Call for contributions

International Symposium: "Alternative Cultural Globalization: from East Asia to Europe"
(Paris, 14-16 December 2022)

UNESCO (2016) reports that while Western countries remain the main consumers of cultural goods, what they consume nowadays, comes from various parts of the world and particularly from East Asia. The Japanese Wave has flooded the market since the 1980s with its manga, anime and video games. More generally, the "Asian miracle" of the late 1990s has found a breeding ground in the cultural industries such as the audio-visual and recorded music sectors as well as video games. Currently the South Korean Hallyu is taking the lion's share of the pop and TV series markets on a global level. Moreover, China, already one of the leaders in video games, is investing massively in the national cultural industries and the art market and is also taking a stake in the capital of Hollywood studios.

Almost twenty years after the diagnosis of the role played by cultural flows from Japan on a "refocused globalization" (Iwabuchi, 2002) and those from South Korea on a "decentralized multiplicity" (Kim, 2007), can we now speak of the Asianization of global culture?

Aim and scope: an Asianization of the global culture?

As early as the 1990s, a number of authors adopted a multi-level approach that gave central importance to the cultural dimension of globalization: as some of the founding texts testify (Appadurai, 1990; Featherstone, 1990; Hannerz, 1990; Robertson, 1992), culture has indeed been a constitutive object of the analysis of the global since the beginning of global studies in the 1990s. By emphasizing the deterritorialization (or delocalization,

denationalization) of imagery and the birth of transnational "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983; Hannerz, 1990; Appadurai, 1996), some authors have made the globalization of culture one of the privileged observatories for pointing out the required change of scale for the apprehension of the global reality (Beck, 2004).

The major issues that have been highlighted since those years still remain relevant: as a double opposition between the spread of American-Western cultural models and ethno-national resistances on the one hand, and local promotion and indigenization, glocalization, creolization, hybridization on the other. Nevertheless, other tools have been developed to investigate more keenly this inflection of the cultural globalization we are witnessing: the emphasis on participatory cultures and spreadable media (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013), digital intimacy (Choi, 2015) platform capitalism (Elkins, 2019; Poell, Nieborg and Duffy, 2021) and emotional capitalism (Illouz, 2006; Yano, 2013), cultural diplomacy (Nye, 2002; Ang, Isar and Mar, 2015; Iwabuchi, 2015; Jin, 2018). These tools allow us to better define the outlines of a globalization that has gained in scope, speed, penetration and even desirability through a dizzying circulation of imaginaries associated with cultural materials (values, norms, ideals, lifestyles) and cultural products.

Nevertheless, these tools alone cannot capture one of the major issues of global culture in the 21st century: the installation in the global landscape of powerful production centres, fabrication of new imaginaries from East Asia, (Iwabuchi, 2004; Chua and Iwabuchi, 2008; Russel, 2008; Moreran, 2013; Kim, 2013; Jang and Lee, 2016; Kawashima and Lee, 2018), sometimes recycling European cultural elements (Chappuis, 2008; Lucken, 2019).

This phenomenon of the diffusion of Asian culture is documented in many countries and geo-cultural areas (from the United States to Latin America, from the Middle East to sub-Saharan Africa), but is of particular interest in Europe, a continent that has historically produced and exported culture, being itself highly multicultural and intensely crossed by all sorts of transnational flows and dynamics. The irruption of imaginaries from geographically and culturally distant countries that have become major investors in cultural industries prompts us to examine this undeniable new superiority of cultural products, of which Europe in general is a major consumer, and which has profoundly transformed the imaginations of Europeans (Détrez and Vanhée, 2012; Pellitteri, 2016; Pruvost-Delaspre, 2016; Cicchelli and Octobre, 2021).

This international colloquium is the first scientific event to be organized in France on this subject, and aims to investigate this globalization of culture that comes from East Asia from 4 perspectives:

a) the production of cultural goods (within the framework of cultural capitalism);

b) the political competition in the global arena for cultural hegemony (through the use of soft power);

c) glocalization, i.e. the adaptation of production to local contexts (through the work of intermediaries);

d) and reception (by consumers who have become omnivorous, global or cosmopolitan).

Without denying the contribution of the American model, which's mastery in the field of pop culture has been emulated, the objective of this colloquium is to bring to light the alternative represented by East Asia, by spotlighting both the common features and the specificities of countries located in this geographical area, compared to Western countries. For example, if Hallyu was greatly inspired by the Japanese cultural industry, South Korea was nevertheless able to develop quite quickly its own strategies for the production and circulation of its products.

a) <u>The production side</u>: cultural globalization is very much linked to the new spirit of capitalism, based, since the 1960s, on growing consumerism, high urbanization, mass schooling, democratization of leisure and the development of new communication technologies. All phenomena are constitutive of both Western and Asian modernity. This global cultural capitalism has been called "aesthetic" (Böhme, 2017) or "artistic" (Lipovetski and Serroy, 2013).

This capitalism has made cultural goods one of its most produced, distributed, and profitable commodities: this system has operating methods in terms of sales and marketing strategies that are specific to it and whose impact on everyday life is of unprecedented

magnitude. This capitalism has shown itself capable of generating and maintaining a strong dependency among consumers, including by making intimacy (i.e., likes and dislikes and related emotions) - both cognitive and emotional - a commodity (Yano, 2013; Illouz, 2019): this evolution has given transnational cultural industries and consumers in search of new stimuli a fundamental weight in the functioning of the global economy.

Numerous studies have also shown that, even in the cultural industry sectors, states are strongly committed to supporting aesthetic capitalism: direct support, tax exemptions, limiting competition through quotas and support for exports by an articulation with public structures for the dissemination of culture in third countries (such as the Network of Cultural Centres), etc. The action of the states is also pursued at the international level within the framework of the WTO to ensure that cultural products benefit from a derogatory status ("the cultural exception"). Within these negotiations, the place of law is central.

Moreover, the platforming of aesthetic capitalism raises important questions concerning the maintenance of competition and product diversity, and of net neutrality. The complexity of this synergy between public and private, and of the articulation between the national and international scale, confirms the specific status of culture in the stakes of contemporary capitalism. What are the specific forms of cultural products capitalism in Asian countries and in what way do they propose an original model compared to Western models?

b) The political effects of these global cultural flows: the globalization of culture leads to an ideological competition for the production of global imaginaries through soft power (Nye, 2002; Kim and Nye, 2013). Alongside countries with a proven track record in cultural diplomacy (in particular France and the United States), the new global actors in culture have invested heavily in creating a positive image of themselves. This is namely the case of Japan (with the deployment of a "pop-cultural diplomacy", Iwabuchi, 2015) or South Korea (with its "sweet power", Cicchelli and Octobre, 2021) or China (Yu, 2010; Courmont, 2016; European Commission, 2017; Rouiaï, 2016 and 2018; Donnet, 2018; Lincot, 2019) which have made their cultural industries the spearhead of nation branding (Fan, 2008). How do different administrations go about investing in cultural diplomacy through pop culture? Apart from the culturalization and aestheticization of the image of the countries that promote it, how effective is the massive use of pop culture? Can we speak of a counter-hegemony or a new hegemony?

More than the pre-digital industries, digital networks can disseminate, rapidly and globally, cultural content that promotes, explicitly or implicitly, social and political values (individualism, heroism, consumerism, feminism, etc.), via popular products that are widely accessible, and sometimes co-produced with/by consumers. Their control has become a central issue for certain states. While digital networks and platforms promote values that are not reducible to an ethno-national origin, due to their global reach, they nevertheless remain firmly anchored in national realities, with their legal, cultural and political constraints (this is not only the case for Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Snapchat in the United States, but also for WeChat, Weibo, Douyin in China). What are the new faces of soft power?

If state investments encourage global cultural industries, actions are also moving towards policies that support national heritage and "authentic" local cultures (Curran and Park, 2000) - notably in reaction to fears of homogenization and cultural imperialism. What are the means and the scope of these cultural advocacy efforts? And how do we "measure" their effectiveness?

c) <u>The intermediaries of global cultural flows</u>: the products circulation of cultural industries accelerates the "global mix" (Pieterse, 2009), the multiplication of hybridisation phenomena. While hybridisation is a process as old as history, globalisation is one of its driving forces. One of the major lessons of global studies refers to the complex dynamics by which global cultural processes are integrated into local contexts, then appropriated and reinvented, in a word *glocalised* (Robertson, 1992; Jang and Lee, 2016; Roudometof, 2016). In order to better understand these dynamics, we need to look at the intermediaries who act on this *glocalisation*: political and institutional players (via quota policies, for example), economic players (artistic agents, distributors, managers, tour operators, authors' agents, publishers, translators, adapters, but also digital content distribution platforms, etc.) or civil society actors (fan communities in particular, whose actions are neither neutral nor marginal). How do intermediaries fit East Asian products into the national world of arts and promote their institutional and public recognition? To what extent do intermediaries act on the dynamics of globalisation by promoting local authenticities (and attractive as such, as demonstrated by particular 'geniuses') while at the same time promoting the dissemination of international ways of doing things, norms and standards (organisational, legal, qualitative etc.)? In fact, intermediaries working in European countries have accentuated the cultural

distance, strangeness and exoticism of Asian cultural products (Iwabuchi, 2002; Pang, 2005; Yano, 2013). How can we concretely analyse the production strategies of Asian cultural products aimed at global audiences, and the reasons for their success?

d) <u>Reception by European audiences</u>: the question of the mechanisms of reception of global products has produced numerous studies which propose very contrasting hypotheses to explain the attraction that certain products have managed to arouse in global audiences. On the one hand, some researchers postulate that the appropriation of foreign cultural content is only possible at the cost of a reduction in its cultural complexity, hence diminishing its interest: this is the 'cultural discount' (Lee, 2008). In a complementary manner, other researchers believe that products appeal according to a pre-existing and/or constructed 'cultural proximity' (La Pastina and Straubhaar, 2005) between the content conveyed by the product and the receiving public. On the other hand, research has shown that the appropriation of products participating in the international mainstream gives rise to a process that conveys meaning for consumers (Liebes and Katz, 1990), even in cultures that are a priori far removed from the product's culture of origin. This work of appropriation is all the more marked in the context of spreadable media (Jenkins et al., 2013), which accentuates consumer participation in cultural production. Drawing on a cosmopolitan approach, other studies have shown that foreign cultural products are the object of multiple appropriations, under social conditions, which contribute to the construction of the dialectic of the 'near' and the 'far' and, consequently, to the definition of one's place in the world (Cicchelli and Octobre, 2017). The high consumption of cultural products circulating on an international scale and coming from the four corners of the world does set up the desire to consume otherness - a kind of neo-exoticism - as a motor for growth, a desire that is skilfully maintained through the marketing of difference (Emontspool and Woodward, 2018). How do European audiences' appropriate East Asian content and integrate it into their daily lives? How are the cultural repertoires and imaginaries of consumers of these products transformed? How does consumption in the 2.0 context reformulate the notions of near and far?

This conference will address all the issues raised in each of the four plans.

Organisation

The conference is co-organised by the Global Research Institute of Paris (Université de Paris) and the Department of Studies, Forecasting and Statistics (Ministry of Culture). It will be held on 14-16 of December 2022 in Paris.

How to submit a proposal

Proposals for papers -in French or English- must be submitted on the conference website: https://euroasie.sciencesconf.org.

Proposals should be no more than 250 words in length and should indicate the theoretical framework, the data used, and the axis(es) in which the proposal fits.

Calendar

-**March 1, 2022:** submission of the proposals

-**May 2, 2022**: selection of the proposals and feedback to the attendees

-**December 14-16, 2022**: conference in Paris