the others" become the medium of finding out the "emotion that remains incomprehensible in ourselves" (Agamben, 2005: 19). The significance of the cultural, political impact of Webtoons is in that it demonstrates digital technologies are being used on a daily life-basis as the expression medium can be understood as the trans-individual of the collective that makes individuals intervene in so far as they carry a charge of pre-individual reality (Barthélémy, 2012: 230). That is why this research also paid attention to the Webtoon platform as a major archive formed by amateur creations and made by amateurs. It is as if the allegories were created by individuals who see contemporary society as swimming in the ocean like a school of fish. And this sea which has been filled with infinite passions and emotion, becomes the technical condition of the trans-individual activities. One

popular Webtoonist left the similar comment in an interview with the TV journalist, "after the advent of Webtoon, the barriers of published comics were lowered and the sea of cartoons was finally created" (Kim, 2016c). Whether this huge sea can be reinvented to advocate the diversity and differences in the micro-politics of every day activities remains an issue.

Meanwhile, it cannot be overlooked that most of the amateur Webtoons found in open contests often express depressing aspects of everyday life, but always portray it comically. Thus, it might be natural that the futuristic apocalypse imagery and social criticism made by the masters of the genre in published cartoons, along with severe emotional messages, are difficult to find in amateur open contest entries. Due to having the freedom to reapply as often as they like, most amateurs post 'small stories' consisted of conversational stories and story fragments (c.f. Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2009) with relatively short runs until they begin to receive attention from the public. For these reasons, some people sometimes criticise the lightness of amateur Webtoons because their artwork just remains 'comic.' Some argue that the self-narration Webtoon, being less developed than the paper cartoon with the 'big story,' reconstructs reality by reflecting the author's world view and political view and lacks literary value (Ryu and Lee, 2013: 139). It is worth noting how the explosion of small stories produced through such technology of the self has brought changes of social and political circumstances in today's Korean society.

To do so, it is necessary to pay attention to Hiroki Azuma (2009)'s research related to this topic, who analysed an amateur production centering on the second creation seen in Japanese Otaku culture that is derived from postmodern consumerism. According to him, in the Otaku culture of Japan, which is formed based on the database system of the Web, not only the originals that include "grand narratives" reflecting the author's world view is consumed. 'Small narratives', which are fragments of grand narratives, can prompt consumers' attention and allow audiences to actively to participate in the secondary creations; mostly produced by Otakus amateurs who are revising or reorganising the original work (*Ibid.*: 31). Azuma further argues that all kinds of digital texts tend to be accumulated in the database system as information, regardless of whether it is the original or derivative creation, thus may be consumed at the same value to consumers (*Ibid.*: 60-

63). As a result, "decline of the grand narrative," (Azuma, 2009: 28) which is mentioned as a characteristic of postmodernism by Lyotard (1979/1984), is generalised in its cultural context. Otaku culture is thus regarded as a derivative that emerged from a society that can be characterised as a failure of grand narratives. Here, after continuing to consume the small narratives, the audiences who are able to outline the grand narratives of the originals (database system) are able to create small stories with their own hands (Azuma, 2009: 66) freely, and as a result, a mass of 'small narratives' push out the political ideology of grand narrative from the system (*Ibid*: 72-73). In this sense, Azuma claims that the otaku sensitivity is close to cynicism (*Ibid*.: 73). Can these otaku amateur products - many parodies that lead audiences rather than grand narratives - be compared to Korea's daily life toon?

There is also a rebuttal that the increase of production and consumption of small stories is a result of a drive in micro politics to resist big discourse. According to Ryu and Lee (2013), the huge historical and political themes that dominated the modern era (particularly the 20th century), including liberation, patriotism, modernisation, unification, nationalism, and democracy, has also dominated mainstream culture in South Korea (*Ibid.*: 140-141). As a result, an average [ordinary] lower middle-class citizen's personalities and their interests of daily life were relatively poorly represented. However, in the early days when the web appeared, the Webtoons that were introduced to the public through the personal websites of the amateur cartoonists, in contrast, brought out the subjects that has not been light before. Since the production and consumption are done in a relatively private space, these amateur cartoons tend to be subject to individual daily life, feelings about it, and self-awareness about themselves, until consumption of Webtoons through web portal became universal (*Ibid.*: 129). Their comics are called 'episode-cartoon' and 'essay-cartoon,' and they became the origins of 'daily life cartoon,' which is now one of the mainstream genres on Web portals (*Ibid.)*.

When analysing the works of interviewees who won the contest for the production of the daily toon, most of their themes were about personal goals of life, personal experiences

about small events and incidents at a level that would never be politically controversial or socially challenged, that anyone might have experienced in daily living. Whether they illustrate personal impressions of food that they eat every day (Eun-Jung), comic portrayals of the twists and turns with cats (Tae-Ree; Jin-Ah), or record the day-to-day work of young people in their twenties, who are dreaming of being cartoonists (Hyo-Ree; Se-Hun) and so on. Since these tiny stories are serialised for a few years at least once or twice a week, each story seems to have been scattered like debris, but, in the process of accumulating stories on the platform, the process of growing one person naturally becomes apparent. Here, individual amateur dreams of "realising himself as a comic artist," performs a repetitive Webtoon work, 'draws' himself in work, has help from the audience to comment sometimes, and pursues the completeness of the work. In this sense, daily life cartoons seem to be a good example of digital *technê*, as a technological activity that cannot be directly evaluated by artistry nor either simply by craftsmanship (c.f. Shiner, 2001: 19-20). In this context, there is a significant difference between the Otaku culture and the Webtoon culture, even though they are both based on amateur productions. If Otaku culture is aimed at database consumption or reproduction through consumption of a mixture of original text and secondary creation, Webtoon as 'mnemotechnologies' (Stiegler, 2017b), represented by daily life cartoons, is aimed to be produced only as original texts (original works emphasising daily life replacing imitation of the mainstream media). The life of the author is the original text. The viewers of Webtoon reconstitute their reality by using the routines found in the Webtoon, as seen in previous comments left by them. In the contest where the overwhelming dominance of awakening everydayness over fictiveness, the production and consumption of daily life cartoons shows social sculptures of small stories that are sometimes dull and meaningless and demonstrates the trans-individuation of Korean society today as the whole meaning of being is gathered and condensed.

4. When the Amateur Becomes a Creative Worker

After competition, prizes for the victory

So far, twelve years on since the birth of Webtoon platforms, over 120,000 amateur cartoonists have attempted to produce an official series for the platform, but only 0.03% of them are known to sign a formal contract as a professional (Park, 2009). Those who succeeded in being promoted from an amateur to a professional through such competitions are called 'Webtoonists,' a word combining 'Webtoon' and 'cartoonist' and this job category is seen as a new promising group of artists. Their income varies widely depending on their popularity, but those who become famous Webtoonists are known to rake in hundreds of millions of Won (more than 60,000 GBP) for their work. In general, their sources of income can be summarised in two ways; 1) money received from the Web portal platform in exchange for publishing the Webtoon one or two times a week, and 2) the revenue from selling their copyright work. First of all, in the case of the creator's fee, the portal usually pays 100,000 ~ 300,000 won per episode (Su-Bin; Bo-Ra; Jin-Ah; Mi-Soo; Tae-Ree). However, some payment increases in consideration of the commercial achievements of each work every quarter (Park, 2009: 136). In the case of Webtoonists who receive some recognition, they win 3 milion-5 million won per month, and popular Webtoonists receive 10 million-15 million won per month (*Ibid*.: 143-144). In other words, the average monthly income is generated differently from 1 million to 15 million in proportion to the degree of experience and popularity.

Further, Webtoons is regarded as the most significant sources of innovative ideas in the Korean creative industry today. Thus, a handful of star Webtoonists make money not only by selling Webtoons to the platform but also by selling the copyright of these Webtoons to other industries, in which they are turned into films, character goods, games, animations, TV programs, stage shows, etc. A Webtoonist earns 500, 300, 2700, 100, 5 million won in revenue respectively when they are selling copyright to character goods,

movies, radio dramas and games industry respectively (*Ibid*.: 143-144). But, so-called "star Webtoonists', such as Kang Full and Yoon Tae-ho, can make a huge profit from selling their original copyrights, and their works have recently been remade into various forms of other media. The recent popularity of films based on Webtoons is derived from the success of previous works such as *Apartment*, *Hello Schoolgirl, Neighbour*, and *26 Years*, based on works created by Kang. Yoon's *Moss* was remade into a film in 2010, which drew attention from around 3.4 million moviegoers, becoming the top-grossing film among the Webtoons-based works. According to research by the South Korean government, copyright sales of such South Korean comics comprised 18.8 percent of the nation's total cartoons market, as can be powerfully illustrated with one source for multi-use (OSMU) strategy in creative industries (Chung, 2013). In this context, the Webtoon platform can be understood as a new type of digital properties market for the supply of individual IPs on the commissioned Webtoon channel, which can provide all the temps the platform needs and eliminate the hassle of dealing with multiple vendors of IPs and intermediaries. Here, the most critical point is that, in this competitive environment, the hierarchies and gap of the income among Webtoonist are made. Although the popularity of Webtoons has been overwhelming, and Webtoon content has sold overseas, the revenues of most of the Webtoonists who are now freelancers remain in the doldrums.

It has been controversial that all Webtoons, whether they are amateur or not, are the very source of the online advertising revenue, the largest source of income for the web portal platform. It is even well known that the platform gets an online advertising income in proportion to such numbers and the Webtoons posted on the Web portals have a minimum of 400,000 clicks per episode (Park, 2009: 145). Instead of offering content to users for free, such portals allocate commercial ads for each Webtoon page and get a pre-paid or post-paid ad income by the number of ad impressions. Typical advertising costs are set at 1000 won to 1500 won per 1000 impressions. These online advertising revenues also come from amateur comics published during the competition. As a result, it brought on a deluge of public criticism that the debut system through amateur-based competition has been used to exploit amateur and newcomer Webtoonist creative desire and to make the cartoon production environment more competitive, while the compensation and treatment

for their effort have not improved (KOCCA, 2016d: 17-18, 21). Some argued that the distribution of the profits to the authors should be readjusted so that the authors can maintain their motivation and produce quality works (Song, 2012a: 135). This controversies over the matter followed skeptical critics of UGC and the social media platform claim that these are new models of the cognitive capitalist market (Fuchs, 2011; Allmer, Sevignani, and Prodnik, 2015). Within the framework of cognitive capitalism (Bauwens and Kostakis 2014; Moulier-Boutang, 2011; Hardt, 2010), it could be also understood as the 'digital social factory', where Webtoons as information (data, knowledge, design, or culture) produced by amateurs and users are 'simultaneously voluntarily given and unwanted, enjoyed and exploited' (Terranova, 2004: 74). Here, amateur creations are exclusively privatised and then commodified as a means of generating profit in the pre-programmed competition by the platform in some ways.

"Because the system itself is based on the competition, there is no compensation for the episodes that were drawn during the competition. Even in the case of the Webtoonist who won the competition (like me), the platform does not reflect the popularity (from the competition) when it comes to budgeting for the cost of the work. It's just fixed. The problem is that Webtoonists do not share such problems with each other because we do not have any chance to communicate. The platform does not like it, to be honest. So some of the weboonists got angry. One of them says, even if we cannot form a union, let's meet and talk." (Jin-Ah)

"Usually, a Webtoonist working with Daum renews their contract each season, including 25 episodes. On the face of it, according to the platform, doing so can make the Webtoonist less tired and better rested in the renewal period, and increase efficiency in the work [laugh with a sneer]. But the real purpose is to lay off Webtoonists in case their Webtoons decline in popularity. It's the best excuse for dismissal." (Su-Bin)

The debate about the web portals' unfair treatment of Webtoonists was exposed through media reports. Freelance Webtoonists hired by two major portal sites, Daum and Naver, had received a monthly fee of only 400,000 won, even less than the basic cost of living. In an article on December 11th, 2011, in the *Korean Economy* (Kim, 2011a) entitled "400,000 Won Cartoonists," two Webtoonists who demanded anonymity were serialised in Daum' and Naver, the largest Webtoon distribution centers in Korea, said' "publishing Webtoon on the Web portals is not a good opportunity, indeed." They then accused the poor working conditions that it would be difficult for them to make a living by getting paid only 400,000 Won a month from the web portals, and said "people think, cartoon-making does not cost money, but I can not do it without the workshop, I have to pay the electricity bill." As the demand for improvement of the labour treatment of amateur creators and rising Webtoonists began to increase through society, new digital platforms that specialise only in Webtoons, not web portals, have emerged and been starting to attract these low-paid and underpaid workers. The new type of Webtoon service providers, such as Lezhin Comics and TopToon have appeared in 2012, with the creator-centered incubating policy and have begun scouting amateurs who have been outstanding in the competitions of the Daum and Naver. Not only amateurs but even Webtoonists who have already made their debut on the portal platform have moved to new platforms, if they are not as satisfying with the income. It was enough to be called the era of the warring states period at that time. Some debut Webtoonists have surged as a result of the addition of the Webtoon services of small- and medium-sised companies (Su-Bin; Jin-Ah).

> "If the monopoly disappears, the portals will recover its sense. Naver and Daum have been the strongest players in the Webtoon market. But now Lezhin has come, Daum has already been screwed by Lezhin, so the PDs hated to talk about it. Naver must feel uneasy, too. They (Web portals) now have such competition to pursue change (Smile)." (Jin-Ah.)

Noteworthy is that as Webtoon is regarded as an important field in Korea's creative industry, competition among platforms has also created a change in the awareness of amateur creations as well as the treatment of Webtoonists. It was possible because the web portals' competitions are exposed to not only the public but also to their competitors,

Interestingly, these competitors are also using Web portal competitions to supply human resources. They just deliver a scout proposal by sending a message or email to successful competitors (Se-Hun). According to another Webtoonist whom I have met, small-sised platforms that offer professional Webtoon services provide at least twice the fees than web portals (Su-Bin). Here, we are reminded of ambivalence toward amateurs' free labour which Terranova (2000) already pointed out. Since 'free labour' means not only unpaid work but also freely given work, "endowed with a sense of autonomy," (Andrejevic 2009: 416) there could be an alternative understanding of amateur exploitation. For example, Andrejevic points out that there is an important distinction to be made between 'user-created content' and 'user-generated data' (*Ibid*.: 418) and insists that it is the latter one only that is extracted under conditions of private ownership and turned into a commodity. Likewise, amateurs who have the private property of their creations, in this case of Webtoon, have decided where they want to go between platforms while having considered the commercial value of their work and labour as demonstrated by amateurs migrating to other platforms. However, it should be noticed, regardless the difference between the platforms, all the platforms stand in the "cartography of power" designed by diverse industrial interests that "seeks to exploit the IP generated by creative labour" (Rossiter, 2006: 41) of Webtoonists. Then, in response, to prevent the outflow of young artists, Web portals have newly established a compensation system for the works of amateur contests, while having increased the minimum guarantee to 2 million won per month for the Webtoonist making their debut (KOCCA, 2016d: 17-18, 21).

Competitive compensation

The fact is that without amateurs' Webtoon production, portals such as Naver, Daum, and Line would be nothing substantial, empty, just another business selling search engines or messenger apps. Let's make it clear: Amateurs produce all contents. It is impossible for the platform. It takes only the intermediary role. Thus, neither the 'orthodox power' of professionalism (Bourdieu, 1984) nor 'the Vectorlist class' (Scholz, 2012), the new ruling class in the digital/creative industry, can dominate the space of Web 2.0 for

amateurs' productions. In this Webtoons platform, since it has absorbed the principles of UGC productions, the power of the cultural production, in some ways, is changed and belongs to the empowered users and amateur creators. As only personal choice can create amateurs' Webtoon productions, as said above, it can be stopped for personal reasons. For the Webtoon UGC platform, which should increase the production of amateur contents maximally and infinitely, the 'continuity of amateur Webtoon production' or 'deep immersion' in the activity is a problem connected directly to the growth of the company. As the marketplace is globalised, new markets, new workforces for Webtoonists and new competitors are making the portal companies look for ways to adapt creator-friendly compensation policies. Web portals try to overcome this issue through so-called 'competitive compensation' programs for both commissioned cartoonists and amateur creators.

Page Profit Share

First, web portals such as Daum and Naver have suggested that they will add unique features on the menu for Webtoon creators, which allows them to add online advertising to their Webtoons themselves so that they can generate revenue directly. It is up to the author to decide which online advertisements and promotional contents are applied on each Webtoon page. Naver first created the PPS (Page Profit Share) program in March 2013. In this program, while creators and platforms share responsibility for the management of ads on each Webtoon's web page, the revenue generated from the advertising is divided between the creator and the platform at a ratio of 70:30. In the month after this system was introduced, there was a commissioned cartoonist who made a profit of 78 million won (Kim, 2015a). Notably, amateur creators have also been able to insert so called 'textual ads' directly into the bottom of their cartoons and earn revenue from them during the competition. Amateur creators pick up one of the ads that fit with their work, from the list suggested by the platform and have half of the ad revenue determined by the exposure of the ad. For example, an amateur who wants to depict what happens when s/he ate a chicken, chooses one of the ads related to the chicken, and, after

publication, check out directly from his or her own management page how much his readers have clicked on the ad to ascertain the overall profitability (Kim, 2015a; Hong, 2013; Jung, 2013).

Pledge for amateurs

On the other hand, Naver has introduced sponsorship systems for amateur creators. First of all, Naver Webtoon platform, which provides a Korean-based service, has been operating so-called "Potential-Up" supporting system for amateurs who are active in the 'Best Challenge' competition from January 2016, saying that "we want to develop the powers latent within amateur creators" (Kim, 2016d). This system can be understood as a kind of scholarship. First of all, Naver 's Webtoon service department select 5 of the amateur creators who have uploaded at least 6 Webtoons in the best challenge. The selected amateurs then receive a scholarship of 6 million won for two months, and one of them will be chosen as a commissioned Webtoonist who will publish Webtoons officially in the Daily Webtoon service. Also, Line (2016b), one of Naver's global Webtoon services, made its patronage program for content producers, so-called 'pledge support.' The Line started to directly support up to 300 'qualified' creators, up to US$1,000 per month each, from the beginning of August 2016. In this program, any creator, not only professionals but also amateurs, publishing comics on the Line platform would get ongoing monthly payments. But, like everything, there was one condition. It is an incentive offer, only for "qualified creators." Creators who reach a certain popularity and page view, as seen below. To 'qualify' for Webtoon's pledge, the cartoonists need to: a) update at least twice a month and b) have 3k+ subscribers (all regions) and have 10k+ US monthly page views.

Crowdfunding for amateurs

Further, to support more amateurs, Line introduced a crowdfunding program in August 2016. It has teamed up with Patreon, one of the popular crowdfunding platforms. It was a very easy job to do, just another intermediary activity for Line. The Line just matches amateurs with the Patreon, without any efforts to set up its monetary system on the platform. Once, contents' IP address links to a page on the Patreon website, it allows fans to donate a certain amount of money each time the cartoonist produces something. Then, Patreon takes a 5% commission, and give the rest of the donation money to the cartoonist. This digital monetary model which was formed by mutual help between two Web platforms allows amateurs to obtain funding from their fans, so-called patrons, on a recurring basis or per work. According to Line, this co-work funding program is a ticket for showing its goodwill to amateurs. Line insists both Patreon and Webtoon that "are creator-friendly platforms dedicated to fostering new talent and helping creators monetise their work in the digital realm" because it still grants amateur creators full ownership of their IP.

However, taking everything into consideration critically, these competitive compensation projects on the Webtoon platforms mentioned above are a finely tuned engine in which the attention to the amateur on the ranking system can be turned into real money. As the whole process of it is visualised as the index of numbers (e.g. subscribers, view counts, and clicks on ads), it is shared as the tacit knowledge, approving whether the amateurs are 'qualified' not. And the most important thing is that both the platforms and amateurs rely on not only this index but also on each other, as the donation to amateurs increases as the profit by collecting the commission rises. They set the same goal, seeking users' attention, together. This 'obligatory symbiotic' (neither can exist without the other) relation between amateur and platform builds consensus about the fairness of the commissions. Here, the amateur reward system of the Webtoon platform follows the logic of the 'attention economy' (Goldhaber, 1997, 2006; Terranova, 2012) that allows the economic value of the awards to be determined according to how much attention is drawn. It is because the amount of compensation is measured by the number of views and subscribers on the web page and the number of clicks on the online ad that is attached to the Webtoon.
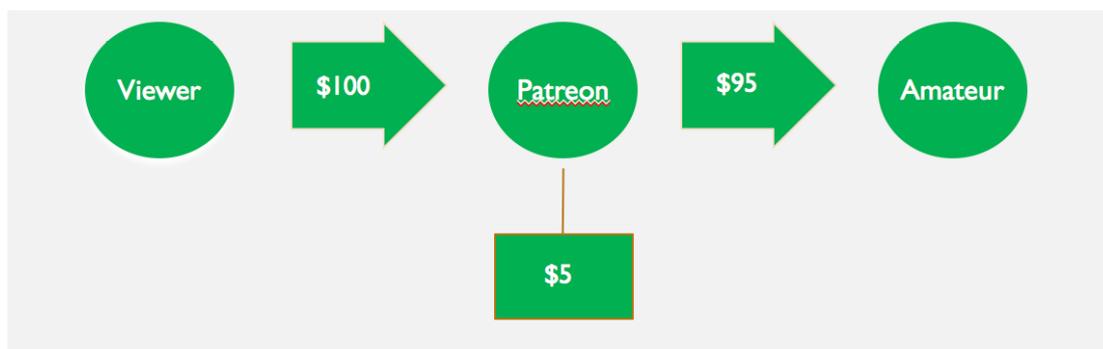
Table 3 The process of crowdfunding projects for amateur creators

Above all, amateurs themselves can judge the value of their work by measuring those numbers, so that the free activity becomes more inclusive of commercialism. As a result, there is also a greater likelihood that amateurs may establish their identity as self-enterprise-artist or self-employment-producer themselves, regardless of the success or failure of the competition. In other words, such 'attentional assemblages' of the Webtoon platform, with 'automated forms of measurement' (Terranova, 2012: 2) in above competitive compensation projects, enable not only platforms but also creators to begin to pay attention to and engage with the marketisation and commercialisation of Webtoons autonomously. The trend of Webtoon production can lead to attention-seeking and competing with others, exposing the nature of players in it, self-interested, calculative 'neo-liberal' subjects, although these players, amateurs, originally stated motivations came from their 'pure love' for culture and art. Thus, we cannot help discussing the issue around the programming of 'competitive compensation' of the platform is deeply related to the program of subjectivisation of artists.

This skepticism reminds us of Berardi (2009)'s concern on "the progressive mentalisation of working process, and the consequent enslavement of the soul" (*Ibid*.: 24), which expands discussion of Foucault's biopolitics. According to him, capital's latest approach, "putting the soul to work," has caused the new form of alienation. Especially once our desiring energy is trapped in the trick of self-enterprise; thus economic rules regulate our effective investments, our attention is captured in the precariousness of virtual networks. Then we may ask if every fragment of mental activity must be transformed into capital

as he diagnoses, what psychopathological implications of the subjugation of amateurs' soul to digital work processes?

Fear and insecurity: risks of the game winning

Then, what is the Webtoon creators' reaction to this shift? There are serious questions among Webtoonists relating to the work conditions that professional Webtoonists have to deal with after their debut on the platform. For example, both physical and emotional stress can result from communication with readers. In contrast to the fact that most of the workers in the creative industry do not communicate directly with consumers, they are dealing directly with users through the platforms. Due to various incidents, most of the interviewees had realised that their occupational status as Webtoonists was unstable, that of second-class artists who give up privacy in exchange for fame.

"I have a fear of comments. This fear of a comments-tsunami. Webtoonists are not public figures or even authorised cartoonists; they're in an ambiguous position. Thus, audiences easily concentrate their fire on us, responding immediately whenever we put up Webtoons. At first, I thought I ought to endure all of these things because I'm the author… I'm the cartoonist…" (Jung-Hwa).

"Once, one high-profile Webtoonist's depression gained attention. [Researcher: You mean X?] Yes. She received psychiatric treatment for a while because of the malicious comments. As far as I know, she never wanted to be a professional Webtoonist. She just drew and posted some 'Cooking' Webtoons on her blog, but suddenly [because of the popularity of her Webtoons] she could get a job for Naver Webtoons. After she had started, the massive attention gave her serious stress." (Yon-Hee)

"After I started, my father read the comments on my Webtoons very carefully. The thing is, I always get a lot of malicious comments. The other day, I saw that my

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father had left one comment between the malicious comments. It made me not only happy but also sad, and a little bit bitter. My papa said (in his comment) that he loves to see this Webtoonist working hard. Yes, he said it like that. [Researcher comment: Interviewee makes a sad face]" (Mi-Soo)

They also noted that, unlike traditional publishers, Webtoon platforms provide no protection or safeguards for creators: "No discipline. There is no father who can take care of us." Since Webtoons are produced for free, there is no regulation and control; the portals are only tempting to allure Webtoonists to produce more. It became clear to some professional Webtoonists working with portal companies that some of the so-called 'producers' (or, in short, 'PD') who take charge of managing Webtoonists have little expertise, especially in comparison with the traditional cultural intermediaries. One of the interviewees criticises his producer, mentioning that the producer does not have similar [embodied] cultural tastes or engage in any practices related to cartoons (Su-Bin). Another interviewee (Mi-Soo) also mentioned the incompetence of the producers and accused them of non-professionalism in the management of Webtoonists across portal platforms.

"[Reseacher: I heard that there is some staff called 'producers' in such portal companies, who are taking charge of Webtoons and Webtoonists?] Yes. But in the case of Daum, well, I can't say that they are producing anything for us. They don't want to be involved in my work. [Researcher: Doing nothing? Then, that might make you feel free, free from any relation with the company.] Yes. But, the problem is, I feel more responsible, as long as I work free…" (Bo-Ra)

"[Researcher: Do these producers have much experience working in the publishing companies? In book cartoons?] No. They are placed in the 'Webtoon' team after they are hired. They are 'just' employees in the IT area. Alright, let's say that we have some knowledge through cartoons or Webtoons. Did they ever study or like them? Seriously, I mean, ever? I think geeks in the subculture probably know more about Webtoons. The worse thing is, I heard there is a shortage of workers in the

Webtoon team. My producer used to manage up to 40 or 50 Webtoonists himself."
(Su-Bin)

The professional Webtoonist Mi-Soo is an interesting case. She won the Daum competition while preparing to start working for one of the major publishers. According to her, there is a crucial difference between portal platforms and publishers, in that while the publishers professionally manage and educate authors and cartoonists, as well as protecting them from any legal issues, the portals only focus on managing online distribution and selling copyrights (Mi-Soo). In the comments below the Webtoons, Webtoonists are often compared to 'traditional' cartoonists, and they often find themselves caught up in unexpected plagiarism cases in connection with other cultural products. Even some 'star' Webtoonists have been embroiled in various legal disputes with domestic rivals working in similar genres and who follow a similar drawing style (Bo-Ra). In such matters, publishers cover liability in the event of long-term legal prevarications and plagiarism rows around the distribution and consumption of printed cartoons; this is because they own the copyright for the work. The portal platforms cannot own the copyrights to Webtoons, but only mediate them mechanically, even for professional Webtoonists; they take no responsibility for the personal protection of individual creators and their works. This loose autonomous relationship between the portals and individual Webtoonists is also reflected in the working conditions. As discussed above, however famous one may be, one may never become a permanent employee.

"Regarding book cartoons, publishers' decisions impose some severe constraints on production. I felt like I was doing it with him from the bottom up and the top down, from writing a script to combining stories and plots. When I worked in the cartoon industry, my publisher was like a man with a lot of experience. He gave me a lot of guidelines on drawing, and I learned a lot. But Daum (the portal company) has done, like, only uploading my file. The staff there just download my Webtoon files and click to upload files. That's all. One click. It has irritated me finishing one of my Webtoon series there. I know there is no obligation for the platform, I mean, they don't have to give any guidelines about the production. When there was a highly

controversial issue around my Webtoon, the platform didn't share the responsibility with me. The whole thing was my responsibility." (Mi-Soo)

Most Webtoonists are acutely aware of these working conditions on the platforms. They have been solving numerous problems of emotional labour themselves facing users' malicious comments or cyber bullying. But as it begins even at the amateur production stage on the web, they know the bitterness they feel is justified. Rather, they guard their words and actions and are reluctant to expose their privacy on the Web (Bo-Ra; Jin-Ah). That is, crisis management abilities are believed to ensure stable production of Webtoons. In this process, they act like politicians, while regarding the production as a relationship with the people listening, with the public. It reminds us of the fact that the words referred to as a feature of immaterial labour today, by Virno (2003), that labour has absorbed politics.

"[researcher: After you won the competition, has there been any change in your life?] Before I won, I thought there would be no difficulties. Once I started, I realised there were. I could all draw my favourite things before I won. But after that, I had to consider the public, and couldn't draw anything which might harm readers' feelings, to avoid any kind of issues. There are all sorts of people on the Internet, so I have to be careful. In my Webtoons, there are no strong opinions about society." (Bo-Ra)

"The traps are in the word 'communication.' At first, I enjoyed communicating with readers. I'd love to reply to positive comments. It meets my need to contact people who like me. But there came a moment when such communication turned into poison. For example, readers told me not to do social media stuff and use the time for drawing more Webtoons. Some told me to meet a deadline, I mean, in their comments. I know, maybe it'd be better not to do any social media [laugh]. [researcher: But we can't.] Showing off on SNS (social network sites) can be like a poison in the end." (Mi-Soo)

Webtoonists cannot produce cartoons without the negative communication since it always passes through the Web. They inevitably have to deal with 'ones,' who are

anonymous and pervasive. According to Virno (2003, 2009), citing Simondon, this 'one' is a 'pre-individual' who dominates the scene, inhibiting any individuation whatsoever. It nurtures reassuring certainties and diffuses opinions that are always already shared. It is the faceless subject of media communication. It feeds us an idle talk and unleashes a curiosity that cannot be restrained (Virno, 2003: 43). Bearing in mind that 'ones' are present on the production floor all the time, not only on the platform, Webtoonists cannot help but interact with them. Without any protection or guidance from the portal industry, the Webtoonists are responsible for publicising themselves on the portal platform. With the burden of exposing themselves in front of talkative 'ones', they produce Webtoons alone in their home/workplace, trying to overcome the fear of dangers and uncertainties that they might face in future, such as hate comments, the termination of their contract of employment, unexpected legal disputes, and so on.

Of course, Webtoonists are not the only people who suffer from such issues around neo-liberal working conditions. We all experience the cultural production workplace, where the boundaries between public area/labour and private area/work have collapsed. As it is, the fear of precarious working conditions and the burden of communication described by all the interviewees are justified as inevitable by-products that must accompany such a long-awaited career. However, it should be noted that when recalling competition as an apparatus for transforming amateurs into professionals, commissioned artists hired by the IT company and not the cultural industry gain from repeated use of this apparatus not only the artistic skill of comic production, but also the mastery of self-branding (c.f. McRobbie, 2011, 2016) and (immaterial) labour skills, and their means of production and products, that is, their lives. The inherent attributes of the platforms of cognitive capitalism (as much as possible to trigger commercialisation of free activities while at the same time giving maximum freedom to the individuals) give duality to the meaning of 'freedom' in their activities. On the one hand, they are artists who pursue self-organised projects, and on the other hand, they become the enterprise themselves who plan and manage the commercialisation of the project. This process can be called 'amatuer-professionalistion', or shortly Pro-Am.

Further, considering all the findings in this study, Pro-Am refers not only to the professional-like amateurs but also to professionals who must compete to keep their place as amateurs on the digital platform in which amateurism is co-opted by the ideologies of neoliberal economies. In this 'amateur-only contest', most 'amateur-like professionals,' such as cartoonists working in the cultural industries and freelance cartoonists not selected by capital, are still subject to unstable employment and lower wages or commissions, and they therefore even regard the long-term 'free labouring' (c.f. Terranova, 2000, 2004), such as continuing participation in the amateur-only competitions, as a necessary route to their successful career path. In light of this, the processes of amateur cultural production today might also be witnessing the 'alienation' of art's production from its creators – which marked the activities of those who were previously called 'precarious creativity' (Curtin and Sanson, 2016) or creative workers in the creative economy. Amateur activities filling the platforms are then looted for the purpose to maximise profits of digital corporations, perhaps at the expense of losing their inherent self-fulfilling nature.

Certainly, some of these amateur-like professionals will find other opportunities. Once they have won the contest and 'entitled' a Webtoonist status, they can continue to conduct creative work fully autonomously, which is not always the prerogative other creative workers and most amateur-like professionals enjoy due to the poor management and incompetence of the platforms. Due to its ontological nature, digital platforms of cognitive capitalism based on the commons cannot own the workers or possess their work, and so there is always a hole through which any free labourers can easily escape. However, this should not be understood as a naïve suggestion that the political implications of an amateur's aspiration for self-realisation are still valid. On the contrary, it just demonstrates that there is a chance for the competition-winning amateurs to escape from the platforms, and to successfully transform their creativity, ideas, and the communication capability into a form of digital 'human capital.'

Most importantly, over the course of this amateur competition, all amateurs are systematically becoming accustomed to the free-labour working condition. Even the winners of the contests often continue to remain subject to unstable employment and

improperly low wages for the high value of their Webtoons. Yet there are roadblocks to improving such undesirable working conditions, not least because the process of digital culture production is highly dependent on platforms and already attuned to the routinised use of production means possessed by digital capital. This establishes a de facto standard working environment where amateurs are required to come to compete against others at the contests, and this makes it increasingly difficult for amateurs to raise critical questions against the platform – at least during the contests. In fact, it now even seems that one needs be declared as a winner by the platform in order to qualify as a Webtoonist, regardless whether s/he is an amateur or a professional. The privilege given to the winner is in many cases only a contract proposal that promises little more than unstable employment, and the value of her/his victory becomes literally '*priceless*' – that it cannot be measured in money.

Chapter Seven. Amateur Self-publishing as Mnemotechnics

1. Introduction

: Amateur Self-Publishers are Changing Book Culture in South Korea

This chapter will discuss an amateur group based in South Korea, who work with the materialisation of individual history, experiences, and memories within the community through paper book-making, choosing to avoid the free self-publishing opportunities available on the Internet. Rather than presenting cultural products in digital spaces such as Afreeca TV's BJs and Webtoonists, these amateurs are dedicated to the production and distribution of 'old-fashion media' paper books. Their attachment to such an abiding form of media can be considered a revivalist movement within literature. This chapter explores the question of whether a particular reason exists to explain why the group prefers to publish their personal, amateur works in the form of 'real' books, and to sell them at a dedicated bookstore, despite the opportunities presented online.

Since the group's desire for self-publication extends beyond the individual dimension of simply storing memories and experiences, it constitutes a project of transindividuation, and as such involves an awareness that the publications are read by others. Utilising the example of these South Korean amateur self-publishers, this chapter will establish an associated hypomnesic milieu that explores the subjectification of authors and readers, as well as their experiences of the circumstances in which they are involved, through the process of materialisation of individual and collective experiences and memories. For Stiegler (2010a), human memory was originally exteriorised, and hence was technical from the outset. If self-publishing is perceived as a type of 'mnemotechnics' or 'memory technics', to employ Stiegler's term, it is possible to analyse the direct influence that such experience-recording and imprinting techniques have on the composition of collective individuation within today's Korean society. It is possible to discuss how amateur self-

publishing channels and structures the transmission of the symbolic environment (milieu), or the pool of sedimented experiences from which we individuate ourselves as individuals, or members of a family, or society, and thus how it permeates our very ability to experience the world (Schlecker, 2011; Stiegler, 2004/2014).

For this, it should be noticed that these amateur self-publishers are not pathfinders in their devotion to this type of cultural project. Indeed, in South Korea, the term 'self-publishing' has been used since the 1980s to collectively describe small-scale publications that were originally planned and produced by an individual, or a small group, without the involvement of publishers or professionals. As in other countries, the multifaceted nature of self-publishing makes it difficult to establish its academic definition, and the scope of previous related studies (Kwon, 2016). However, in the case of 'independent publishing' (Korean-Chinese: 獨立出版), in another Korean-Chinese expression referring to self-publishing, the meaning encompasses printing the book and disseminating it to the world (出版) without constraint from, or domination by, others (獨立). The self-publications studied in this essay take this form. In the process of production and distribution, these amateur projects tend to embrace the cultural and social diversity necessary for capital exemptions from commercial interests, because they are inclined to distinguish themselves from such industries. In this context, a small number of previous Korea-related studies suggested that amateur producers in self-publishing must be regarded as a resistance force against mainstream culture, or as a counter-power against symbolic power in the field of culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Eun, 2016; Kwon, 2016). However, these amateurs, a group of independent publishers, which will be discussed in more detail herein, share traits with other amateurs that cannot be explained fully by the above approaches.

These self-publications emerged at a time when the computerisation and digitisation of publications had become an important issue in Korean society, following establishment of the Internet. They are distinct in the fact that they actively employ digital authoring tools and digital editing software necessary for printing; however, in terms of distribution, they primarily feature within a network of small bookstores dedicated to independent

publishers, located in a physical space, rather than an online self-publishing platform, such as Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) and Lulu; these target an unspecified number of people, and are designed for online self-publishing. In addition, and in a way that is similar to the previous generation of publishers, the product of this cultural practice of self-publishing is presented only through a physical medium, a paper book, and a limited, physical distribution network accessible to only a small number of specific communities. Thus, it should be understood as a different type of amateur project in its own right, separate not only from industrial print publishing, but also from the digitisation of publications. Self-publishers are critically aware of the probability that their publications could be subsumed by the monopolistic online platforms for self-publishing that are as vast and homogenous as the existing publishing industry.

This study seeks to highlight this new and unique amateur self-publishing context as a sub-culture comprising the voices of amateurs dedicated to independent publishing by exploring its background. Due to the increase in the production of independent publications, their consumption has grown, and since the late 2000s, small-scale, independent bookstores distributing these books have been established in the residential districts of low-income groups in Seoul, South Korea (Kim, 2017d). This essay focuses on a place-specific consumption culture, in which a new network is centred on amateur self-publishers, the specific community that actively consumes it, and on the independent publishing bookstores that mediate and condition its production and consumption.

There are currently 106 independent bookstores, primarily involved in selling only amateur self-published books nationwide, with 68 of them situated in Seoul[68]. The development of subcultural consumption was evidenced by an increase in the number of workshops for independent publishing, and by the popularity of the 'Unlimited Edition' book fair (2009-2016), organised via the cooperation of the independent bookstores and independent publishers. In the case of the former, the number of visitors increased from 9,000 to 16,000, and the number of participating groups increased from 22 to 167 (Kwon,

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[68] On June 15th, 2017, I counted the number of independent bookstores by using location finder web-based software on the 'another books' website, where an online network of independent publishers is held.

2016). Successful independent publishers also presented various workshops in order to educate newcomers and amateurs[69]. These second-generation independent publishers are not left to their own devices as amateur self-publishers, but rather they voluntarily form and organise educational programmes, informal distribution networks, and events for the community that supports them. Thus, the emergence of a new community-oriented publishing culture that does not conform to the logic of capitalism or industry businesses, or to the approach of typical independent publishing organisations in traditional Korean society, can be expected.

2. Mnemotechnics of Self-Publishing

The amateurs featured in this 2017 study were aged in their mid-20s to early-30s, and were generally office workers or self-employed individuals, who primarily learned how to write at school, before the internet and smart devices were introduced. As a highly educated group of people holding postgraduate Master's degrees, they were engaged in the types of 'creative' occupations favoured by younger people in South Korea, such as design, publishing, TV production, and architectural design. Each had created an independent publication for different reasons. They considered independent publication to be situated outside the context of sales figures or revenue generation, and more likely to be "self-contained" (Mi-So), as they tend to begin as personal projects that record and trace the experiences of a community in a material form, such as a paper-book.

After working as a planner at a publishing house, Mi-So retired and began publishing independently in order to record her experiences at a "turning point in life." Sa-Rang published her father's autobiography in order to share aspects of her father's life with her

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[69] As of June 15, 2017, the independent publishing workshop currently run by independent publishers and related communities in Korea included Studio Pie's 'Small-scale Independent Publishing Workshop - One Day Class', and 'Make Zine Workshop' in Hong-dae Gymfree, 'Talk to Someone' in Chungju Bookstore, 'Independent Publishing Writing' in After Now Books, and 'Make Magazines' in Storage Book and Film.

Figure 17 Inside the independent bookstore, "Storage Book and Film"

(1 May 2017, taken by me)

Figure 18 Examples of amateur self-publications

(1 May 2017, taken by me)

acquaintances; such a book would have been unlikely to appeal to commercial publishers, since her father was an ordinary civil servant. For a similar reason, Hyun-Min also chose self-publishing as an alternative means of publishing his photograph collection. He had been an amateur photographer for many years, but since the subject in which he majored was irrelevant to the arts, it was not feasible for him to make a formal debut in this genre via a publisher. In the case of Ryeo-Won, upon learning that the area in which her apartment was located would be redeveloped, she published four books about the old building in a serial form, in order to record the past, and the dissociation process experienced by the residents. So-Yun also produced a series of independent publications in the form of zines that introduced animation artists and their work in a bid to contribute to the development of the animation production community. Chan-Yeol created a series of magazines in order to record his personal life and hobbies, by satirising the format of lifestyle magazines, whose aim is to satisfy the demands of luxury lifestyles. The final interviewee, Do-Hwan, a serious collectomaniac, created independent publications in order to classify and record the objects he collected, in magazine form.

Since it is now possible to self-publish virtually free of charge, and to distribute the products to tens of thousands of people, e-books produced by fashionable amateur writers, as well as other forms of self-publishing employing online platforms, share a similar purpose to that of self-published print books, of not only storing a person's history and memories, but also wishing to share them with others. For example, fan pages are co-creation projects consisting of photographs and text that constitute a biography of favourite celebrities. Bolter (2001: 181) stated that these fan pages are also a sub-genre of the "gift" page or site, so that an individual contributor's content creation must be understood as them returning something to the cultural community via the internet. However, the type of independent publishing considered in this paper differs from the co-creation of a digital project; rather, it is a 'solitary' project in which the creator must pay for the materials, and provide the funds necessary to create the project, which in this case is a paper book.

> "Think about the meaning of independent publishing, that is what I am talking about.
> In the case of independent publishing, people make the books. Their stories are likely

to be kept in the form of ... *diaries*. Nonetheless, they engage in book-making, rather than publishing the stories on…blogs." (Mi-So)

"My dad said that he would look back on his life after he had retired, in order that he might discover how to live the rest of his life. For this reason, I published my father's autobiography. It was a work of *recollection* to present his life in review. It took me almost a year to make the book. My father gave it to his family members, and my relatives, and said he was so proud of the work." (Sa-Rang)

Sa-Rang, a TV producer who professionally produces a prime-time entertainment show concerning the public service, focussed on the symbolic values and merits of the "*materiality*" of a book. She noted that e-books can be difficult for older generations to use. For example, her father, whose autobiography she materalised, may be damaged or hurt by them; "E-books can be dangerous for users with limited vision, like my dad" (Sa-Rang). Although she herself is young, and in media terms is labelled as part of the digital generation who has grown up with easy access to digital technology for writing, she was nonetheless aware of the symbolic value of the act of making and sharing a paper book, even when published at her own expense. Another Interviewee, Mi-So, related a similar story:

"It could be a generational difference. Little kids are familiar with digital technology, and are exposed to cell phones from an early age. I was born in 1983, a generation familiar with physical hand-writing. I became accustomed to computers as a college student, working on a PC. That's why it's so important to me to be familiar with…material things and to own them." (Mi-So)

"I think the materiality of paper books was comparatively good for me. When I printed my pictures, unlike when I saw them on a monitor, it felt very different. The existence of the physical properties felt better and different. I realised that I love…having my pictures in paper books. I then became interested in book-making. I like the unique smell of the paper… and each piece of paper also has different materiality. I like that I can *feel the paper*." (Hyun-Min)

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Mi-So talked about the privilege of authorship, stressing that "the first reader is the author themselves", and that this is important in this type of self-publishing, "unlike the publishers, who always think of the reader's preferences in order to sell more books, these amateur self-publications are often self-satisfying activities". In this way, the producers of the publications add a new meaning to the production itself, rather than in terms of sales and distribution. In the case of a paper book containing a personal record, "the smaller numbers in which it is…printed, the scarcer it becomes, and its value is recognised" (*Ibid*.). In this sense, the marketing and distribution of traditional publishing can render the authenticity of the production suspect. Mi-So, who has worked as a professional editor and marketer in a publishing company, then exhibited her sincere enthusiasm for independent publishing to the degree that she has already produced three independent publications. In the role she plays as 'gatekeeper' in her daytime professional activities, her job is to *reject* manuscripts that are not considered worthy of publication, that are not attractive, or that do not appear profitable.

Since self-publications in the form of paper books are only produced according to the judgment of the individuals making them, without any intervention on the part of the publishing authorities, they include non-commercial and amateur-level texts. As such, they are often radical in nature, and able to dismantle the cultural norms and standards or institutional practices to which traditional publishers adhere. However, technically a self-published work still constitutes a 'paper book,' similar in form to traditional commercially-printed publications, thus with an individual responsible for, in addition to 'writing,' other works that constitute the materiality of the book such as editing, designing, and marketing. It is therefore not unreasonable to claim that "independent publishing is the work of one person in multiple roles" (Do *et al*., 2016: 12).

Self-publishing is a technology that enables the visualisation of thoughts in a physical form. Thus, it is necessary to employ the tools and materials appropriate for such spatial visualisation of writing. In addition, since paper books cannot be edited once they are printed, it is necessary for individual authors to ensure that *technical perfection* is achieved. Most of the interviewees used computers and laptops for writing, employing text-based software programs, or word processing programs, and then employing layout

software designed for desktop publishing, generally Adobe InDesign, during the design process. When the design work was completed in the form of a book, it was saved in a PDF format, and emailed to a printer. This digitalised production style, together with knowledge of the essential digital skills that are implicitly shared among, or transferred to, the community of independent publishers may be difficult for the elderly to master; most of the independent publishing amateurs encountered during this research were in their 20s and 30s. Each publication was different, and each took a considerable amount of time, generally three months (Do-Hwan; Chan-Yeol; Mi-So) to a year (Sa-Rang), to complete the entire production process, as these amateurs were also engaged in daytime occupations, and hence must conduct their writing work in their leisure time. During the process, they learned not only the skills necessary for the production, but also which methods they particularly favoured; for example, "[their] construction of print, with its traditions, its hierarchies, and its unidirectional form of communication" (Bolter, 2001: 209). For Sa-Rang, who published the autobiography of her father, it took almost took a year for the book to be ready for the printing stage. Since the manuscript was lengthy, and real names were used, the related fact-finding and verification process was conducted during the editing stage. It also took several months to edit the 800 pages of the draft manuscript, using InDesign for the first time. Chan-Yeol stated that the difficulty of this process ironically assisted him in recognising "*myself as an author*" (Chan-Yeol).

A further reason for publishing paper books is its contrast to users' dependence on the Internet's hypertext culture, and the use of digital technologies. The self-publishers were concerned about storing precious memories and experiences using capitalist technologies that they could neither own nor control (Mi-So; Ryeo-Won). This reminds Stiegler's warning of the danger in the externalisation of memories is that it is dependent on tertiary retention mechanisms, such as digital technology, for self-expression, which constitutes what he called "mnemotechnologies" controlled by industries (2010a: 65). Such mnemotechnologies that wish to use the accumulated memories for their own purposes are not only individualised themselves, as demonstrated by the example of the artificial intelligence involved in forms such as social media, and other social websites, but are also increasingly expanding their role in knowledge production (Stiegler, 2010a: 65-66).

What Stiegler worries about is then the more we become part of a device as producers, the more we depend on it, while losing and forgetting our knowledge of the technology itself. In the process, producers become 'active' consumers of the technology who recall memories but do not know how to keep them on their own or get too lazy to learn that. In other words, the loss of knowledge in production and in circulating our memories conditioned by the digital technology, together with the proletarianisation of the labour, which was initially self-fulling, transindividual activity, results (Stiegler, 2010b, 2011c).

"I think…web culture can… potentially disappear very quickly. I also use blogs, but I still believe that is not the best way to publish my stories, although it can *expand their circulation*. The companies that provide the platform for blogs are businesses. Who knows what their futures hold? There is no permanence…it is a *business* that cannot prosper forever. But I do think there's something in the independent media. Materialising, work to make a paper book…probably serves the needs of the present." (Mi-So)

The interviewees highlighted that the reason why independent publishing is so popular in today's Korean society is that it operates counter to the technological transformation effected by the digitalisation of all of the cultural production in an individual's daily life. Similarly, Sa-Rang likened the independent publication of printing work to film cameras. Taking pictures using a smartphone can also be thought of as "the act of storing memories of everyday life" (*Ibid.*), but it requires a different form of recollection than that employed in the use of actual cameras. Taking out a camera is generally a cumbersome process, effected only on special days for special locations, when only a few photographs are printed, and only a select few of those placed in a photograph album. In the process, an individual learns not only the related techniques of such technologies, but also recognises the value of the memory involved, and the importance of the act of storing the memory at a certain time. Further, publishing photographs can have political implications in that the act of publication constitutes a project of individual autonomy in the age of, "if you do not remember it yourself, it's hard to *give meaning to that memory*" (*Ibid.*).

3. It's All about Love! Transindividuation through Self-Publishing

Even if self-publishing originates in personal hobbies, the products will eventually be printed, and will reach readers via bookstores; as such, it is possible to consider self-publishing as being a technology of transindividuation. Once the memory of the individual self-publisher is transformed into a physical book, it constitutes mmenotechnics, whereby his or her memory is transmitted across reader generations, and thus cannot be limited to individual minds any longer. Thus, amateur self-publishing is the technics of transindividuation, wherein it serves as the basis for social transformation, and intimates a range of connectivities that allow the 'passage' of individual and collective thought across time (Stiegler and Rogoff, 2010). Further, such memories, experiences, and records of the individual, and of society, contained in the books are always consumed in a social and cultural context, even if they have been made and edited by individuals. The self-publishers in this study, who were primarily aged in their 20s and 30s, often projected their publications as a cultural and political project intended to inform the world about their personal issues, such as employment and marriage, but also about the changes and crises experienced by the communities to which they belong.

One of the interviewees, Ryeo-Won, watched a film about the victims of the 2011 Japanese earthquake in which the victims subsequently sought photographs recording their lives at the disaster site, rather than tangible artefacts from those lives. In a bid to aid the disaster victims to restore their lost memories, Google Japan created a website called 'Memories for the Future', (Japanese: '未来へのキオク'), through which users could upload images from Google Maps, which enabled them to virtually tour the affected areas before and after the disaster. When Ryeo-Won learned about the redevelopment of the Jugong apartment complex in which she had lived since childhood, she decided to commence her own project creating a medium for storing her memories, and the community's memories, from that place.

"In Japan, this natural disaster…caused people to lose their memories. But in the case of the regeneration, I think it is a man-made disaster. However, there is time left to do something before we lose the building. The media always tells us to be prepared for such a disaster, but because we do not prepare, it becomes a disaster. So I thought, I should prepare for a similar occurrence. Not only myself but…all of us (people living in the apartment complex) will suffer from an equivalent loss, so I thought this book should be made as a storage medium for the memories of everyone…my friends and neighbours, who will miss this place, not only an individual record intended only for myself." (Ryeo-Won)

This case is interesting because, although inspired by the Google project, Ryeo-Won chose a paper book as her medium, which is expensive to produce. She initially uploaded photographs and articles to a blog, believing she needed create a personal record, however after hearing that one of her favourite social media sites, Cyworld, which was once South Korea's largest social networking service[70], and which she had used actively in her 20s, had ceased to exist, she realised the danger of storing memories on a capitalist-owned digital platform. "I realised that if it is a digital project, it may disappear without trace" (Ryeo-Won). She subsequently created four publications for the community, using her personal savings together with her pension from a previous 10-year employment in a construction company.

"I thought it would disappear *without a trace* in a moment if I made it digital and stored it online. Instead, I decided to make it into a book, even if I had to take responsibility for the production and distribution, and for providing the funding to do so. We can keep books, which have physical properties, at least until we die. If anyone else then wants them, he or she can flee with it if there is a fire! So, I made up my mind to create a physical book." (Ryeo-Won)

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[70] Cyworld launched in 1999, and was the largest social networking service in South Korea until 2014. However, after failing to compete with global social media such as Facebook, it decided to close its domestic service on September 30th, 2015 (Chu, 2015).

In the case of So-Yun, who works as a programmer at an animation film festival, her independent publishing comprised a series of books that was created because of their 'readability'. She stated that, although there was consensus that the animation community needed a magazine to introduce directors and artworks to the world, "no one started" one (*Ibid.*). She therefore commenced production of magazine-style independent publications in order to "relieve the frustration" experienced in this context. Initially, she planned to distribute digital magazines and paper books, because she wished to link related materials, such as images and links, as well as the texts of the animation media. However, she realised that not even she read articles that were shared between digital magazines and online spaces, therefore she ultimately decided that a 'physical recording' for the community was required.

For those creating community-based projects, there was a shared fear that their work may be used for political reasons by the media, or by industry. Many of the interviewees were highlighted by the media as heroes leading a new cultural trend, distinct from commercial publishers in the industry, or as having grown "the democracy by recording the voices of those who had no voice" (Lee, 2016d: N.pag.), because their amateur projects were believed to highlight the cultural and political implications of publicising social issues. Amateur publishers who created books addressing retirement and housing redevelopment, and which presented parodies of high-culture lifestyles, were mentioned in the media as being representative examples of the "new generation" who chose to express themselves in interviews with newspapers, fashion magazines, and on the television (Mi-So; Chan-Yeol; Ryeo-Won). In these interviews, they were frequently asked what they thought of the "solidarity in the community through self-making," or in other words the commons-based projects, and whether their projects could be understood as "resistance to on-the-shelf publishing" (Mi-So). The interviewees complained that they were referred to as "icons of the young generation's culture" in such interviews (Chan-Yeol).

"I was exposed too much in the media. The newspapers represented me as an icon of the '880,000 KRW Generation.'[71] It was too painful, so I changed the concept of my magazines. Even I don't know much about poverty, but they called me as an icon of poor Korean youth. I then commenced self-censorship of my books. I…felt bitter about this. I did not want to hear that I was selling the concept of poverty in order to sell a book." (Chan-Yeol)

In general, the self-publishing activities of those interviewed in this study commenced with activities aimed at self-satisfaction; the individual's love for the subject triggered the subsequent production activity, focusing on sharing feelings for that, thus, not trying to be 'impartial records'. As Ryeo-Won (2017) stated, "Possessing feelings in independent publishing is the same as taking pictures of someone's spirit"; it is a manifestation of the desire that readers will receive a book well. In the process, however, the "traces of love" contained in the publications inspire accusations that they emotionally engage readers who have had similar experiences, in order to sell the book. Since their production does not experience 'gatekeeping', as in the traditional publishing industry, it gives rise to such criticism.

Nonetheless, these individuals will not cease publishing their work, because the success of their publications confirms that someone is listening to them, despite the fact that these are "ordinary people" (Sa-Rang).

"I ask the people who read the book which phrases they were impressed by. People said the books reminded them of similar shared experiences. My dad's younger sister helped him with farming when they were young. She accidentally cut her hand, but they could not find the piece of finger she had lost. In the book, my dad wrote that he still tears up whenever he sees his sister's fingers. There are readers who read this and cry as a result. For those from the same era as my father, the record of these ordinary people becomes a…*retrospective device*…and reminds them of their own

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[71] South Korean media referred to young university graduates as the "880,000-KRW generation" because most of them belong to a group of low-paid workers earning only 880,000 KRW (about 600 GBP) monthly, after graduating.

life. This made me realise why I was involved in my own publishing ventures." (Sa-Rang)

Through the mnemotechnics of independent publishing, these producers of self-published works have not only the ability to expand the meaning of life in the process of recording, recollecting, and re-defining their lives, but also to create a reader community. For Miller, this community is constituted of readers who crave "the intimacy to be had in allowing a beloved author's voice into the sanctums of our minds" (1998, cited in Bolter, 2001: 209). As a result, the meaning of self-publishing extends from being a self-technology aimed at hobby activities, to being a technique of transindividuation, facilitating community transformation.

4. Why Self-Publishing Cannot Be a Commodity Activity

So far, this chapter has examined whether self-publishing as a form of external memory, printed on books, can be ascribed a new value in terms of psychological and social individuation. However, the fact that this form of writing, and the nature of paper books and their inevitable relationship with the material economy, entails a demand on natural resources should not be overlooked. If the production of the book is not designed as a 'gift' project for a particular family, group, or taste community, it will necessitate a relationship with the contemporary publishing 'economy' because it requires a physical distribution channel, namely a bookstore, in order to find a readership. In fact, most serious amateur publications tend to be sold in their hundreds, and even thousands, via bookstores, therefore these books are subject to an economic exchange.

At present, the main vehicle for the distribution of amateur publications in South Korea are small bookstores, known as independent bookstores, whose size is only one tenth of that of the average bookstore, and which specialise solely in independent publications.

Figure 19 Independent bookstore located in Yongsan-dong, Seoul

(1 May 2017, taken by me)

Publishing industry experts have highlighted that the emergence of the small bookstore network, focusing solely on distributing these amateur self-publications, has created new social opportunities in South Korea (Lee, 2016d; Kim, 2017d). Naturally, indie bookstores, which have independent distribution channels involved with the school system, libraries, and local businesses, and which distribute relatively non-commercial publications on a regional basis, are not only found in South Korea, but also the United States (Briggs, 2017). Unlike the 'big box' bookstores that were impacted upon by online bookstores, for example, Borders went out of business in 2011, and Barnes and Noble recently closed hundreds of its stores, indie bookstores have become the core of the local consumption movement, combined with the online distribution network (Heyman, 2015). According to a survey conducted by the American Booksellers Association, independent bookstores in the United States have experienced an astonishing recovery since the financial crisis, and have increased in number by 27% since 2009 (*Ibid*.). Furthermore, the growth of these indie bookstores based in local communities has demonstrated the value of the experience of holding and finding books together in a single, reader-centred space of the kind that cannot be provided by a large bookstore, or online platform, both of which offer price reductions, suggesting that today's readers have a willingness to pay

not only for the books themselves, but also for those experiences (Young, 2016). It is worth noting, however, that in the case of South Korea, groundbreaking indie-author only bookstores occupy the majority of the indie market, which is seldom found elsewhere, even in the United States.

Furthermore, American amateur self-publications are not only sold in independent bookstores, but are also actively marketed by the network technologies of online bookstores, especially in the United States and Europe, which focus on e-book sales on an Internet platform. According to the 2015 Infographic Research (McCoy, 2015), 31% of the books sold on Amazon's Kindle Store were self-published books, and amateur authors claimed 40% of the total income earned by e-book authors, thus confirming the commercial value of their books. For this reason, Mark Coker (2014), the founder of Smashwords, went so far as to estimate that self-published e-books would account for 50% of e-book sales by 2020. It should be noted, however, that South Korean amateur self-publications are distinctively different from other varieties of self-publishing, since they are recognised as a new restorationist, cultural form made of materialistic desires, primarily consumed as 'paper books' in localised stores in a particular cultural context.

Previous studies in South Korea have highlighted that the self-publications on the Internet are specifically targeted, and are mainly consumed by specific genres such as romance (Lee, 2017b). In contrast, in the case of paper self-publications, consumption occurs primarily in independent bookstores, and tends to concern the observations of the daily life, tastes, and hobbies of the individual amateur authors (Kwon, 2016). This trend constitutes the most important feature of such forms of amateur self-publishing, namely the authorship-orientated, individualised production, whose production methods and scale can be differentiated from others because they are more concerned with the publisher's personal desires than with a consideration of potential readers. For instance, through the independent publishers' own choice, the volume of individual publications produced varies from 300 to 1,000 copies, and as a result, the total distribution scale cannot be accurately estimated according to industry or national calculations. This has contributed to the fact that the economic scale of such independent publications has not

been accurately determined, and this thereby provides an alternative context of a social awareness that emphasises social value, rather than economic value for self-publishing.

The interviewees in this project did not consider the Internet as a distribution channel for their work; instead, in order to diversify their distribution channels, some interviewees employed e-book platforms, or the Internet platforms of established publishing companies (Mi-So). However, they exhibited a negative view of the use of such platforms since, in return for using this commercial technology, they were required to pay a 40% commission on their sales' proceeds. In addition, in order to register on the digital platform of domestic large bookstores, the amateur author must undergo a complicated registration process in order to gain government approval as an independent publisher, and must acquire an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) certification for their publications. In contrast, independent bookstores are favored by amateurs as primary distribution channels because they take the relatively smaller fee of 30% of the sales. Furthermore, ISBN registration is of concern to these independent publishers due to the controversy concerning ISBN registration. In the publishing industry, possessing an ISBN is viewed as a precondition for enabling publishing through a proven online platform, or established publishing distribution network. However, some individuals working in independent bookstores express concern that this might prompt a belief that "amateur publishers also have to register as self-entrepreneurs to sell their publications", and thus may limit the unconventionality in the activities of amateurs (Lee, 2016d: N.pag.).

Even Do-Hwan, who had registered as an entrepreneur, was critical about ISBN registration.

> "Even if the demand at independent bookstores disappears, I will not submit my book for ISBN registration. Does it mean anything to get a barcode (in independent publishing production)? Such ISBN certification may be meaningful to formal publications, however I do not think I should have to pay for one for

my book, since it has its own nature. I would like to prove that, even if I do not register, I can survive, sell, and distribute my books. Even if I do not act on society's demands." (Do-Hwan)

His remarks implied that the personal desire for spontaneous, voluntarily activity on the part of an individual author and independent publisher can create an independent movement that contributes to the development of alternative distribution channels in a way that differs from that of the traditional publishing industry. In this context, amateur self-publishing and independent bookstores have a form of symbiotic relationship in South Korea. Furthermore, the fact that the author-centred self-publications are produced and distributed solely in the form of paper books, and are not reproduced separately in the form of e-books, means that they are scarce as a result of their physically restricted distribution channels. However, the small-quantity production centered on these paper books inevitably places an economic burden on the individual producers, since an initial capital investment is required that is proportionate to the number of publications to be produced. This serves as a motivation that these amateur publishers may be aware of themselves as own-business-publishers.

The preface of the recent 'Self-Publishing Guide', which was published as a self-publication for individuals aspiring to be independent publishers, claims that the standard of independent publishing reflects the fact that the author works directly on the entire process of a book's production (Do *et al*., 2016). In other words, it defines a self-publisher as a self-entrepreneur performing multiple roles. Accordingly, unlike the authors published by the traditional industry, the author must be aware of the need to 'do it yourself' at all stages, from pre-production and distribution, to post-production, including publicity and sales, therefore the individual is concerned with the role of author, as well as publisher. Hence, it is necessary for the individual to acquire the knowledge required for one-man publicity and distribution via the non-institutional education contained within the small self-publishing community (Hyun-Min).

The sustainability of independent publishing has become a 'buzzword' among the interviewees, with one commenting, "we only need to see any one of us succeed in order

to prove that independent publishing can produce money" (Mi-So). Although it is an activity that commences without expectation of revenue, the individuals require a degree of profit from the sales in order to produce subsequent publications. In the case of an amateur who does not have a separate business, or vocational activity, this constitutes the greatest concern. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that the growth of self-publishing is perceived as being based on a *"social emotion"* (Ryeo-Won), a view which therefore regards it as an indie culture containing amateurs' experimentation (Lim and Ham, 2012). As has been demonstrated, the way in which these individuals are presented by the media is in the context of a counter-culture, thus some conclude that the cost of the materials and labour entailed by the book production cannot be calculated in the same manner as that of commercial publishing.

"[Why are independent publications so cheap? The first thing I noticed was that they're cheap even though they are handmade.] When I first started, I did not have confidence in the content I created. I still think I am an amateur, and because I am the person creating it, I keep questioning whether the book will sell, therefore I reduce the price. But once I gain more confidence, things could change. Having confidence from the outset is hard; once I've published a few books, I might raise the prices little by little" (Do-Hwan).

Above all, the self-awareness on the part of amateurs tends to entail them pricing their books lower, especially in the case of the first edition. Although their production is small-scale, they do not have a great expectation of income from the sales, since they are priced at, or less than, the price of a mass-produced publications (Chan-Yeol). The problem with using only independent bookstores, which specialise purely in the distribution of amateur self-publications, is that the authors must wait 1-2 months to obtain their sales returns, and thus it does not constitute a regularly-profitable activity. In the absence of a solution to these financial difficulties, there are many cases in which independent publications are financed by the individual providing all the money necessary themselves (*Ibid.*), for

example by cancelling an installment savings plan (Ryeo-Won), or a retirement allowance (Mi-So; Do-Hwan). Some interviewees stated that they had used a crowdsourcing platform as a pre-sales method of raising finances, a vehicle that has gained popularity in Korea in recent years, but that they could not find any incentives for sponsors, other than "making their own gifts to readers" (Ryeo-Won). In this situation, it is easy to conclude that it is almost impossible to make a living through self-publishing. Likewise, even within the independent bookstore system, the expectation that distribution through independent bookstores will become an alternative to the commercial publishing market that pursues economies of scale is hasty and irrelevant (Lee, 2016d).

However, media and academic studies in South Korea are increasingly focusing on whether an alternative book consumption culture, based on the bond between independent bookstores and amateur self-publishers, can be established. During the late 2000s, small-scale bookstore networks emerged around the outskirts of Seoul (Kim, 2017d), and these have affected the development of local culture. Interestingly, Hyun-Min, who publishes a monthly independent publication magazine consisting of photo essays featuring interviewees, established an independent bookstore to sells his books, together with other amateur productions. His bookstore is located in a residential area of Seoul where foreigners live, named *Liberation Village*. He plans to not only sell books, but also to host various events and free workshops, sometimes held in conjunction with other bookstores, for guest authors to explain the purpose of self-publication, and share information about independent publishing. His bookstore is therefore not simply a place to sell books, but rather a network linking independent publishers and readers, and serves as a non-institutional training location for independent publishing, thereby expanding the purpose of independent bookstores. Many of the other interviewees had participated in this type of publishing workshop in order to acquire skills in independent publishing distribution and public relations when they were new to independent publishing. Amateurs who have earned a reputation through producing a number of publications appear as 'speakers' at customer events, which tend to be held once or twice a week at these independent publishing bookstores, in order to make incidental revenue (Hyun-Min; Do-Hwan; Mi-So).

It can be observed that the majority of these independent publishing bookstores are located in suburban, non-commercial districts in Seoul. However, these independent publishing bookstores are perceived as being the physical channel of the 'sub-culture' of young South Korean 'hipsters', and are beginning to gain attention from the surrounding business community, and they are thereby become commercialised as a place of the consumption of "'analog sensibility' driven by young people" (Seon, 2017). Similarly, some of the interviewees highlighted that one of the reasons why amateur books appeal to the younger generation is that they cater to the desire to consume the rarity, and to show it off to the world in a physical form (Park, 2016c). In addition, some interviewees explained that media coverage of independent bookstores has been colourful, providing examples such as, "How about a Shakespeare vacation in an extraordinary neighborhood bookstore" (Seon, 2017), "Evolution of a small bookstore riding through social media" (Cho, 2017), and "Rebellion of a local bookstore". Furthermore, an increasing number of cases exist in which independent bookstores have unintentionally contributed to the gentrification of an area. As a result, these aspects have resulted in an increased perception of an independent bookstore as being a multiplex space, incorporating economic and social values, which customers visit in order to enjoy the space itself, even if they do not come to buy books.

The development of such a culture that encompasses the '*hip* atmosphere' of an independent publishing bookstore can be seen at first glance to constitute an opportunity to expand the rewards proceeding from the increase in the size of the network, and the investment in sales activities. On the viral-marketing side, users' word-of-mouth in social media is involved in consuming such 'hip' culture. For example, the independent publishing bookstore is spoken of, and viewed as, a good 'dating venue', where a couple can spend time browsing for rare books in a unique atmosphere, without paying a lot of money. As a result, as the interest in the indie culture produced by these bookstores has grown, so the cost of the stores' rent has increased proportionately, and the bookstores that have been forced to relocate to edges of adjoining districts have closed due to lack of accessibility (Mi-So). Ultimately, sustainability in the face of gentrification has become a pertinent hot topic for these bookstores, and as a result, concern exists within the

bookstore community that "the speed of proliferation of independent bookstores is exceeding the demand" (Park, 2016c: N.pag.).

Ironically, the reason why independent publishing bookstores can continue to distribute amateur books is that media and social media promotes them as constituting part of a special consumerist culture. As it is possible to disseminate information concerning the sellers via these channels, the interviewees were acutely aware that the potential consumers for their publications are a young generation with a curiosity about the sub-culture. Since their self-publishing activities, and self-branding work, are conducted via the same social media channels, these media activities have become a specific opportunity for increasing the cultural and economic value of the amateur publications. Paradoxically, however, this contributes to the recurrence of the *gentrification* cycle of the independent bookstores, the sole source of distribution, which will eventually result in the commercialisation of amateur bookmaking activities.

This discussion suggests that, with the development of South Korea's self-publishing culture, a new type of artisan who has stubbornly adhered to the production of old media, has appeared. In this context, craftsmanship means a desire for the work itself to be produced perfectly, and these amateur self-publishers share an explicit goal of conducting their self-publishing in a belief that their work is different from the products of the traditional publishing industry. Due to the fact that digital technologies enabling self-publishing to have negated the bottleneck phenomena in the publishing industry, these individuals could employ this technology to invest themselves in the work of materialising their memories, and creating a new book culture. However, significantly, they choose to reject the use of digital hypomnemata, anecdotal records, for self-publishing in the Internet in favour of producing physical books, a material form of self-expression and self-externalisation, which are networked within the small-scale physical distribution channels of independent bookstores.

These amateur publications are thus not only the repositories of individual records, but are also the mnemotechnics for trans-individual activities connecting their pre-individuals to the reader community. Their production aims to help the readers get out of amnesia.

This community, as the hypomnesic milieu, in which hypomnemata facilitate the deployment of memory, could be seen as being associated with the embodied act of memory - or what Stiegler called "anamnesis" (2010a: 66). In this way, these amateurs and the reader community can be possibly differentiated from consumers who are dissociated from anamnesis, unconsciously buying books recommended by engines driven by machine learning (ML) on Amazon.

Ultimately, these hypomnemata, amateur self-publications, not only prevent individual memory loss, but also promote the transfer of memory between individual symbolic practices, and community formations. As a result, this micro-cultural movement contributes to the diversity of the publishing culture, and to knowledge production in South Korea. It can be considered that such a movement weakens the position of a traditional, publisher-certified author, although its political relevance resides in the sense that it socially awakens the various meanings of 'the author', and that it materialises small stories, or the voices of people without voices that the traditional publishing industry does not illuminate. Concurrently, it is noteworthy that the taste of the community that actively consumes the products of self-publishing, as well as the independent publishing bookstores that mediate and condition their distribution, possess close economic and social connections.

Amid the cultural context in which amateur independent publications, such as paper books, emphasise the value of the sub-culture, amateurs perceive themselves as authors as well as publishers, defining themselves as a 'creative entrepreneur' (McRobbie, 2016). As a result, they cannot ignore the importance of the relationship between independent bookstores and social media. Ironically, the commercial development of the independent bookstores, together with word-of-mouth in social media, encourages both the increase in the power of the subculture, and the commercialisation of amateur production, which strengthens, as well as inhibits, their independence. However, young amateur independent publishers have shown themselves to be active producers of a culture that recognises them as 'amateurs', while responding appropriately to, compromising, or rejecting, such changes in order to sustain the value of the amateur's independent activities. As a result, amateur self-publishing cannot be judged as a mere trend that will

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yield to the commercialisation associated with the circulation of gentrification, in which an ostentatious lifestyle is promoted among the young generation who wish to be 'hip' and 'unique'. Rather, it should be viewed as a protean culture in which the goals and values pursued by amateur self-publishers who pre-produce the culture are transforming the entire business as they unite and conflict with other commercial values.

Chapter Eight. Conclusion

This thesis began by theorising amateur cultural production on the Web as a transindividual activity. Digital technologies, which emerged upon the advent of the Web, play a crucial role not only in connecting amateurs with their potential audience but also in mediating contents produced and circulated by the amateurs. The audience also uses them not only to consume or decode the content, but also to reveal their opinion about it, share it with others, thereby reproducing its symbolic value. In other words, the technologies give voice to the 'common' within these subjects (Simondon, 1958/2010: 253; Virno, 2006: 36), and, in Negri and Virno's (2003) words, "what is common" is exteriorsed in the process technologically mediated by the technology, "the I outside of the I", as it is obvious certain transindividual dimensions of those activities are necessarily made tangible by these social interactions. Thus, as long as amateurs and audiences are involved in the activities – that is, for Stiegler (2017b) 'the [amateur] practice of repetition' to become what they desire to be and want to realise – which perpetuate, modify and expand the collective inheritance (again, "what is common"), thereby making individual (amateur) and collective cultural production persistent. This is why it must be thus noted that neither amateurs' nor audiences' activities using digital technology should be referred to as consumers' or prosumers' activities, but rather as 'transindividual activities'.

Meanwhile, in the domain of digital culture, all cultural, communicative, and technological forms of expression related to the transindividual activities of amateurs and audiences (e.g. digital texts, images, sounds, videos, communications, etc.) are now circulated like a form of 'gift' between (amateur-)givers and (audience-)receivers. What is in common in this context is the value attached to the gift and a sense of autonomy in its exchange. In particular, creative and inventive amateur contents are shared and circulated throughout online communities on the UGC plaforms, often 'free of charge', as is evident in the case of gift economy on the Webtoon and Afreeca TV platforms. The meaning of 'free' here resonates with what theorists of the Commons have suggested (Benkler, 2003; Hardt, 2010; Roggero, 2010). Such amateur content is disseminated free

of charge – like air – since its production is self-organised and autonomously distributed outside the control of cultural industries and digital platforms.

That the creation of amateur content is free, and thus not subject to professional norms or industry instructions has led its techno-aesthetic characteristics towards an alternative direction. The amateur's lifestyle itself has become a key element in identifying the entirety of cultural content production. Styles of representating content vary according to each individual amateur's experience, memory, knowledge, and different ways of externalising them into a particular form of self-expression and self-writing through self-study. For this reason, such genres as 'Mukbang' on the Afreeca TV platform and the 'daily life cartoon' on the Webtoon platform, which used to receive little attention in the conventional cultural industries, have been spotlighted in the current amateur productions in South Korean society, and are even regarded as an important form of cultural representation.

Given this take, this thesis argues the possibility that much of current audiences are fond of the 'originality' of amateur content (that is, Simondonian concept, 'singularity'), even more than its quality. This is a generous love, all about respect of various lifestyles and cultural diversities. These amateur individualities and creativities may have been considered of lower aesthetic and commodity value compared to those of the cultural industry or experts. However, as exemplified by the Webtoon and the Afreeca TV case studies, audiences still love, patronise, and are individuated by the works of amateurs. This is mainly because these amateurs are 'being-together' with their audience, in contrast to cultural industries and digital platforms. On Afreeca TV's daily live video streaming show, the BJ does not merely eat and play games, but he communicates with his viewers. The bi-directional Net allows being together virtually, whereby the BJ responds immediately to audience's reactions (although audiences cannot always easily attract the attention from popular BJs).

Since the exchange and circulation of these gifts is based on the technologically- mediated social interaction between amateurs and their audiences, then a crucial technological condition of transindividuation is the entire production system of the digital network – at

least on the 'gift' culture-based platforms which hinge on the collective-transindividual existence of amateurs and audiences. Thus the platforms developing and exerting control over the technologies of circulation of the 'gift' have become involved in the overall composition of the psycho-social individuation of amateurs and audiences. In other words, the platforms must be always 'technologically-transindividual', rather than being mere technical entities, and, by doing so, their economic extension into the web ecosystem could affect users' and amateurs' transindividual activity.

Along with the transformation of the (amateur-)producers and (audience-)users relationship on such platforms, the research further identifies elements of increased competition. As shown in Chapters 5 and 6, amateur-gifting is based on a 'pledge of competition'. In the most clear example of that on Afreeca TV, amateur live video streamers compete in real-time to attract attention in order to increase the level of donations from their audiences. This general inclination towards competition leads to the emergence of new norms of reciprocity that in turn also makes audiences competitive, as seen in aggressive donation campaigns like "if you want to watch or lurk amateur content, make some monetary support or at least 'like (it)'." On the other hand, audiences' competition also manifests in the 'star balloon sending' of Afreeca TV as a real-time renewal of love. In some cases, admirers make a massive donation, which becomes a form of symbolic capital that allows the donor to stand out in the (even transient) real-time conversation within the live broadcast community. Obviously, both amateurs and audiences change the meaning of the term in ways different from Barthes' definition that amateurism does not accompany "the spirit of mastery or competition" (1973: 52).

In light of this new mode of competition-driven amateurism, it is possible to conclude that amateur transindividual activities stimulate a 'different' gift culture and economy into which the spirit of 'competition' is instilled. However, it is yet controversial that such support for amateur activity is exchanged with virtual currency through a technical means developed by the platform. This can be understood as the Marxist notion of 'reification' of amateur gifting, triggering a form of psychic-social (dis-)individuation in which transindividual activities come to be identified with physical properties of 'money.' Indeed, an extreme case in point: the unexpected appearance of 'star balloons' (animated

images showing in real time an audience donation monetised into virtual money) on Afreeca TV caused a massive shock, often rupturing communication channels originally designed as free messaging between audiences (as discussed in Chapter 6, concerning Yoo Sohee's sponsorship record). When such disruptions happen repetitively, a real problem develops. In this state of distraction (Benjamin, 1936/2002), the individual subjects may become disillusioned about the dream of collective individuation, which is being-together – communicating as equals.

This can be understood as the new 'symbolic misery' (c.f. Stiegler, 2004/2014; 2005/2015) of amateur gifting in which the presupposition of a 'money' system substitutes for aesthetic experience and collective activities on the Net. However, this thesis has also argued that, despite the strong tendency towards monetary rewards and incentives, most amateurs bear a strong sense of responsibility for the exchange of emotions in the amateur productions centred on such real-time, crowd-sourcing pledge platforms (i.e., the 'emotional labour' of Mukbangers and Webtoonists communicating with and acting on behalf of audiences). Furthermore, as they become more familiar with the conditions of technologically-mediated social interactions, they cannot be conscious of public criticism of overly commercial activities, at least from the audience communities where they belong and contribute to their development. In fact, although monetising gifting still provokes criticism in South Korean society, some famous Afreeca TV BJs have donated cash and goods to vulnerable and poor people through the platform mediation since 2014 (Hur, 2017). In this sense, this thesis's conclusion could have been that the gift culture and economy on Afreeca TV has become a kind of *pharmakon*, possessing an ambivalent state of a poison and a remedy simultaneously (Stiegler, 2012b). This leads to the question of whether there is any strategy against the reification of amateur gifting.

This is reminiscent of Kostakis (2009), a Marxist critic of digital capitalism. He once argued and forecast that a new amateur class of the Web should break with the past false consciousness of the proletariat and claim an original value of amateurism, by not regarding the alienated nature of human labour – money – as an end in itself. However, such criticism involves the risk of reducing amateur activity to a kind of 'privileged' ethical activity that cannot be achieved without overcoming the economic problems in

reality. Above all, the dilemma is, amateur activity, as already being mediated by digital technologies, is a non-class routine activity that is the result of mass amateurisation and has already become a common thing. For this reason, this project rather pays attention to the platforms that create a competitive atmosphere for the quantitative and qualitative expansions of freely-provided amateur contents, and develop appropriate, often technically simple, means to deliver compensation for competition. Typical examples of this tactics include the popular vote for amateur-based competition on the Webtoon platform, and a real-time BJ popularity ranking presented on the Afreeca TV. These devices visualise a real-time index-focused audience-attention within bi-directional stimulus arrays between amateur content producers and their viewers. These numbers are shared as a kind of tacit knowledge on the platforms and create a hierarchical order between amateur and Pro-Ams. Eventually, all emotional relationships triggered by amateur content processes are expressed in rankings. For those competitive amateurs wanting to earn as much as a professional but whose livelihood remains dependent on audience sponsorship, contending for precedence is paramount for their symbolic survival.

The digital platforms also promise 'competitive compensations' as a way to attract excellent amateur content. They promote competition through not only amateur rankings and popular votes, but also 'compensation apparatuses' such as virtual money sponsorship ('star balloon' game-type patronage system of Afreeca TV), crowdfunding viewer support, and online adverts sharing programmes ('Page Profit Share', 'Potential-Up' scholarship, and Pledge program of Naver and Line Webtoon). However, in these compensation schemes, the platforms themselves are primarily responsible for 'technologically mediating' such sponsorship, providing tools for users to send pledges to the amateurs. Some platforms such as Line and Afreeca TV even collect 'exchange fees' when transferring audience donations. What's worse, the treatment given during the competition championship is not much different. When commissioning work to amateur-based competition winners, the platforms proposed such a seriously low wage that it once featured in a range of South Korean news media. But the problem is, as these Webtoon platforms, Web portals and Afreeca TV have retained their near-monopoly in live video streaming service and Webtoon service, respectively, until recently, amateur producers have thus remained in this relationship; they are well aware that their economic rewards

would disappear without these platforms. There was a kind of consensus about the fairness of platform commissions (as discussed in Chapter 5 and 6).

It is obvious that in the virtual labour market, amateurs who work like professionals, as in the examples of amateur Webtoonists in semi-final competitions, can no longer be seen as free-labourers who are voluntarily self-exploiting with pleasure. Some of them sign contracts with those platforms and receive monetary compensation for their hours and days of work – through platform or platform mediation. In the case of beloved Afreeca BJs earning huge revenues, they are involved in various cultural productions and intermediary activities that can be categorised as immaterial labour. Mukbang BJs are not just eating food but criticising or promoting its consumption and commenting on their actions in real time – as a self-broadcaster-entrepreneur-commentator. The moment in which these amateurs are called 'Pro-Am' on these kinds of platforms marks the shifting nature of transindividual activity, from transindividuality to precarity. This thesis argues, in the cultural and media area, that self-employed professionals and freelance artists are entering into the virtual labour market of the Web (particularly in the case of Webtoonists in Chapter 6). This tendency gives a new meaning to 'web-Pro-Am' professionals who hope to be 'picked up' in real time in the virtual labour market, even if they also pretend at being or act as amateurs. In this sense, Pro-Am is a new category of 'creative precariat' (c.f. de Peuter, 2014; McRobbie, 2017) that has to deal with a financial crunch and unrest over unstable, precarious working conditions until they are called on by one of the various commercial entities to work 'on-demand' through the digital platform.

However, at the same time, what is noticeable is that, since unpaid amateurs have exhibited and evaluated their contents on the Web for only a decade, those who realise the economic value of their production are now inciting competitions between platforms. Platforms compete to attract the attention of amateurs and users. It is mainly because everything amateurs create is personal to their own lives that such creations can never be fully owned or copied by the platforms or other cultural industries. In particular, cognitive capitalist digital platforms, parasitic on the amateur content and the consequent sponsorship of the community, can never laugh at the resistance of these living labourers. Notably, most beloved Pro-Ams receiving enormous support from audiences have proven

their competence in communication. Their production and fan sponsorship to sustain it are more important factors of the commodity economy than that of the platform itself. Indeed, when amateur content producers and competitive communicators become central to political struggles, the ripple effect was a surprise to Seoul, and to the whole of Korean society as well.

For instance, famous BJ couples on Afreeca TV not only moved over to YouTube but also acted there as testers for developing a donation system similar to that of Afreeca TV. This kind of 'exodus' of amateurs is also observed where competition contestants hired as freelance Webtoonists are dissatisfied with poor payment and move to smaller-sised rival platforms. Notably, the platform already struggles to prevent the further escape of amateurs. Naver Webtoon, which was socially disgraced because of its poor treatment of amateur creators, began operating their 'scholarship system' in 2016, stating that it wants to support the amateurs' livelihood even during the competition period. However, the original concept of 'exodus of the multitude', which was theorised by cognitive capitalism theorists such as Hardt&Negri (2001), and Virno (2003) means to escape from the existing social and political order and constitute a new social and political order under the banner of biopolitics composed of collective subjectivities (Hardt&Negri, 2001; Virno 2003; Dyer-Witheford, 2005a, 2005b). So far, the defections observed from Afreeca TV and Webtoon platforms have been limited to simple migration to another capitalist platform with similar economic logic.

Nonetheless, this thesis, on the other hand, suggests that Web amateurs are still a viable political project. The Web is the network foundation of collective subjectivities, in which we are always, or already, transinviduated; thus, there are many more possibilities, imaginations, and lifestyles that are related to how we reconstruct our society and economy. Most importantly, these possibilities can become a reality during unexpected political events. Everyone can give a voice to it. Thus, though it may sound 'small', like a sparrow chattering or the rumblings of discontent, it is still important in the realm of micropolitics. Can the BJ who makes money by over-eating, or the amateur Webtoonist who makes daily life cartoons become a democratic activist? At least the BJs we saw in Chapter 4 did. The BJs who played games and read books on the live Afreeca TV platform

broadcast could not ignore the audience's requests to act as an alternative media: they relayed scenes of the inquisitive anti-government political rallies that rocked Korean society in 2008. The transindividuality of the live video streaming service became immersed in Korean society thanks to the amateur broadcasters' passionate contributions. Their live-streamed broadcasts of candlelight vigils lasted for nearly 100 days, interacted with the digital technologies of other webs, changed national policies, and had even greater impact on Korean society. When the former president's corruption scandal broke out in 2016, candlelight vigils were again held by the multitude equipped with various media, such as YouTube and Afreeca TV. Eventually, the president was impeached, and the opposition candidate, Moon Jae-in, who joined the citizens' candlelight vigils, became president. During the presidential campaign, he said, "It must be a society where justice can be seen, heard and felt tangibly. Because every individual is different, it should be a community of respect and integration that lives in harmony even if it is a bit noisy and distracted."

This thesis does not claim that candlelight vigils were the accomplishment of Afreeca TV, or that Korea's regime change was achieved by amateur broadcasters. This thesis has consistently refuted any technological determinism. Rather, this thesis clarifies the cultural and political significance of everyday amateur activities of the multitude in which the transindividuality of technology and the transindividuality of the collective overlap. This routine activity becomes politically relevant when we organise relationships with others in technologically-mediated activity and at the same time critically analyse how capital, state, and various powers are intertwined with such technologies. At the 2016 candlelight vigils, there was a conflict between the old and the young generations: the Taegeukgi rally against the Candlelight rally. This shows that the making of truth based on amateurism is always carried out collectively, which can lead to different political results depending on the tendencies, beliefs, and class characteristics of the collective subjectivities. At that time, the divergent truths produced caused conflicts among two amateur groups and an expert one.

This thesis mainly focuses on the Web amateurs, cultural and political implications of their daily practices, and their relationship with the digital political economy, using case

studies from South Korea. I myself was also individuated during the research process, through self-criticism, reflection, and facing regrets. For instance, there is no case study on the audience communities, although I observed how they collectively interacted with Pro-Ams and consequently were individuated through technologically-mediated production and circulation of live videos and Webtoons. Not reflecting their real voice through the fieldwork is regrettable. However, it seems obvious that mass-amateurisation in the production and consumption of these amateur content takes place. The techno-aesthetic characteristic of Korean Webtoons allows the audience to directly scroll images from top to bottom to determine the speed and effects of the image flow. By scrolling the daily life cartoon, the audience not only remembers and recalls the 'small narratives' in it, but also gives careful attention to project reflection on it into the future. In the process of the psychosocial individuation, they participate in the collective project restoring the value of self-expression as a means of systematic manipulation of external memories. Likewise, in the Afreeca TV BJ's overeating broadcast, the voices of the audience expressing different emotions and desires are entwined and collectively cope with the emotional poverty of solo living. Here, 'living alone but eating together' in the Mukbang show young solo-living South Koreans acknowledging the transindividuality of the live streaming service technology. This is a new and valuable collectivism responding to the breakdown of the traditional Korean family.

Another important, noteworthy matter is, though amateur cultural production was triggered by the emergence of the Web in Korean society, its scope of influence is now expanding beyond the Web. Amateur self-publishers reject online self-publishing platforms and distribute their stored, externalised personal and community memories through small physical forms of books and distribution channels networked by independent bookstores. Although they use a variety of digital technologies for their self-publications, the way they exhibit them differs from the e-book authors or bloggers on the Web and social media. They materialise their memories into a hard copy paperbook made by their own hands. As discussed in detail in Chapter 7, as they persist persuing paper-book production like lonely artisans, they gain critical knowledge how to 'materalise' their memories or those of the communities where they belong, thus understanding the ambivalent characteristics of digital technology. Even if they might be

economically disadvantaged, they dedicate themselves to find ways to circulate their paper books. While forming a paper-loving cultural community with other self-publishers, these amateurs further construct their own networks, including collaboration with an independent bookstore that only distributes independent paper books made exclusively by amateur authors. Even if these networks do not get incorporated into the mainstream, it is not a big problem that deprives them of their love for the activity, although as 'independent' self-publishers they still feel the burden of performing multiple roles as an author, publisher and marketer.

Thanks to these amateurs' constant efforts, a paper-book gains a new meaning. It does not remain a technic of self-writing reflecting the author himself or herself, but rather becomes a *mnemotechnics* as "a power of individuation" (Stiegler and Rogoff, 2010: N. Pag.), since the book exists as what Stiegler calls "the community of the reader" (*Ibid*.). This community is co-constituted by both authors and readers, as long as they become individuated by reading the book, and thus communicate with each other across time. Also the book, at the same time, is individuated from their acts of reading, and is being transformed into the circuit, "the long circuit created by the readers", according to Stiegler (Stiegler and Rogoff, 2010). This denotes the construction of a base for further transindividuation of the aforesaid community – which, of course, must be conditioned neither by any industrial programmes nor commercial interests. Most importantly, if this circuit lasts long enough it will provides a new passage to critical thought and practice across time, then we could expect alternative forms of cultural production. Digital technologies will then be unarguably beneficial for amateurs' and readers' transindividual activity, and self-publishing can be an instantiation of a free, autonomous and aesthetic-technological activity of empowered community, materialising a potential for the counter-force against industrially controllable short-circuits in Web's cognitive capitalist platforms. However, we should raise vigilance against the tendency to over-romanticise amateur self-publication as a panacea to the 'symbolic misery' (Stiegler, 2004/2014; 2005/2015) in the digital era. While amateur self-publication materialises their own projects into technical object, taking it as an ideal-type of any amateur cultural production might lead to a misunderstanding that only those who are financially viable and willing to bear the economic expenses among other costs for self-publication can engage in

'genuine' amateur activities. This might risk replicating certain artistic amateur practices that were meant or considered to differentiate amateurs from other classes – for instance, those of the French 'honourable amateurs' in the 18th century (Guichard, 2012). Meanwhile, this question of costs also resonates with the concern of digital accessibility. The 'Web' amateurs I interviewed, who mediate their creations on other web and digital platforms for the sake of convenience, may also be seen relatively more prestigious than others who are digitally excluded or experiencing difficulties in using digital products and the Web. However, as I elucidated in Chapter 1, amateur activities in this thesis must be deemed different, in terms of both character and purpose, from practices that distinguish amateurs from others; it must, first and foremost, be construed as a transindividual activity.

It is noticeable that there is also the study on mnemotechnologies in this thesis, which reminds Stiegler's critique of the embedding of memories within digital technology systems. According to Stiegler, digital technologies aiding self-writing, which exteriorises individual and collective memories into technical objects, are dependent on the industrial mechanisms controlled by digital platforms or digital capitals (Stiegler, 2010a). Stiegler worries that such mnemotechnologies now give a challenge to the process of transindividuation (*Ibid*.). Perhaps such concern is intimated in the case of Webtoon platforms discussed in Chapter 6. Understood as a massive mnemotechnological milieu fused with 'Daily life' Webtoons, Webtoons allow amateur cartoonists to externalise their every-day, common memory onto the web(-cartoon), thus to make possible transindividual activities between Webtoonists and readers through the networks of communication on the platforms. Through the mediation of Webtoons, both Webtoonists and audiences are individuated, for instance, as in the "emotion" of readers, aroused from a very personal story, being conveyed to a Webtoonist through the comment window, touching off other readers' and the author's 'emotion'. However, there are yet both possibilities that, while these technologies related to Webtoon production and circulation give amateur activities a new sociality, they can be used for the platforms' own business purposes. Since all the amateurs' and audiences' activities are accumulated, organised and generated as the platform's data and contents, the values of their expression and externalised memories created as a result are commodified, marketed by, or

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exchanged into, the properties of the platforms. If this is the case, what Stiegler called the 'symbolic misery' repeats (Stiegler, 2004/2014; 2005/2015). Such loss of participation in the circulations and reproduction of all the memories and symbols articulated by the mnemotechnologies eventually results that the process of psychic-social individuation exposes to the manipulation seeking to hold the control of these technologies.

Owing to space constraints, however, this thesis leaves behind some unresolved frustrations. For studying the specificity of each amateur group dedicated to the production of newborn genres (such as Webtoon and live video streaming), there was relatively little preceding works that comparatively analysed amateur groups and cases; much of the extant literature is committed to investigating other (web) amateur groups such as amateur fanzine studies, as Henry Jenkins (2006) did. Moreover, in most of the case studies in this thesis, the interviewees' demographic factors are varied in terms of age, gender, income, and even educational background. It was fairly difficult to surmise their education or their 'offline' lives, as they can only be seen in the line of public appearance to the extent they want to show, although these methodological limitations will not fade the overall implication of this study. On the other hand, it is also regrettable that the literature review here focused more on narrowing the scope of study to the digital cultural production of amateurs after the advent of the Web, partly at the expense of a rich introduction of the precedent research on the 'old' amateur figures that could have further enriched the discussion. Moreover, there was no enough room for an in-depth analysis of the South Korean government's creative industry policies that support and sustain Webtoon platforms' technology manpower cultivation. Such analysis could have helped elaborate further on the connection between such cultivation and the neoliberal imperatives employed by the platforms' amateur Webtoon-based competition, such as "You can be a cartoonist!" (Naver).

I aim to fill these gaps in the future research with a critical approach to media imperialism, and hope others will join me in the endeavor to capture this fascinating domain of post-Web amateur cultural production. At the same time, while this thesis may have left behind

certain unresolved issues, I believe and hope to have shown that, as a collection of case studies that deal with various amateur figures which have appeared since the advent of the Web and digital technologies, the cultural production of Web amateurs has already become an important cultural form of our lives, and that it is changing our politics of transindividuation. Since it is already part of our lives, critical research on the technological and political structure surrounding it must continue. I hope this thesis on the amateur's transindividual activities through case studies of the South Korean Web inspires further studies that focus on the transindividuality of the digital technologies and their collective social-political subjects.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 List of Interviewees

Name (under a pseudonym)	Interview Date/Method	Age band	Gender	Notes
Afreeca TV BJs Total: 12				
Min-Hyuk	19/02/2014 Indepth	20s	Male	Gaming show broadcaster
Tae-Hyun	24/02/2014 Indepth	40s	Female	Politic News show Broadcaster
Ji-Yong	26/02/2014 Indepth	30s	Male	Culture show Broadcaster
Jae-Sang	20/02/2014 Indepth	40s	Male	Gaming/Gag show Broadcaster
Chul-Soo	17/02/2014 Indepth	50s	Male	Politic News show Broadcaster
Ji-Min	21/02/2017 Indepth	30s	Male	Mukbang Broadcaster
Tae-Yang	15/02/2017 Indepth	20s	Male	Mukbang Broadcaster
Jae-Seoung	09/02/2017 Indepth	20s	Male	Mukbang Broadcaster
Jung-Woo	18/02/2017 Indepth	30s	Male	Mukbang Broadcaster
Young-Soo	18/02/2014 Indepth	40s	Male	AfreecaTV employee (Marketing)

Min-Ho	18/02/2014 Indepth	30s	Male	AfreecaTV employee (Technology development)
Ga-In	02/06/2017 Indepth	30s	Female	Media Regulation Specialist(KR)
Webtoonist Total:14				
Jung-Hwa	23/06/2015 Indepth	30s	Female	Amateur Webtoonist
Hee-Jin	23/06/2015 Indepth	40s	Female	Commissioned Webtoonist / Webtoon Publisher
Mi-Soo	08/06/2015 Indepth	30s	Female	Commissioned Webtoonist
Sang-Jin	08/06/2015 Indepth	30s	Male	Webtoon Publisher
Yoon-Ah	04/07/2015 Indepth	20s	Female	Commissioned Webtoonist
Su-Bin	28/06/2015 Indepth	30s	Male	Commissioned Webtoonist
Tae-Ree	29/06/2015 Indepth	30s	Female	Commissioned Webtoonist
Beom-Soo	02/07/2015 Indepth	30s	Male	Commissioned Webtoonist
Bo-Ra	30/06/2015 Indepth	30s	Female	Commissioned Webtoonist
Jin-Ah	08/06/2015 Indepth	30s	Female	Commissioned Webtoonist
Sun-Min	15/06/2015 Email	40s	Female	Commissioned Webtoonist
Hyo-Ree	29/06/2015 Email	30s	Female	Commissioned Webtoonist
Yeon-Soo	24/06/2015 Email	20s	Female	Amateur Webtoonist
Se-Hun	03/08/2017 Email	30s	Male	Amateur Webtoonist
Self-Publisher				

	Total: 7			
Mi-So	05/05/2017 Indepth	30s	Female	Self-Publisher/Publishing Editor
Hyun-Min	01/05/2017 Indepth	30s	Male	Self-Publisher/Bookstore
So-Yun	28/04/2017 Indepth	30s	Female	Self-Publisher/Programmer(Film Festival)
Chan-Yeol	29/04/2017 Indepth	30s	Male	Self-Publisher/Web Designer
Ryeo-Won	02/05/2017 Indepth	30s	Female	Self-Publisher
Sa-Rang	05/05/2017 Indepth	30s	Female	Self-Publisher/TV Producer
Do-Hwan	06/04/2017 Skype	30s	Male	Self-Publisher