

**Imported Second-Hand Clothes in South Korea:
An Examination of *Guje* Clothing as an Autonomous
Consumer Practice**

by

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Abstract

This thesis considers issues of individual's 'style competence' within global order. *Guje* (imported second-hand garments) fashion in South Korea is an ideal case study from which to examine consumer autonomy in the adoption of this Western vintage fashion trend since the 1990s.

The importance of *guje* clothing lies in the local-cultural discrimination between the 'imported' and the local second-hand garments; *guje* clothes have been considered far more fashionable than the locally generated used garments. Consequently, in *guje* and vintage markets, the origin bears a great significance, such as German or American *yasahng*, or Japanese(-import) jeans.

While the foreign origin of these garments is an emblem of being stylish, the images of foreign cities are mostly presented as ideal places associated with romanticism and nostalgia. Such fashion practice reflects South Koreans' 'rose-tinted' view of foreign countries and material culture. Furthermore, nostalgic memories are imagined and constructed based on Western fashion history in replacement of South Korea's own. More importantly, Japan plays a key role as a cultural and material mediator in the introduction of Western fashion, from jeans to luxury goods, to South Korea.

This ethnographic research concludes that *guje* fashion cannot be regarded as a fully autonomous consumer practice, but rather as symptomatic of global homogeneity, which reveals the cultural and material impact of both Americanisation and Japanisation dominant in South Korea.

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1. Introduction

The main topic of this research is the culture of *guje* (imported second-hand) clothes consumption in South Korea. My primary academic interest lies broadly in the ways in which imported goods and cultural styles have been assimilated, over the course of globalisation and Westernisation, into current South Korean society. Intrinsic to these overwhelmingly widespread material and cultural flows, are imported (both second-hand and luxury) goods, the significance of which has grown immensely towards the end of the twentieth century, so much so that they have played an important role in the formation of social and individual identity among South Korean consumers.

The impact of globalisation and Westernisation has been omnipresent in South Korean fashion consumption for some time. Amid this social background, vintage fashion was brought to South Korea in the 1990s. However, prior to the advent of this global fashion trend, South Korea's imported second-hand clothes market has had a comparatively long history. Wearing imported second-hand clothes, is known as *guje* style. The nearly extinct *guje* clothing market has now become notably popular among certain types of young consumers since the 1990s. This fashion revival of *guje* clothing coincides with the global vogue for Western vintage fashion in South Korea. Therefore, *guje* fashion can be seen to be closely tied to Western vintage trends.

As a result, the term 'vintage' has become a key word in South Korean fashion scenes, especially *guje*. The idea of vintage – applied to items as disparate as wine, stereo systems and cars, as well as clothes – is universally grounded in the fetishisation of things from the past. It is therefore interesting to find that in South Korea, both vintage and *guje* fashion trends do not only have a historical reference to 'old (second-hand) clothes', but are, in fact, also 'foreign clothes', or clothes which reference or reflect the past of Western fashion, presupposing geographical connotations in the South Korean notion of "vintage." Therefore, it is essential to consider both the cultural and material flow from the West to South Korea. In short, the recent popularity of *guje* consumption is due to the cultural impact of Western

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vintage fashion and has generated a large circulation of imported Western and Japanese clothes in South Korea as a result.

Elizabeth Wilson, in her book *Adorned in Dreams*, mentions that “Western fashions have overrun large parts of the so-called third world” (2005 [1985]: 14). South Korea used to be a part of the Third World during the post-World War II era. In this thesis, therefore, the consumption of the West’s second-hand *guje* clothes which have been assimilated in South Korea since its post-colonial history can also be considered as an example of these Western fashion forces overrunning the non-Western world.

This overwhelming penetration of Western fashions is not confined to ‘the so-called third world’. On the contrary, in a highly modernised country like contemporary South Korea, both luxury and second-hand Western fashions are spreading even more rapidly owing to the communication technologies, economic affluence and global trade. The latest Western fashion can be found on the streets of South Korea, almost simultaneously. In the context of global material and cultural flows, it is important to note the 1997/98 financial crisis – referred to as the IMF (crisis)¹ by eastern Asians, one of the most recent and influential socio-economic events in South Korea. The social impact of the IMF crisis on fashion culture in South Korea is well-described in Rebecca N. Ruhlen’s² (2003) ethnographic research. Ruhlen argues that the failure and despair of the global economic order during the IMF crisis has incurred “a veiled criticism of modern Western clothing – and of Westernization in general” (Ruhlen 2003: 124). According to Ruhlen (2003), this veiled criticism has been expressed in reversion to wearing new versions of Korean traditional attire *hanbok* among women as a political fashion statement.

¹ Laura C. Nelson begins her book *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* by explaining the “Asian Crisis.” “The International Monetary Fund proposed a “rescue package” of U.S. \$57 billion in loans, tied to a number of financial and commercial reforms, to save the nation from bankruptcy. (2000: 1)” IMF is a well-used abbreviation in South Korea to indicate this humiliating financial backdrop.

² Ruhlen, Rebecca ‘Korean Alterations’ in *Re-orienting Fashion* 2003: 117-137.

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The IMF crisis urged South Korean consumers to reflect the Western-oriented fashion culture and lifestyle, as Ruhlen suggested. However, more importantly, it served to alter the propensity towards consumption. As a result, a long-lived superstition held regarding goods cast-off by strangers has considerably weakened due to financial concerns. Paradoxically, an increase of scepticism in the South Korean approach to Westernisation, in the aftermath of the IMF crisis, has not affected the consumption of (used or new) Western apparel. On the contrary, this financial crisis provided a necessary boost to the resurgence of traditional and outdated *guje* markets facilitating to the emergence of consignment shops for imported luxury goods. Therefore, the consumption of Western used garments has grown exponentially, as a means of both thrift and fashion.

Such Western-driven fashion culture within nationalist discourse can be understood as “the cultural colonization of imperialism” (Wilson 2005 [1985]: 14). Wilson (2005) uses this term to account for the way in which people have a preference for Western dress to their national attire as a symbolic display of modernity over well-adapted traditional styles. This type of cultural colonization in fashion consumption will be analysed in this thesis mainly within the general context of Westernisation.

As pointed out at the outset, globalisation and Westernisation are the fundamental concepts which provide a theoretical ground for the development of this thesis. However, compared with the Western perspectives, the concepts of Westernisation and globalisation are often used and understood differently in South Korea. It is, therefore, necessary to clarify the specific connotations of these terms within South Korean context, here, as these ideologies greatly affect the national susceptibility towards the consumption of foreign products.

Sociologist Anthony Giddens offers a keen insight into the ways in which globalisation is perceived in non-Western world. “To many living outside Europe and North America, it [globalisation] looks uncomfortably like Westernisation – or, perhaps, Americanisation” (Giddens 1999: 15). Giddens’ observation can be applied exactly in the case of South Korean fashion consumption, where the

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concepts of Westernisation and globalisation are largely indistinguishable and overlap. Generally, Westernisation is considered even more prominent and prevalent than globalisation. Additionally, for outsiders from Europe and North America, like South Koreans, these two continents can be normally regarded as ‘the West’. Then, given this in this context, it is possible for South Korean consumers to identify globalisation in their fashion practice as the assimilation of the appearances of Europeans and North Americans.

Instead of criticising the ‘uncomfortable’ or incorrect association between globalisation and Westernisation, pointed out above by Giddens, it is my intention to explore the ways in which Westernisation (and Americanisation) has been perceived and employed as a dominant discourse in *guje* (imported fashion) consumption in South Korea. Therefore, in this thesis, globalisation and Westernisation, or foreignness and Westernness will be treated in light of being conflated terms.

In addition to the ubiquitous Western influences found in South Korea, I should also mention that Japan can also be included in a conceptual category of “The West” in this research. Political scientist Jung-in Kang notes that there is often discrepancy between the ‘geographical West’ and the ‘cultural and political West’, and “the latter prevails against the former, [...] and therefore, Japan [...] is sometimes classified as the West due to their ‘advanced or Western-level of living’” (Kang 2004: 54). In accordance with Kang’s ideas, Japan will be considered as the ‘cultural West’ in this thesis. In *guje* fashion, Japan is regarded as a primary trendsetter; for example, the importance of Japanese second-hand clothes *hurugi*, along with the prevalent Western styles, among younger South Korean vintage consumers should not be overlooked. For the sake of the subject matter, this will be discussed in Chapter 6 in regard to the consumption of jeans.

Further discussion regarding Westernisation and globalisation will be provided along with practical examples in the contextual chapter; but as briefly explained so far, the idea of Westernisation and “The West” is a key concern of this research

insomuch as it represents the dominant powers comprising Europe, North America and sometimes, Japan.

In addition to this general thesis on globalisation, several accounts of fashion studies will be dealt with from the perspective of cross-cultural clothes consumption. In regard to the idea of “The West” and the Other, Verity Wilson (2002) indicates the insignificance of geographical boundaries in the division of these two concepts.

Clothes from elsewhere [non-West, or Asia] had the power to hold back the banality of everyday life [in the West]; the ‘other’ in this case was not necessarily a geographical colonized domain, rather a landscape of leisure and sensation (Wilson 2002: 148).

Similarly, a geographical demarcation of the West is also less meaningful in this context. The focus lies in viewing the ‘other’ as ‘a landscape of leisure and sensation’, as stated above; then likewise, the West can be understood as a landscape of ‘modernity and advancement’ which will be demonstrated in the following chapter of Literature Review.

The focus of this study weighs heavily onto the acceptance of foreign imports, particularly cultural commodities from the West and Japan, because *guje* consumption involves the imported Western and Japanese garments and fashion styles. Therefore, the consumption of *guje* clothes in South Korea offers an opportunity to explore consumer autonomy and conformity from the context of Westernisation. By providing a counterargument to the globalisation thesis which is considered to mainly offer diversity, but not Westernised homogeneity across the world, I will suggest that a *guje* fashion practice is highly Western-oriented in nature. Furthermore, the particular South Korean socio-cultural discourses like ‘consumer nationalism’ (Nelson 2000), an ‘inferiority complex’ (Lee 1983) and an ‘outer complex’ (Kang 2004) -which will be explored in Chapter 4- should be considered as compelling forces in the formation of consumer identity and practice in the accommodation of imported goods.

Notwithstanding its recent revival, *guje* fashion consumption has not gained a widespread public appeal yet. This has led to a considerable lack of academic

attention on this subject matter to date. Moreover, there is serious cultural discrimination among fashion academics and writers who disregard *guje* fashion practice over vintage trends. It is often found that the word *guje* never appears in their discussion of vintage clothes which are considered as high (Western) culture³ and inclines instead towards the Western perspectives on fashion. For example, Hyunzin Ko's 'a Study on the Aesthetic Values of Vintage Fashion' (2001) deals with vintage trends in terms of Western fashion history, media –such as films-, high street and high fashion on the basis of subculture and postmodernism. The majority of Ko's reference points are European countries and the United States, which coincides with the Giddens' remark of the (uncomfortable) boundaries within Westernisation as practiced by non-Westerners.

Should the term vintage, then, be regarded as a completely separate concept from *guje*? To account for this fashion phenomenon in South Korea, I will employ Roland Barthes' (2000 [1972]) theory of 'myth' for a core part of my research methodology. Barthes writes, "*Myth is a type of speech*" (Barthes 2000 [1972]: 109). By speech, Barthes includes visual representations such as cinema and photography as well as any mode of writing and adds, "Mythical speech is made of material which has *already* been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication" (Barthes 2000 [1972]: 110).

In the world of art and design, this type of construction of mythical speech concerning second-hand clothes is most distinctive in visual representations of creative works produced by the Dutch design group Droog Design and the Belgian fashion designer Martin Margiela. In fact, my academic interests in the appropriation of second-hand clothes first arose from these two creative movements.

The rag chair (Tejo Remy 1991) is one of the most famous productions of Droog Design which was created with a pile of cast-off clothes tied up with steel strips. The significance of this re-use of second-hand clothes into a deconstructed design

³ See, for example, *Interesting World of Fashion* (Park 2006: 99-101), *Fashion Trend and Image* (Kim 2007: 14-15) and *World Dresses and Fashion Information* (Lee, 2002: 237-238).

product introduces “the narrative power of use-objects” (Schouwenburgh 2004: 38) and can be understood in the same artistic concept as another Droog’s designer, Jurgen Bey, as follows:

Why should I invent new forms if reality already offers so many fantastic images, so many special solutions. As a designer I only have to discover them and to restructure them into new stories.
(Bey, quoted in Schouwenburgh 2004: 36)

This kind of creative reconstruction of second-hand objects into myth – or ‘new stories’ as shown above – is even more evident in Margiela’s sartorial works.

Many of Margiela’s “raw materials” are fashion detritus when he starts with them: *second-hand or army surplus clothing* [my emphasis] is the commodity form with the lowest exchange value in the fashion system. [...] Margiela, in another of his reversals, *gives new life to second-hand clothing and simultaneously repositions it at the top of a hierarchy of prestige* [my emphasis]. He converts it into something that has the highest status, not just in the art world, where cultural capital is all, but equally in the fashion world, where economic capital is not insignificant.
(Evans 1998: 81-83)

The new cultural significance and economic status that Margiela creates with second-hand clothes is an apt example of the way in which mythical speech is reconstructed by using existing materials, in Barthes’ account. Margiela’s employment of “second-hand or army surplus clothing” is a particularly relevant aspect considering that the most popular fashion items in South Korean *guje* consumption are imported second-hand clothing including military uniforms. Therefore, while Droog Design and Margiela exemplify how these design practitioners accommodate second-hand clothing as their primary source of materials, this thesis will demonstrate the way in which individual *guje* consumers utilise imported second-hand garments as the embodiment of Western-oriented mythical speech.

Applying mythical speech to the case of *guje* /vintage consumption, it may explain the ways in which the existing *guje* clothing has been re-accommodated in the form of vintage fashion with its more suitable communicative quality than *guje* in order to attract South Korean consumers. One of the primary aims of this thesis is the illumination and conceptualisation of the word *guje* as a generic fashion term

which denotes the imported-second hand clothes and as a counterpart of vintage which is interpreted within the realm of culture and identity unique to South Korean dress history.

The purpose of this thesis is therefore firstly to examine the ways in which *guje* /vintage fashion practices have given rise to consumer autonomy in South Korea. Secondly, it aims to explore to what extent foreign cultural influences have engaged in *guje* fashion practice and consumer identity. Thirdly, this study will analyse if the consumption of *guje* (imported second-hand) clothes can be considered as a more authentically autonomous fashion practice comparison with the consumption of (imported) luxury fashion, which are generally faced with the public criticism due to a lack of self-esteem. Finally, this thesis will conclude by arguing whether *guje* fashion offers either global homogeneity or local diversity to South Korean consumers.

Structure of the Thesis

This research considers Western- and Japanese-oriented fashion practices in South Korea, along with a general discussion of the relevant theories and context. The overall structure of this thesis consists of two contextual chapters and three chapters with main case studies. Instead of providing a ponderous Introduction Chapter, I have developed a contextual chapter in more detail to account for the pressing issues of contemporary consumer culture and fashion discourses discussed in South Korea. Due to the large volume of a contextual chapter, this thesis is divided into two parts to simplify the structure. The first part deals with the general backdrop essential to understand the characteristics of consumer sensitivity in South Korea, while the second part consists of three main case studies concerning specific issues of *guje* consumption. Each chapter posits independent issues, but also can be understood within the extensive concerns of Westernisation and consumer autonomy.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review which is based on Western scholarships of second-hand clothes consumption. This historical account of second-hand clothing is separated in two geographic locations – juxtaposing the consumption of

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imported second-hand clothes in the West and non-West. The first part starts with Chapter 3 which discusses ethnographic methodology and semiotic analysis by presenting typical examples from qualitative interviews conducted in Seoul, a capital city of South Korea. It also demonstrates the various types of second-hand clothing shops which have been newly developed in South Korea. The relationship between *guje*, vintage, luxury consignment and charity shops will be explained. Counter-‘active audience theory’ and Barthes’ ‘mythologization’ provide a useful framework for the analysis of my case studies. Chapter 4 examines the South Korean socio-cultural context to help in the understanding of *guje* clothes consumption prior to the primary case studies of this thesis. In particular, imported Western goods and culture will be a central point of criticism.

The second part presents three case studies, starting with Chapter 5 foreign *yasahng* (military field-jacket) consumption as a start of *guje* fashion practice in the 1950s and its transformation and representation of male identity over time. Chapter 6 explores the world of second-hand jeans generates consumer knowledge on the authentic self and the fake other. I will argue that consumers often regard the label of jeans as a symbol of their identity; and therefore, whether their jeans are fake or authentic become a vital emblem in representing their identity. In addition, Japan plays an important role in mediating articles of clothing and fashion culture from the West to South Korea. Chapter 7 interrogates the ways in which ideas of vintage fashion have been differentiated from *guje* through its process of ‘mythologization’ and fabrication of historical narratives.

The final chapter reviews the implications of the three primary case studies in terms of the cultural and material flows from the West and Japan which are omnipresent in South Korea. It concludes by arguing that *guje* consumption offers diversity to its local consumers for certain, and yet, it does not reflect an autonomous and reflexive consumer practice. This thesis demonstrates the ways in which *guje* clothes have been accommodated by South Korean consumers.

2. Literature Review: Fashion Culture and Second-Hand Clothes Consumption in a Global Society

The aim of this chapter is to examine current accounts on second-hand fashion culture in the broader context of globalization and identity. This exploration will serve as the cornerstone of the cultural studies concerning imported second-hand clothing in South Korea. To date, there has been little theoretical analysis on this subject matter which has been researched in South Korea. From the outset, it was clear that the lack of academic research on this topic in South Korean literature would necessitate a heavy reliance on Western scholarship regarding second-hand fashion. By reading those Western critiques of socio-cultural and anthropological perspectives, I will investigate to what extent the existing theories are valid and relevant to build a theoretical framework to analyse the culture of imported used clothes consumption in South Korea.

If research of second-hand fashion has mostly been developed around Western countries; this corresponds to the development of Western consumer practices around used clothing. Recently, the fashion practices involving the imported used garments in developing countries have gained some academic attention, but these accounts are also chiefly written by Western scholars, not by native academics from the countries involved. This dearth of academic research stimulated me to provide an account of South Korean second-hand fashion culture as a native, not as a foreign -Western- observer.

South Korea has experienced astonishingly fast economic development since the 1960s. As a result of this rapid socio-economic progress, the cultural phenomena of second-hand fashion in developing countries and the West coexist in South Korea. On one hand, the current fashion culture in the West can offer a rationale for the tremendous popularity of vintage fashion trends in South Korea. On the other hand, researching into developing countries, in particular, provides an interesting fashion distinction between the imported and the local second-hand clothes which can hardly be identified in the Western consumer practices of used garments. The distinction between the imported and the local used clothes in the non-Western

world can be understood as an aspiration for the ‘foreign (or Western)’ and for differentiation within the community. The primary reference point will be the study of second-hand fashion consumption in non-Western countries such as *salaula* practices in Zambia (Hansen 2000, 2005). The existing demarcation of the imported and the local second-hand clothes in some non-Western countries holds up a mirror to my argument regarding the cultural clash of the individual and national identities from the perspectives of diversity and homogeneity, of globalisation and Westernisation.

Western accounts on the consumption of second-hand clothes (in the case of the United Kingdom)

This section will briefly consider the existing research of second-hand clothes and a few practical guidebooks and publications from wide perspectives, dealing with historical, economic, cultural and practical aspects. Firstly, numerous historical accounts, mainly based in England, have been introduced since the 1980s.

Madeleine Ginsburg (1980) initiates the study of trading in second-hand clothes in England, tracing their significance since the eighteenth century from a historical standpoint. Beverly Lemire (1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 2000) has also contributed her historical knowledge of second-hand clothing in eighteenth-century England. Similarly, both Elizabeth C. Sanderson (1997) and Miles Lambert (2004) show valuable evidence of the second-hand clothing trade in Edinburgh and Northern England in the eighteenth century, respectively.

From socio-economic perspectives, informal and second-hand consumption patterns (including second-hand clothes) of lower-income households in contemporary English cities have been investigated in empirical research projects, which are largely based on extensive surveys and interviews, by Colin C. Williams (2002, 2003a, 2003b), Williams and Christopher Paddock (2003), and Williams and Jan Windebank (2001). Williams *et al.* (2001) coined an interesting definition – the “excluded consumer,” a phrase indicates, which for him, people who are under economic constraints and acquire second-hand goods by necessity. The “excluded consumer” is a concept in opposition to notion of the individualist that

we find in later accounts of the second-hand consumer who is a creative and discerning practitioner in stylization and aestheticization of everyday life. The latter has become a popular subject in both academia and the world of fashion since the 1990s.

Geo-cultural understanding of second-hand consumption also provides an interesting case. Nicky Gregson and Louise Crewe (2003) investigate the sites of second-hand consumption in the UK, such as charity shops, car boot sales and retro shops, from a geographical perspective by applying participant observation. Firstly, they argue that the second-hand exchange is swayed far more by buyers than by sellers. Here, consumers have multi-dimensional aims: capturing 'difference' (fun), capturing 'value' (bargain), and 'spatialized practices of shopping' (buyers' use of geographical knowledge) (Gregson *et al.* 2003: 4). Secondly, consumer practices of purchasing second-hand goods are affected a great deal by the characteristics of the shopping spaces.

Gregson and Crewe define these consumption practices as "a temporary suspension of conventional social relations of exchange, as a form of carnival" (Gregson *et al.* 2003: 4). The comparison of second-hand spaces with carnival is after all in accordance with McRobbie's description of second-hand street markets as 'pre-modern modes of exchange', which involve being 'festive' or 'being on holiday' (McRobbie 1994: 140-142) and denote spaces of deviation from present customary social relations and exchange. This cultural interpretation differs radically from the economist analysis of the "excluded consumer" (Williams *et al.* 2001) mentioned earlier in this chapter.

In addition to this academic research, Carolyn Chapman's (1984) practical guidebook on how to find, repair and use second-hand clothes (including a full directory of second-hand shops, tailors and organizations across the U.K.) is worth noting for its core idea of 'thrift'. Here, Chapman considers the idea of 'conspicuous thrift' as a distinctive characteristic in second-hand clothes consumption in the U.K. The term 'conspicuous thrift' originally appeared in journalist Nicolas Tomalin's article "in *Town* magazine in January 1963 [...] after

Thorstein Veblen⁴” to indicate the transformation of lifestyle choices of urban middle-class “against chintzy bourgeois convention” (Moran 2007: 107-108).

Chapman recognises that in the United Kingdom the spirit of ‘Conspicuous Thrifters’ was diluted in the recessionary Eighties in contrast to the prosperous Sixties. According to her, ‘conspicuous thrifters’ originally indicate the conscious and discerning consumers and were opposed to the vulgar rich who practiced a mode of conspicuous consumption and leisure. However, a means of differentiation among ‘conspicuous thrifters’ in the Sixties has diminished in its initial intention to a means of saving money, especially in the case of utilising cheap second-hand clothes, in the Eighties. Therefore, in consuming second-hand clothes in the 1980s, Chapman suggests the concept of “Adept Conspicuous Thrifters” (Chapman 1984: 10) who have “persistence and knowhow” and acknowledge the importance of craft skills and knowledge in fashion styles. A similar account can be found more recently; since the late 1990s, the anti-fashion magazine *Cheap Date* advocates the idea of being discerning practitioners in second-hand clothes consumption.

In the whimsical world of fashion, second-hand clothing is more ambivalent; on the one hand, it is considered as (luxurious) vintage items among fashion connoisseurs and on the other hand, as a representation of a politically correct act based on the idea of thrift. One of the most typical examples of the latter is an anti-fashion magazine called *Cheap Date* which was launched in 1997 (Sims 2004). Paradoxically, one of its co-editors, Bay Garnett, is a renowned fashion stylist and consultant for famous designers and has also been a *Vogue* stylist.⁵ Therefore, it is natural to find *Cheap Date* not defying the idea of fashion, as such, but only resisting ‘fashion consumerism and tyranny’; reasoning that the vacuous consumption and the tyranny of consumerism generated by the fashion industry, it deludes people into being pretentious and also offers nothing but ‘(the creation of)

⁴ It indicates the concept of ‘conspicuous consumption’ in Thorstein Veblen’s seminal book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899).

⁵ ‘Bay Garnett: Doyenne of jumble-sale chic’ (Kamp 2005)
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/bay-garnett-doyenne-of-jumblesale-chic-511629.html>

unfulfillable aspirations', 'pointless dress code criteria', 'big business brainwashing', 'built-in obsolescence', and 'the exploitation of child workers in Asia and elsewhere' (Harding, 2004). The editors suggest the antidote to the current fashion industry, that is, a practice of thrift by making full use of second-hand clothes according to the individual styles or personal preferences. To a certain degree, their concept resonates with the previously mentioned notion of 'conspicuous thrift', but has extended into a political and aesthetic discourse.

The growing resistance to insatiable mainstream fashion industry, however, has been distorted and absorbed by the world of fashion to support the habit of "conspicuous consumption." Vintage fashion trends hit the British high street in the early 2000s. With the help of celebrity clients and museum exhibitions adopting or displaying real vintage items, 'the idea of vintage' (Jones, Nadia in Rickey 2004) came to conveniently coexist as a key fashion trend in both high street and designer labels (Rickey 2004), thus heralding another opportunity for mass marketing. When consumers start to crave something original and old in their autonomous second-hand fashion practices, whether as an anti-fashion statement or an act of thrift; the mass market offers a reproduction⁶ of the original vintage clothes to a wider public through its high street fashion chains. Individuals want to look authentic, and yet, being original can be an elusive task in this current mass consumption society. Despite this seemingly endless vicious circle, it is still the case that second-hand clothes furnish modern consumers with diversity, pleasure and thrift.

A question of nostalgia and authenticity in Western vintage fashion

Having provided a brief understanding of second-hand clothes consumption in the U.K. as a classic case found in the West, this section now focuses on a more cultural account of the modern vintage fashion practices in the West. From 1989 onwards, the theoretical analyses of contemporary second-hand clothes consumption have been developed in more depth, mostly from a cultural viewpoint. The centre of this discussion is Angela McRobbie's (1994 [1989]) seminal work

⁶ For examples of the reproduction of the past fashion by high street fashion companies, see 'the role of the ragmarket' (McRobbie 1994 [1989]: 138-139).

‘Second-Hand Dresses and the Role of the Ragmarket’. The significance of McRobbie’s (1994 [1989]) research lies in her pioneer analysis of the consumption of second-hand clothes as a subcultural fashion practice from the late 1960s to the 1980s and a means of achieving authenticity by individuals.

McRobbie explores retro fashion in postwar Britain in conjunction with the development of youth subculture. The implication of the accommodation of retro-style lies first, in the increasing role of women in fashion culture and business; second, flourishing creative entrepreneurship in cultural sectors of both music and fashion industry; and last, a celebratory act of consumption whereby second-hand market stalls have become a reservoir of trendsetters. The importance of McRobbie’s study is to read second-hand consumption not only as a cultural, but also as a social consequence in conjunction with historical evolution.

McRobbie (1994 [1989]) demonstrates the ways in which young British female consumers employ second-hand clothes and fashion styles to construct and present their identity of their era. The consumers in her research may be under the economic constraints which are similar to the social conditions of the “excluded consumer” (Williams *et al.* 2001) mentioned in the previous section. However, their cultural practices of second-hand clothes consumption are viewed differently; she suggests, stating that these young British women can be more creative and knowledgeable about their fashion styles. Here, street markets during weekends are described as one of the most pleasurable places for both bargains and leisure activities: “the atmosphere is festive,” and “shopping is like being on holiday” (McRobbie 1994 [1989]: 142). Therefore, McRobbie provided a completely new understanding of second-hand clothes consumption as being young, fashionable, authentic, retro and fun regardless of class and gender.

Second-hand (style) clothing can easily be interpreted as a nostalgic fashion practice, especially from a postmodern perspective. However, in the cultural analysis of second-hand (style) fashion, McRobbie refutes the notion that the postmodern condition of nostalgia is a given:

It is unwise, however, to place second-hand style [fashion] unproblematically within that cultural terrain marked out by Fredric

Jameson as the sphere of postmodernity. This would be to conflate retro-dressing as merely yet another cultural re-run, no different from the nostalgic remakes of 1940s 'B' movies, or the endless re-releases and revivals of old hit records (McRobbie 1994 [1989]: 152).

McRobbie rejects the understanding of second-hand (style) fashion in the perspective of postmodernity because it reduces this creative dress practice simply to a nostalgic act of re-creation of the past styles. Therefore, McRobbie defines second-hand styles as an un-nostalgic fashion practice as follows:

[I]t might be argued that these [second-hand fashion] styles are neither nostalgic in essence nor without depth. Nostalgia indicates a desire to re-create the past faithfully, and to wallow in such mythical representations. Nostalgia also suggests an attempt at period accuracy, as in a costume drama. [...] This [Laura Ashley fashion] style is marked out rather by a knowingness, a wilful anarchy and an irrepressible optimism, as indicated by colour, exaggeration, humour and disavowal of the conventions of adult dress. (McRobbie 1994 [1989]: 147-148)

Therefore, according to McRobbie, second-hand clothes consumption in the 1970s and 1980s is not a postmodern fashion practice based on nostalgia or depthlessness, but a representation of subculture with the employment of knowingness and intended pastiche of the previous styles by young adults.

Since McRobbie's (1994 [1989]) work, similar types of cultural studies have been carried out. The next three articles all present the consumption of second-hand clothes in a similar vein to McRobbie's (1994 [1989]) analysis by offering diverse examples from the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States, respectively; 'Bjorn again? Rethinking 70s revivalism through the reappropriation of 70s clothes' (Gregson, Brooks and Crewe 2001): 'Dressed in history: Retro styles and the construction of authenticity in youth culture' (Jenß 2004): 'Hooked on vintage!' (DeLong, Heinemann and Reiley 2005). These examples demonstrate that McRobbie's approach, viewing the consumption of second-hand clothes as a realisation of self-identity, has become a convention that has been widely adopted and has inspired numerous academics across different cultures.

Firstly, the issue with nostalgia which is mythically embedded in retro fashion, as well as the concept of authenticity, is well-argued by Gregson *et al.* (2001) whose interest lies in the popularity of 70s clothing and retro styles in Britain since the

1990s. According to Gregson *et al.*, this revivalism, at least in fashion, is not so much based on nostalgic sentiment as largely grounded upon two modes of reappropriation of the past fashion; that is, the carnivalesque –temporal spectacles for fun, such as 70s night-out- and the knowingness –the disposition of kitsch in everyday dress practices which represent individuality.

Interestingly, Gregson *et al.* crystallise the concept of “the imagined authenticity” (Gregson *et al.* 2001: 16) whereby ‘knowing retro consumers’ creatively mobilise historical narratives, personalize the retro garments accordingly and therefore, ‘construct their difference from others’. In their later publication, Gregson *et al.* incorporate ‘imagined authenticity’ into ‘imagined histories’ and reiterate, “Such historical fashion knowledge is mobilized to construct a personalized way of dress which emphasizes difference, individuality and knowingness” (Gregson *et al.* 2003: 148-49). The conceptualisation of ‘knowing consumers’ and ‘knowingness’ grows more and more important; because both McRobbie (1994 [1989]: 147-48) and Gregson *et al.* (2001: 19-22) employ it to diminish the aspect of nostalgia in retro fashion.

A similar question can be also identified in Jenß’s paper. Jenß, in her ethnographic research ‘Dressed in History: Retro Styles and the Construction of Authenticity in Youth Culture’ (2004), explores the ways in which 60s(-style) garments have been used as a means of expressing authenticity by young retro groups of the Sixties scene in Germany. The key point of this subcultural practice lies in the correspondence of the historical accuracy of fashion in this era with the wearer’s performativity of the lifestyles in the past “on an everyday basis” (Jenß, 2004: 388) –not only for special occasions like clubbing- in the twenty-first century.

Jenß suggests that authenticity is not inherent in, but is always negotiated with, both object (dress) and the subject (the wearer). For example, objects acquire authenticity and uniqueness throughout its historical revivals and are revalued or rebranded in the market. According to Jenß, this is what Margaret Maynard would call “commodification of authenticity” (Maynard 1999:184, quoted in Jenß 2004: 397).

Following postmodernist accounts, Jenß further claims that 60s fashion worn by young retro consumers in the twenty-first century is not simply “copying the styles of the original “authentic” [original emphasis] youth cultures of the past” (Jenß 2004: 395), but should be considered as “the identical copy for which no original has ever existed” (Jameson 1984: 66, quoted in Jenß 2004: 395). Furthermore, Jenß emphasises that “authenticity is a cultural construction” (Jenß 2004: 399). This can be exactly what McRobbie pointed out previously as “to place second-hand style unproblematically within that cultural terrain marked out by Fredric Jameson as the sphere of postmodernity” (McRobbie 1994 [1989]: 152). It seems that Jenß takes a liberal stance towards the question of authenticity and inauthenticity which is confined only to cultural interpretation. Nonetheless, Anthony Giddens’ concept of “identity as ongoing, constructive and reflexive process” (Giddens 1991; Keupp *et al.* quoted in Jenß 2004: 395) in Jenß’ analysis looks more promising.

Even though Jenß does not give a particular attention to the idea of nostalgia, there is a certain aspect which can be discussed in line with McRobbie’s account. McRobbie asserts that nostalgia requires “a desire to re-create the past faithfully” and “an attempt at period accuracy, as in a costume drama” (McRobbie 1994 [1989]: 147). Therefore, if “[m]embers of retro scenes seem to strive for greater historical accuracy than movie producers” (Jenß 2004: 392), then retro fashion at the Sixties scene can be regarded as a nostalgic dress practice.

However, as Jenß noted, “there is some latitude in how stylists interpret and manipulate the historic style to suit their particular interest and orientations” (Jenß 2004: 394). Moreover, what inspires these young German retro consumers is mainly the British mod style from the 1960s, and therefore, the historical accuracy is questionable in regards to their spatiotemporal and cultural gap.

More recently, Marilyn DeLong, Barbara Heinemann and Kathryn Reiley’s (2005) paper ‘Hooked on Vintage!’ introduces five case studies based on in-depth interviews with (American) female vintage consumers in their late twenties and late seventies who have an extensive range of interest in the past fashion styles from the 1800s up to the 1980s. Their research method is interesting as it provides one of the most specific descriptions by scrutinizing each interviewee’s figure,

such as body sizes and the colour tones of their skin, hair and eyes, the whole outfit from head to toe at the meeting and a list cataloguing their wardrobe at home.

‘Hooked on Vintage! (2005)’ then unfolds more detailed vintage consumption practices, documenting the interviewee’s personal motivations and preferences, their bargaining and collecting strategy for and techniques for mixing and matching vintage or antique clothes from different eras or with new items “to assemble a distinctive and individual look” (DeLong *et al.*, 2005: 39).

DeLong *et al.* pay attention to the revaluation and differentiation in commodity exchange and the creativity of recycling second-hand garments, and yet, ‘authenticity’ is still considered the most important aspect of vintage fashion practice here. They explain vintage clothes consumption by employing Virginia Postrel (2003)’s account of authenticity as pleasure; a both connection to time and place and process of self-expression. So, according to DeLong *et al.* vintage consumers firstly, gain pleasure from their experiences of shopping and wearing; secondly, are attached to the history and origins of their second-hand garments; and finally, display individuality by differentiating their look from the crowd.

After examining the theories discussed so far, two main issues must be raised. One is DeLong *et al.*’s misreading of McRobbie’s remark in relation to the haphazard manner in vintage shopping at the beginning; and the other is the explanation of (in)authenticity towards the end.

McRobbie [...] described the search for vintage as ransacking history for key items of dress in a seemingly eclectic and even haphazard manner. But does haphazard relate to the wearer of vintage or the manner of shopping? [...] Gregson *et al.* describe the process of mixing vintage and new clothing as “clever dressing for knowing audiences [...] Thus being hooked on vintage begins to appear not so much haphazard as a rather complex process involving the consumer/connoisseur [...] (DeLong *et al.* 2005: 24)

What McRobbie means by “a seemingly eclectic and haphazard manner” applies to what is shown on the surface. In her paper (McRobbie 1994 [1989]), second-hand consumers and retailers are described as creatively charged trendsetters ahead of high street fashion and imaginative cultural entrepreneurs. Most of all, DeLong *et al.* contrast McRobbie’s remark of ‘haphazard manner’ against Gregson *et al.*’s

comment of ‘knowing audiences’, when in fact, McRobbie has already mentioned in her paper that “this [contemporary second-hand] style is marked out rather by a *knowingness* [my emphasis], wilful anarchy and an irrepressible optimism” (McRobbie 1994 [1989]). Therefore, one of the distinctive features of all these academics’ understanding of second-hand (or vintage) fashion is the knowledgeable aesthetic practices involved.

The second point is found in DeLong *et al.*’s analysis of authenticity in relation to the pleasure of vintage fashion practices.

All the women also experience pleasure by combining different eras or combining vintage with new clothing to create unique ensembles whether they reflect specific period or create a contemporary look. (DeLong *et al.* 2005: 35)

DeLong *et al.* state that this act of ‘the mixing around vintage clothes from different eras’ can be understood as ‘inauthentic’. Therefore, they stress on Postrel’s remark, “If an ‘inauthentic combination’ is in fact pleasing, it will become a new -and newly authentic- style” (Postrel 2003: 114, quoted in DeLong *et al.* 2005: 35).

Given a number of studies on vintage /retro fashion in the West, the following characteristics can be considered for my own research. In the West, music is commonly related to vintage /retro fashion (see McRobbie, 1994 [1989]; Gregson *et al.*, 2001; Jenß 2004). Similarly, these academics point out gender limitation in reappropriating retro fashion. While nostalgia does not play as important a role in second-hand (style) fashion as it seems to on the surface; authenticity based on knowingness can be seen as a primary characteristic in vintage /retro fashion. Finally, postmodernity needs to be considered carefully in terms of nostalgia and pastiche in retro fashion practices.

The above mentioned features will be closely regarded to examine whether vintage fashion in South Korea is another copy of Western ideology within the ‘trickle-down’ capitalist structure; and if there are any differences to be expected due to the dichotomy of the West and the East, or if there are particularities to be found in vintage fashion phenomenon in South Korea. In the two decades after McRobbie’s

research on second-hand fashion, recent studies have inclined towards cultural interpretation and individual cases. While this is an effective approach to the subject in discussion, the political and social implications of vintage consumption in South Korea should be considered.

Consumption of the West's second-hand clothes in non-Western worlds

The previous discussions concern the consumption of second-hand clothing and fashion in the West (mainly in the U.K.) from versatile perspectives. And yet, one of the most salient features in the study of used clothes from the 1990s lies in the diversity of research subjects across different countries and cultures. A more recent publication, *Old Clothes, New Looks* (Palmer and Clark 2005) adds a substantial range to the research subjects from Renaissance Florence to second-hand Kimono, second-hand Indian clothes, and imported second-hand clothing in the Philippines and Hong Kong. This is a remarkable change not only for “a complete absence of the position of black and Asian women as [fashion] consumers” (McRobbie 1999: 38), but also for the accounts of the global flows of second-hand fashion culture. Therefore, the main focus of this section lies in the consumption of imported used clothing in the non-Western countries by paying particular attention to Karen Tranberg Hansen's pioneering works on second-hand clothes consumption in Zambia. This section explains the existence of the cultural distinction between discarded garments of the West and those of local origin which can be found in non-Western countries.

Western consumption of second-hand clothing is generally considered as an authentic and autonomous individual practice in contrast to mass-produced high street fashion (see McRobbie 1994; Gregson *et al.* 2001; Jenß 2004; DeLong *et al.* 2005). However, in non-Western countries, consumption of second-hand clothes can be highly similar to consumption of new clothes, as there are geographic discriminations made about the origins of garments, whether they are imported or locally generated. For this reason, consumption of imported second-hand garments in the non-West should be carefully considered in conjunction with wider issues of

permeating global homogenisation and the importance of sustaining national identity.

The threshold of this research can be found in studies by the socio-cultural anthropologist Hansen (1995, 1999, 2000, 2001). She has turned the academic attention of second-hand fashion practices to the non-Western world⁷ by offering a thorough and insightful analysis on the consumption of imported second-hand clothes in Zambia in the context of global economy and culture. This work is most significant to my research because imported second-hand fashion practices in the developing world resonate in many ways with what South Korea experienced once in the past as one of the poorest nations in the world. Hansen's studies can provide a concrete academic framework for developing this thesis, and yet it is challenging to examine in what ways the consumption of imported second-hand clothes in a developing country like Zambia differs from, or resembles, that of a highly modernised country like South Korea.

Hansen explores the consumption of *salaula*, a generic term for imported second-hand clothing in Zambia. *Salaula*⁸ is a Bemba word which signifies “to select from a pile in the manner of rummaging” (Hansen 2000: 1). The original meaning of this word might suggest the fortuitous characteristic of consumer practices in the West's discarded clothes shopping in Zambia; and yet, Hansen stresses that individuals' discernment and knowledge are deeply involved in consumer practice of *salaula* (Hansen 2005: 112, 116).

According to Hansen, “by the postwar [the post-WWII] era Africans had definitely made Western-style clothing and dress practices their own” (Hansen 2000: 40); since the mid-1980s, *salaula* consumption has attracted a wide range of Zambian consumers regardless of their gender and age and “extends across all social strata except the top” (Hansen 2000: 255). The West's cast-off clothes have not only provided diverse clothing choices to its consumers, but also have been adapted to

⁷ Many had followed in her footsteps by investigating the subjects of second-hand clothes in the sub-Saharan areas, such as Zimbabwe (Field, 2000), Gambia (Field, Barrett, Browne and May, 1996) and Malawi (Mhango and Niehm, 2005).

⁸ The origin of the word *salaula* will be mentioned later in this thesis in contrast to *guje*, a Korean term for imported second-hand clothing.

the local dress styles and cultural norms. Therefore, *salaula* clothes fulfil “both their [consumers’] needs and desires” (Hansen 2000: 1, 248) in Zambia.

These clothing “needs and desires” are the major focus of Hansen’s analysis and attempt to understand the role of *salaula* in Zambia: “While *salaula* consumption undoubtedly satisfies basic needs, it also mediates social and cultural desires” (Hansen 2000: 16). The individuals’ desire to realise autonomous local fashion practices through the appropriation of discarded clothes from the West is best exemplified in the following comment.

Secondhand clothing consumption in Zambia is about *much more than imitating Western fashion* [my emphasis]. It is a story about individual and at times idiosyncratic dress practices that are informed by local cultural norms [...] thus *constituting practices through which social identities are both constructed and contested* [my emphasis] (Hansen 2000: 6).

As shown above, Hansen advocates the notion that the *salaula* dress practice does not necessarily entail a mimicry of Western fashion styles and furthermore, that Zambian consumers creatively utilize the imported Western second-hand clothes to present their unique ‘individual and collective identities’. In the context of globalisation and individualism, Anthony Giddens explains construction of identity and consumer choices in everyday life as follows:

Even the small choices we make in our daily lives – what we wear, how we spend our leisure time [...] – are part of an ongoing process of creating and recreating our self-identity (Giddens 2001: 62)

Surely, Giddens’ comment in regard to everyday fashion practice poses two fundamental issues; self-identity and globalisation. It seems to be self-evident that an individuals’ self-identity can be (re)constructed and reflected in their fashion practices as well as in other everyday activities. But in the case, how far is globalisation involved in individuals’ second-hand clothing practices, especially when we consider *salaula* consumption? It is certain that globalisation has effected change in Zambian local fashion styles to some extent:

Given the multiple dress and fashion inspirations they [Zambians] are exposed to in today’s global market, it is not surprising that some of their local creative dress appropriations are beginning to destabilize long-held dress conventions (Hansen 2000: 250).

However, while Hansen acknowledges the tremendous impact of global commodity trades on a global scale upon Zambia's second-hand clothes markets, she refutes the idea that the global cultural influences necessitate homogeneity in *salaula* fashion practices.

There can be no doubt that the accelerated global commodity flow of secondhand clothing and the widespread consumption of *salaula* in Zambia in recent years are both products of globalization and its results. [...] The involvement of Zambians in the global market through consumption does not by itself result in increasing cultural uniformity (Hansen 2000: 251).

Here, Hansen negates the possibility of 'cultural uniformity' in *salaula* fashion practices which might come into being as a result of global trades and communication technology. In Hansen's analysis, globalisation only offers diversity in dress choices to local consumers through worldwide distribution of (Western) goods and is certainly not considered, as Giddens suggests, as "a form of 'cultural imperialism' in which the values, styles and outlooks of the Western world are being spread so aggressively that they smother individual national cultures" (Giddens 2001: 64). Moreover, globalisation affects both material and cultural diffusion, as Giddens indicates:

The cultural impacts of globalization have received much attention. Images, ideas, goods and styles are now disseminated around the world more rapidly than ever before (Giddens 2001: 63).

In the overwhelming material and cultural flow of globalisation, would it be possible to accommodate only a commodity from the West (which is consumed in a non-Western world) without being affected by the Western fashion styles? Even if it would – as Hansen asserts in the Zambian case -, then, "What is the role of "the West" in this [*salaula* consumption], and how can we speak of "local" practices involving garments that are not products of domestic manufacture?" (Hansen 2000: 249)

Hansen's answer to this question grounds on the fact that the use and significance of the term "the West" has diminished in the context of *salaula* fashion practice. She explains that the words like the 'outside', the 'well-developed countries' and 'the donor countries' have replaced the concept of 'the West'; and sometimes,

names of specific countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom or Hong Kong, are in use (Hansen 2000: 252). Furthermore, the idea of “the West” in *salaula* consumption is ‘unspecified’ and ‘imagined’, Hansen insists:

[T]here is no suggestion of *salaula* being the flip side of Western fashion. What the West is, above all, is an imagined place, associated with power, wealth, and an abundance of consumer goods that surpass most local products in quality and style (Hansen 2000: 253).

However, Hansen’s accounts of ‘the imagined West’ as a powerful and advanced subject reflect the ways in which cultural imperialism is deployed. Most of all, it does not carry weight whether ‘the West’ is imagined and insubstantial or not. Notwithstanding ‘the West’, the idea of nation and national identity “is [also] something which exists in the imagination of people” (Tomlinson 1991: 80), according to Benedict Anderson. For both Anderson and Giddens, imagination plays an important role in developing people’s sense of belonging in a community (Tomlinson 1991: 80-90). Therefore, if ‘the West’ came into being as ‘the Other’, an economic and cultural opponent against ‘the self’ (in this case, Zambia as a nation), then it is possible that the concept of both ‘the West’ and ‘the nation’ is imagined and constructed.

The primary question then lies not so much on the claim that ‘the West is an imagined place’, but on the ways in which the idea of ‘the West’ has been constructed and is now being substituted for more specific names (of countries) in *salaula* consumption. At this point, it is crucial to note that *salaula* garments designate not the general second-hand clothing as a whole, but only the imported ones from the West (or the donor countries, and so on). In Zambia, *salaula* therefore indicates the ‘genuine’ second-hand clothes, in contrast to the ‘third-hand’ garments which “refer(s) to previously used clothing, precisely by Zambians” (Hansen 2000: 172). Hansen describes the consumers’ discrimination between the imported and local used clothing as follows:

The purpose of the customer’s scrutiny in the [*salaula*] warehouse is to ascertain that the bale has arrived ‘fresh’ from its Western source, untouched by dealer interference, thus offering a range of ‘new’ items (Hansen 2005: 112).

Firstly, this consumer practice proves the Gregson *et al.* (2003)'s assertion that buyers have a far greater influence than sellers in second-hand consumption as mentioned earlier in this chapter. *Salaula* consumers actively step into the retailers' clothes bales and identify the 'new' (West's) second-hand garments by themselves. A very similar retail strategy is found in Gambia as well.

Gambian clothing traders do not iron or alter the clothes in any way but sell them in the condition in which they come from the bales. This is because Gambian consumers prefer to buy clothes which they know have originated in the West, not those previously worn and donated by the Gambian elite (Simone Field 1996: 372).

Hansen comments that "the point of origin is not the most important issue" (Hansen 2000: 248) in *salaula* consumption. However, as can be seen from both cases in Zambia and Gambia, consumers' active involvement in the process of purchasing second-hand clothes is mainly to clarify that the origins of used clothes are from the West and not from the local community. At this point, it seems more important to consider the reason why Zambians deliberately differentiate *salaula* from the locally used clothing. According to Hansen, Zambians refusal of the local (third-hand) used garments against the imported ones (*salaula*) is made because the third-hand clothes might mostly come from a deceased person which Zambians try to avoid wearing; in contrast, *salaula* garments are regarded "as having no history" such as death (Hansen 2000: 171-173). Furthermore, considering the serious social problem of grave robberies of clothes, it will surely influence Zambians' ability to discern the 'genuine second-hand' garments *salaula* from third-hand clothing, to a certain extent.

Nevertheless, there is no clear evidence that *salaula* garments are not handed down from the deceased people in the West. In another African country like Togo, for example, "the castoffs are called "dead white men's clothing"" (Maharaj 2004). Zambian consumers' worries of *salaula* being "dead people's clothes" were also expressed during Hansen's local interviews, and furthermore, a few wondered if *salaula* really could transmit AIDS (Hansen 2000: 253). And yet, in comparison with the emotional reluctance attached to the third-hand clothes, this kind of moral or hygienic discomfort in *salaula* dress practices can be considered relatively

insignificant and be easily overcome due to its geographical remoteness and the cultural indirectness between Zambia and the West.

Moreover, it is interesting to discover that the dichotomy between the 'genuine second-hand' and the so-called 'third-hand' garments is by no means a unique phenomenon in Zambians' *salaula* consumption and can be observed elsewhere besides Zambia and other neighbouring African countries like Gambia. In a recent book *Old Clothes, New Looks: Second Hand Fashion* (2005), Hazel Clark and Alexandra Palmer introduce an interesting chapter regarding this subject. It presents four countries: India, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Zambia. All three countries share the similar types of distinction between the imported and the local second-hand clothes, except India; India's case deals with their used clothing export to the West.

The origins of the imports are equally important in the Philippines' second-hand clothes market as in Zambia and Gambia, as described in the following text.

On the outside packaging of bales, however, the country of origin is often clearly written. Thus garments obtained from bales may readily assert their superior position if they originate in one of the desirable countries. In some of the more expensive or high-end shops, traders may conspicuously display empty bales that proudly sport their labels [...] (Milgram 2005: 149).

In the Philippines, a word *ukay-ukay* ("meaning to dig through") is widely used to illustrate the consumer practices around the 'imported' second-hand clothing (Milgram 2005: 136). B. Lynne Milgram offers a convincing concept behind this demarcation between the imported and the local: "*Ukay-ukay* thus encapsulates the close association between 'foreignness and progress' the latter associated with Europe and the West" (Milgram 2005: 149). Milgram's analysis of the *ukay-ukay* consumption demonstrates that the 'imported' cast-off garments (from Western countries, Japan and Hong Kong) are clearly distinct from, even superior to, the indigenous second-hand clothes which are generated in the Philippines.

Considering the geo-cultural proximity and the level of economic development, it might be expected that Hong Kong's second-hand clothes consumption would most resemble South Korea in comparison with the previously mentioned countries.

Literature Review

Therefore, it provides a particularly illuminating case study for this thesis. Hong Kong has a long-held aversion towards wearing used clothes of the deceased, similar to the Zambian uneasiness discussed. “Superstition made the indigenous Chinese population reject used garments, which were associated with the deceased” (Clark 2005: 155) in Hong Kong until the 1990s. In addition, Hazel Clark finds the reason why the thrift or charity shops were not common consumer sites previously in Hong Kong was because “not only was there a traditional stigma attached with wearing used items, but also fashion tended towards conformity rather than individuality” (Clark 2005: 158).

Nonetheless, economic hardship resulted in making do with second-hand clothes in the past, and yet with a clear distinction between the imported- and the local used-clothing.

Imports from the West, especially from America were attractive as being considered fashionable and modern, and because they had not been worn locally. [...] Although used, the clothes were desirable for their difference, as representations of ‘Americanness’ and as signifiers of modernity (Clark 2005: 156 - 57).

The above description by Clark illustrates the ways in which the concept of the West, more specifically of America, has been constructed in association with its representation of uniqueness and modernity in the imported used clothing consumption of 1950s Hong Kong. This resonates with the way in which foreign second-hand garments are favoured in the Philippines mentioned previously; ‘Americanness and modernity’ in past Hong Kong and ‘foreignness and progress’ in the Philippines. In the mid 1990s, a strong yearning for Americanness and modernity in consumption of imported second-hand clothing from the 1950s still lingers in contemporary Hong Kong’s fashion scene.

What distinguished these enterprises from charity shops was the fact that they were buying in used fashion items from overseas, especially from the United States and Japan, not recycling clothing obtained locally (Clark 2005: 161).

The above explanation shows that not only has the division between the imported- and the local second-hand clothing been maintained, but now, it has also become more specialised and diversified, with an even greater focus on the origins,

concepts and styles of imported cast-off garments. The ever-powerful ‘American look’, Japanese youth culture and global vintage trends are all strong motivations and aspirations for fashion consumers of imported second-hand clothes in Hong Kong. The following text, showing the trajectory of imported second-hand clothes consumption in Hong Kong, presents a model for second-hand consumption remarkably analogous to that of South Korea.

A significant transformation had taken place since the 1950s and 1960s when second hand clothes were worn for need, to being generally despised as being socially inappropriate in the 1970s and 1980s, to becoming not just acceptable but fashionable to a variety of consumers in the 1990s (Clark 2005: 168).

The above text explains the ways in which second-hand clothes fashion has evolved gradually over a time, and stylisation or assimilation of imported second-hand clothes has taken approximately forty years in Hong Kong – this is same in the case of South Korea. This provides a direct contrast to Zambia, where clothing needs as daily necessities and desires for personal fashion statement have coexisted since the mid-1980s. Having considered Zambia’s case, it seems that clothing desires, which are based on the individuals’ aspiration for authenticity, are not tied to the degree of economic development in a country.

On the one hand, the diverse processes of fashion development – either a shift over a long period or a simultaneous practice – in Hong Kong and Zambia can naturally be considered as separate cases; on the other hand, the popularity of fashioning second-hand clothes in –at least- four countries here, that is, Zambia, Hong Kong, the Philippines and South Korea, has been observed coincidentally towards the 1990s, irrespective of their political, economical and socio-cultural differences. Clark (2005) suggests two main reasons for the recent popularity of cast-off clothes in Hong Kong fashion from the political and cultural perspectives; that is, the 1997 ‘handover’ to China and the global fashion trends of nostalgia ⁹from the 1990s. The two reasons seem to be interconnected in Clark’s analysis. According to Clark, the nostalgic fashion style was the answer for the post-colonial identity in the wake of the particular historic change of the 1997 handover of Hong Kong.

⁹ The aspect of nostalgia regarding South Korean vintage consumption will be dealt with in Chapter 8.

Considering Clark's (2005) accounts, widespread consumption of imported second-hand clothes can be viewed as global vintage fashion trends which can be identified simultaneously across the world since the 1990s, or as (the West's) scholarly endeavour which tends to interpret the consumption of second-hand clothes in terms of individuality and authenticity since McRobbie's (1989) article. By suggesting this, I do not intend to disregard the representation of diversity in imported second-hand clothes fashion, but rather to raise an issue of imitation and Westernisation which remains intrinsic in these consumer practices despite the level of economic development.

In the studies of the countries mentioned so far, academics like Hansen (2000, 2005), Milgram (2005) and Clark (2005) claim that fashion practices of the West's (and Japan's) discarded clothes should be considered as creative and autonomous consumer acts from the perspectives of economic liberalisation and political democratisation and are not signs of the homogeneous and top-down global flows. The following comment by Hansen epitomizes this.

Rather than contributing to cultural homogeneity on a world scale in passive imitation of the West, second-hand clothing consumption in Zambia promotes awareness of difference between local livelihoods and opportunities elsewhere while allowing the expression of variety, individuality, and uniqueness in clothing practice. (Hansen 1999: 345)

Nonetheless, the fact that the origins of the imports appear to be more advanced (or developed) than the importing country itself can imply the possibility of "passive imitation of the West" (Hansen 2000: 256). Here, I should reiterate that 'the West' is the idealised self and is not geographical substance. Therefore, 'the West' is a relative concept which can be changed according to the socio-cultural context in each country.

The next quotation displays the extensive scale of import cast-off clothes which are circulated in the Philippines.

Containers of second hand clothing originating in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, northwestern Europe and Hong Kong [...] are shipped to the Philippines port (Milgram 2005: 142).

The origins of imports not only indicate the material flow of second-hand clothes on a global scale, but also suggest the possibility of inevitable imitation of the West's (or global) fashion styles. Clark and Palmer state that "whatever the point of origin and the geographical direction of the export, the commonality is that used clothing must be transformed to be recommodified" (Clark *et al.* 2005: 100). However, it is still possible that the recommodification process of imported goods from the West can be directed towards the Western-centred fashion by mimicking their styles.

Philippine consumers favour wearing "the most fashionable [styles] in Hong Kong" (Milgram 2005: 149), but not vice versa. Here, I include Hong Kong in the conceptual category of 'the West' as an imagined place of 'modernity and progress' in the context of *ukay-ukay* consumption in the Philippines.¹⁰ In Hong Kong, by contrast, global or international styles connote Japanese or American fashion, not Philippine fashion. Thus it is natural that the representation of the notion of modernity and progress is coupled with the 'trickle-down' practices rather than the 'bottom-up' or 'trickle-across', and the West in this context should be regarded as the imagined and advanced 'Other' regardless of the geographic location of countries.

Returning to *salaula*, the initial point which provides a generic division of the West's- and the local used garments, the following comments can be interpreted in multiple levels.

The real thing, genuine *salaula*, is described as "new" and "alive" in contrast to clothing that is considered "tired" and "dead." This conceptual construction of second- and thirdhand clothing provides a startling twist on local notions of "used" clothes (Hansen 2000: 172).

In the original context, third-hand clothes indicate used-garments which had been worn locally, especially by deceased local people. However, considering the

¹⁰ When Samuel Huntington explains the domination of the Western nations, he sometimes includes Japan. But even if he includes Japan, it does not change a word or concept of 'the West'; "as a result the world is and will be shaped by [...] the principal Western nations with perhaps an occasional assist from Japan. [...] The West is the only civilization [...]" (Huntington 1996: 81)

similar distinction between the West's and the local second-hand clothes in other countries such as Hong Kong and the Philippines (and South Korea), the idea of "tired and dead" is not only an indication of the deceased at the individual level, but is also applicable to the national identity and culture at least in their Western-oriented fashion practices. Therefore, the locally supplied used clothes can be regarded as "tired and dead," that is, outdated in terms of their fashion sense and styles. On the contrary, the West's (or Japanese and Hong Kong, whichever countries being considered more developed by consumers in an importing nation) discarded clothes are "new and alive" in regard to their origin in advanced fashion cultures as well as for their wearability.

Clearly then, the national fashion identity, in as much as it runs parallel to the national consumption of its own locally produced and supplied used clothes, is patently undesirable and disregarded by the indigenous buyers when compared to the imported (the West's) cast-off commodities and aesthetic values. Accordingly, it is contentious to suggest that this everyday practice of imported second-hand clothes can be fully understood as a realisation of autonomous and authentic local fashion styles in the course of globalisation or more specifically, of Westernisation in the non-Western countries.

Cross-cultural accounts on dress provide a more sophisticated and detailed analysis essential to the understanding of the consumption of Other's clothes and styles. Verity Wilson (2002) illustrates a form of cultural interchange between the West and the East by giving ample and diverse examples of the ways in which people have adopted others' modes of dressing from the late sixteenth century up to the present. Here, the idea of 'cross-dressing' (Wilson 2001: 151) is not confined within the context of the opposite sex, but is broadened to the question of identity – including a category of gender-, difference, and place from a cultural perspective. From her multiform cases in the research, Wilson notices the different attitudes towards dressing in others' clothes between Westerners and Asians.

While some westerners in Asia might be ambivalent about wearing native dress there in public, conversely some Asian visitors to Europe and America went to great lengths to ensure their western garb struck the appropriate note (Wilson 2001: 156).

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The different attitudes towards donning Other's modes of dress between Westerners and Asians noted in Wilson's comments have been drastically widened especially by the majority of Asians. On the one hand, they wear Western clothes not only for their visits to western countries but for daily use; and on the other, they no longer don their native costumes except for special occasions. Therefore, while non-Western dress functions as "a landscape of leisure and sensation" (Wilson 2001: 148) for Westerners' fashion performance; for non-Westerners, Western (-style) clothes have now become a prerequisite for everyday practices as well as for their more important leisure activities, by abandoning their traditional garments in many cases. Furthermore, in some Asian countries, their traditional garments have become a site of excitement for special occasions and do no longer work as everyday dress. As a result, although Wilson advocates that Asians are not westernised in their clothing practices, nor fashion victims (Wilson 2002: 156), the domination of Western-style clothing – and furthermore, Western fashion – is recognisable across the world.

Wilson offers a historical account that particularly focuses on Western modes in adopting Asian clothes. More recently, *Re-Orienting Fashion: the globalization of Asian dress* (Nissen *et al.* 2003) broadens the scope of research by drawing theoretical attention to the current phenomenon of globalisation of Asian dresses since the 1990s. The primary focus here lies in the 'internal and self-Orientalizing' (Jones and Leshkovich 2003: 8, 29) fashion development in modern Asian countries, that is to say, the ways in which local individuals have reinterpreted and re-adopted their 'traditional' (unfashionable) garments in 'modern' (fashionable) terms.

A collection of anthropological researches project a wide social and ethnic spectrum of examples like Indonesian professional women, Hong Kong fashion designers, Korean feminists and Vietnamese ethnic minority women. Starting from observation on "[f]ashion: global but Western" (Niessen 2003: 243), *Re-Orienting Fashion* challenges "persistent momentum in the perception of fashion as a Western phenomenon" (Niessen 2003: 243). This long-standing and prevalent

assumption of Western superiority in fashion practice penetrates from colonial Orientalism to contemporary globalisation.

As briefly mentioned earlier in the consumption of foreign second-hand clothes in the non-West, diversity of the origins of the imports has been used as a proof of this fashion practice as globalisation, but not as westernisation by many scholars (Hansen 1999: 359; Milgram 2005; Clark 2005). In case of the Philippines, China and Hong Kong, the popularity of Japanese second-hand clothes and fashion styles has provided the counterargument of Westernisation against globalisation (Milgram 2005; Li 1996; Clark 2005). Literature professor Leo Ching points out the influence of Japanese material culture in other neighbouring Asian countries as follows:

Throughout Asia, Japan is in vogue. From fashion to food to leisure, Japanese cultural commodities are ubiquitous, casting wooing glances at the Orient's nouveaux riches. (Ching 1996: 170)

Does the presence of Japanese goods and lifestyles in other countries make their cultural practices appeared to be heterogeneous forms of globalisation as opposed to homogeneous forces of Westernisation? In this regard, it is worth noting Ching's acute insight of the characteristics of Japanese culture.

Despite its waning economic presence, American mass culture is still dominant and powerful cultural industry in the world today. Meanwhile, Japanese cultural influence is primarily constricted to Asia, and Japanese mass culture itself is still plugged into every trend of Western, especially American, pop culture. (Ching 1996: 171)

It is crucial to acknowledging the Western influence in forming Japanese culture. Moreover, it is highly important to account for the import of some Western material goods and culture in other Asian countries filtered through Japan - which will be the case of the consumption of imported second-hand Levi's jeans in South Korea later in this thesis. The following two texts exemplify the extent to which Western (-style) clothes have been normalised as daily wear in Japan and have permeated through young Japanese' fashion practices as an expression of their chosen identity.

Today "the West," well domesticated Japanese, fully permeates the daily consumer market: [...] T-shirts and blue jeans are all accepted in Japan.

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Kimono [...] is rarely worn today except for special occasions or holidays; western dress dominates Japan's everyday apparel scene. (Masami Suga 1995: 97-98)

In Japan, the kind of 'self-centred' consumption engaged in especially by young has often been seen as 'foreign' or 'Western', as opposed to native 'Japanese'. Thus the cute look that dominated young Japanese's fashion in the late 1970s was adopted explicitly as a rejection of 'typical Japanese' style (Kinsella 199). (Lise Skov 1996: 145 -146)

Having considered the above comments, the domestication and popularity of Western clothes in Japan is deemed to bring forth the extinction of traditional costume and moreover, the rupture of Japanese cultural identity, particularly among young consumers. In this sense, what other Asian countries import from Japan may not offer cultural diversity of globalisation to those importing nations, but emphasise rather the homogeneous, subcultural and postmodern fashion practices¹¹ of Westernisation.

So far, I have examined the way in which the study of second-hand clothing has been developed and extended to a global context, yet I have found a blank regarding South Korea consumer culture in second-hand clothes. I will investigate this fashion practice in my research by focusing on South Korea's turbulent and dynamic political and social history in the global and post-colonial context. At the same time, individual consumers' practice and knowledge will be analysed in depth in relation to consumption of second-hand clothing.

A few questions can be posed here for this research. With regard to the second-hand fashion industry, what kind of social and cultural differences can be observed? I intend to identify the entrepreneurial structures in second-hand clothing in the typical dawn markets in South Korea in comparison with, for example, small scale individual and sociable second-hand street shops in the UK and both 'young and quasi avant-garde' second-hand shops and sophisticated celebrity charity fairs in Hong Kong. I will also account for transitional pattern in consuming second-hand clothes in South Korea challenging the way in which consumers employ the

¹¹ For example, Ching observes that even punk style, which originates in Britain, has lost its characteristics of revolt and become increasingly uniformed and regulated in Japan. (Ching 1996: 183)

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concept of thrift, waste, ethics and style in terms of formation of modernity and subjectivity. In addition, Thorstein Veblen's concept of conspicuous consumption and waste will be analysed alongside the class consciousness in South Korea. Last but not least, the role of the mass media should not be overlooked: South Korean magazines, films and TV dramas will therefore be analysed to what extent they boost second-hand style and consumption. Answering these questions, my analysis will add an understanding of South Korean consumer culture in global accounts of second-hand clothing.

3. Ethnographic Methodology and Semiotics

...the way people dress, the food they choose to eat and the way they prepare them, the pattern and structure of the meal itself can all be read as *cultural texts* [my emphasis]. (Slater 2002 [1998]: 234)

To read cultural texts of *guje* clothing consumption, I have employed qualitative methodologies of participant observation and semiotics. As briefly mentioned in the Introduction, *guje* clothing has drawn remarkable attention among young consumers recently, and yet, has largely remained part of a non-mainstream fashion scene in South Korea. This characteristic of the subculture intrinsic to *guje* fashion has practically formed the methodology of my research as well.

Currently, *guje* fashion is not considered as mainstream consumption, and therefore, is practiced by its consumers in a highly scattered and dispersed manner. Obviously, this makes it almost impossible to collect a large quantity of data about the individuals' *guje* fashion practices at the real scene of consumption. In this respect, the quantitative methodology of positivist approaches such as survey research and statistical methods (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 5) are not suitable for this research.

Having considered the nature of *guje* fashion consumption described above, an ethnographic methodology was selected. Social scientists Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1995 [1983]) offer a clear definition of ethnographic research:

In its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives [...] watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, *collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues* [my emphasis] that are the focus of the research (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 1)

The above description explains the most suitable form of research for my study. It was one of the most viable methods for me to intervene in *guje* consumers' everyday lives and ask personal questions at the market or on the street, where I have spent half of my fieldwork in South Korea – and the other half at the National Library for the archive research.

Ethnographic methodology surrounding the use of interviews has also gained attention within the studies of design history.

Interviews have now become a standard method for eliciting information about objects as diverse as fridge magnets, cross-stitching, *Second-hand Cultures* and laptops. Oral history, on the other hand, focuses on people in order to understand them as subjects in the socio-historical contexts of the immediate past or the present. [...] Interviews, or ‘brief ethnographies’ were a crucial component of the study documenting the experience, feelings and meanings of home, as well as the material culture of its *mise en scène*. (Sandino 2006: 275)

With a particular reference to Gregson *et al.*'s book *Second-hand Cultures*, Sandino notes a growing importance of interviews as an effective research method in design studies. A definite advantage of this methodology lies in “its ability to access material that is unavailable through other means of research” (Sandino 2006: 277). This aspect is most relevant in my research, considering the nature of *guje* (or imported second-hand, in general) market which tends to be closed and unofficial. Consequently, it was impossible to obtain official records of *guje* clothing business. The lack of official records enhance the significance of oral history interviewing even more valuable, as can be seen in the following quotation:

In particular, oral history has become understood as having a significant role in capturing the pasts of those whose voices may otherwise not appear in an ‘official’ record. (Oak 2006: 348)

Furthermore, it was my keen interest to explore individuals' accounts on a more private level rather than quantitative and average statistics, relating imported second-hand fashion consumption. In this respect, “Oral history interviewing offers a highly effective method of gleaning knowledge about particular aspects of objects being scrutinized” (Linthicum 2006: 316). Oral history method does not rely only on interviewing, but is also inclusive of “oral documents such as [...] radio and TV programmes and commercials” (Oak 2006: 353). To avoid the entire reliance on a small-scale interviewing, numerous magazine features and Internet discussions, as well as a commercial and a TV programme, have been used for this cultural study of *guje* /vintage consumption to gain more inclusive knowledge.

While the primary difficulty of initiating this research lies in the scarcity of *guje* consumers who can rarely be seen on the street or in the shop, there were relatively

abundant articles regarding vintage found in fashion magazines in South Korea. Therefore, this ethnographic research project employs interpretive and qualitative approach to deliver the actual voices of *guje* fashion practitioners as well as semiotic analysis to read visual and written texts from fashion magazines and the relevant websites. Semiotics will offer a useful tool for the archive studies, while still maintaining the consistency in my research methods from the qualitative approach.

It [semiotics] is closer to interpretative methodologies than to quantitative and survey methods and is utterly open-ended rather than closed in its questions and investigation. (Slater 2002 [1998]: 237)

Three major research sources are employed on the basis of the qualitative methods and semiotics and consist of on-street interviews, on-line observation and archive research of fashion magazines. All these research materials have divided into a number of case-studies according to their subjects and have formed the main body of this thesis.

Research Scope

First of all, I need to clarify the boundaries of my research subject, prior to the detailed explanation of my research methods at the fieldwork. In *Fashion and its Social Agendas*, Diana Crane (2000) accounts for the division of fashion genre as follows:

A single fashion genre, haute couture, has been replaced by three major categories of styles, each with its own genres: luxury fashion design [created by designers], industrial fashion [by manufacturers], and street styles [by urban subcultures]. [...] Different styles have different publics; there are no precise rules about what is to be worn and no agreement about a fashion ideal that represents contemporary culture. (Crane, 2000: 135)

Vintage fashion cannot also be confined to one category of consumer group either. In the same way that Crane categorises three genres of fashion, three different styles of vintage clothing can be identified in South Korea; ‘luxury vintage designer collections’ which are as expensive as new designer clothes; industry-oriented ‘vintage-style fashion’ which is mass-produced; and ‘street styles’ which represent subcultures. Here, one primary difference is found between vintage and

guje fashion. Vintage fashion can be both extravagantly luxurious, similar to any expensive designer label, and moderately inexpensive like high street fashion; but *guje* only denotes the latter. As *guje* fashion is the core theme throughout my thesis, my research focus lies more on everyday dress practices, excluding the high fashion market of luxury vintage clothes consumption.

Geographical Sites of the Research

One of the first considerations of this ethnographic study was to investigate the age and gender of the *guje* consumers in Seoul. A number of newspaper articles have provided a vague understanding of *guje* consumers being younger generations. However, the research target was not confined to a specific age or gender group in advance of the fieldwork. It appeared later that the ranges of *guje* consumers are mainly in their teens or twenties during my interviews and observation. However, this selection process helped me define the geographic research area. The exclusion of luxury vintage fashion from my main research was also followed by the exclusion of the most prestigious shopping district like *Rodeo Street* in Apgujeong-dong and Cheongdam-dong in Seoul. Therefore, I chose three major geographical sites in Seoul for my interview: two most traditional market districts of Dongdaemun and Namdaemun, the most fashionable university town Hongdae (Hongik University) and the most popular district for foreign residents and tourists Itaewon.

Firstly, Dongdaemun is one of the oldest and largest market districts in South Korea, but there are also a number of new developments of shopping malls. A traditional market like Kwangjang Market and contemporary skyscraper like Migliore and Doota were the major sites for conducting interviews. Secondly, Hongdae is famous for their prestigious art college, and therefore, can be expected to accommodate the most current subcultural lifestyles. Lastly, I visited Namdaemun and Itaewon to research the markets for foreign military jackets, which are a vital subject of this research. In particular, Itaewon is located next to the primary U.S. military base in Seoul. This has made Itaewon a uniquely exotic place within South Korea; full of foreign residents, foreign products, and most importantly, foreign military jackets.

Second-hand Clothing Shops in South Korea

The objects of (imported) second-hand clothing discussed in this thesis are inclusive of not only garments but other adornment such as shoes, bags and small accessories in general. In addition, when considering the intermingled nature of in which the goods are sourced for the second-hand clothing markets in South Korea, it becomes apparent that the concept of 'second-hand' traverses a variety of meanings. Consumers may be referring to simply 'old clothes', whether they are used or almost unused; 'reworked clothes' which have been altered or recreated from their original materials; and sometimes even 'new clothes' which are made to look like the old clothes such as the so-called 'replicas' of old garments¹² or the vintage-style models.

Currently, different types of second-hand clothes markets are present in South Korea. The development of second-hand clothes trade in South Korea has followed, and therefore has become nearly identical to those of the Western and Japanese second-hand clothing industries. To give a brief account, I shall divide the second-hand garment shops into two main categories according to the consumers' prior concerns, that is, aesthetic interests and the environmental and ethical reasons for second-hand purchasing. It is obvious that both groups have the issues of thrift and sustainability in common. However, this division will allow us to understand the general mapping of second-hand clothes much more clearly.

Firstly, the aesthetic-led consumption comprises of the *guje* shops which sell imported second-hand garments (see Figure 1) and the consignment stores which trade in domestically-used western luxury brand goods (see Figure 2). The former have a comparatively long history as aid goods distributors since the Korean War (1950-53), while the latter is a result of the recent commercial success which has brought the re-use of Western luxury goods into vogue among the Korean upper-middle class markets by following the Japanese business formats. Figure 1 is an example of traditional *guje* dawn markets in one part of the Dongdaemun (wholesale) shopping district in central Seoul in which a myriad of stalls reside

¹² A 'replica' is a very important category of *guje*/ vintage Levi's jeans in Korea.

inside one mall. Dongdaemun was mentioned earlier as the primary site of my interviews.



Figure 1 the entrance of a typical *guje* mall in Dongdaemun Market, Seoul, Korea. ‘Imported *Guje* Mall: *HwanWon* 2nd Floor; *ShinIl* 2nd/3rd Floor; *OuSung* 3rd Floor’ is written on a blue large rectangular signboard.

Figure 2 exemplifies the consignment stores typical to one of the most affluent streets called *Rodeo Street* in Apgujeong-dong, Seoul. As shown in the photograph, they trade second-hand (western) luxury brands such as Chanel, Hermes, Louis Vuitton, and so on. It is also important to note that the idea of ‘luxury’ goods in Korea bears the general perception that they are from the West. According to

*Weekly DongA*¹³, the most common frequenters of consignment shops are women who are the upper class, celebrities and hostesses.

Consignment stores normally charge approximately 15 percent commissions and also function as pawnshops¹⁴. As a pawnshop, they charge around 3-7 percent high interest rates with a secure loan. This report in *Weekly DongA* (2004) says that the decline of the pawnshop was because of the birth of the credit cards, but ironically, now pawnshops/ consignment stores are used by customers who want to clear their credit card debt¹⁵. Therefore, the popularity of consignment shops, which deal in second-hand apparel, not only epitomises the consumer obsession with the western designer brands, but has also given rise to a modern pawn broking industry in South Korea.



Figure 2 the main title on a light blue horizontal signboard read ‘New York Used Luxury Goods’. This shop is located just right opposite to one of the most luxurious department stores *Galleria* in Seoul. On the right bottom of the picture, another arch-type sign with the red contour promotes ‘luxury goods alterations’.

¹³ One of the three major newspaper companies in South Korea.

¹⁴ *Weekly DongA*, No. 440, 24 June 2004, pp. 72-73.

http://www.dongailbo.co.kr/docs/magazine/weekly/2004/06/17/200406170500016/200406170500016_1.html

¹⁵ See a news article ‘Resurgence of pawnshops with the fever of luxury goods’ in *Hankyoreh*, 21 May 2002.

<http://www.hani.co.kr/section-004000000/2002/05/004000000200205211945006.html>

The distinctive difference between *guje* markets and luxury consignment stores lies in the sources of the used goods. The *guje* industry imports the second-hand garments in bulk from overseas, whereas the consignment business sources their foreign goods directly from the individual consumers who used the item within the country, that is to say, the ‘domestically used luxury goods (originating in the West)’ opposed to ‘imported second-hand clothes (*guje*)’. However, this gap might be slowly diminished as “some luxury second-hand retailers have already been to similar shops in Japan and Hong Kong to make massive purchases”¹⁶ to furnish enough supply in the rising domestic markets.

In contrast to the cult or edgy status afforded to *guje* and consignment items, the charity shop approach, where second-hand consumption is driven primarily by thrift and environmental or ethical concerns, has, until recently, been an unfashionable choice. For aesthetic-centred consumers, issues of style vastly outweigh thrift; and more importantly, issues of sustainability hold almost no interest for the average *guje* and luxury consignment consumer¹⁷. In short, the styles or brand names are more important than frugality or recycling in this type of aesthetic second-hand clothes consumption.

Environmental and ethical consumption varies according to the prior interests held by consumers. Some patrons consider recycling as an economic choice of thrift; some think of it as a moral choice and as an act against conspicuous consumption, a statement in the campaign against waste culture. Yet, others focus on the philanthropic aspect of second-hand consumption, its purchase as a means to help the poorer. The initial movement of such socio-cultural transition can be identified at a forum held by the *Green Consumers’ Networks in Korea*¹⁸. At the forum, Jang-Hwan Oh suggested recycling and reuse as a way to overcome the IMF crisis and advocates the establishment of flea markets and continuous publicity to remove the aversion attached to second-hand goods (November 1998). This kind

¹⁶ *Weekly DongA*, No. 440, 24 June 2004, pp. 72-73.

¹⁷ My interviews in *guje* markets reflect this trait, and also numerous articles on luxury consignment stores almost never mention the issues of sustainability. On the contrary, the phenomenon of luxury consignment commerce has been criticised as conspicuous consumption.

¹⁸ A non-profit and non-governmental citizens’ group (<http://www.gcn.or.kr/>)

of promotion of second-hand as part of a new civil lifestyle and frugality has also become a cornerstone of the establishment of charitable organisations such as *Beautiful Store*.

The philanthropic-led *Beautiful Store* is the most outstanding example in Korean consumer history in many ways, and therefore, is helpful to understand the ethos and overall development of these recent movements of second-hand clothes consumption.

Beautiful Store is *unique among Korean organizations* in that it uses all of its profit for charity and public benefit while *propagating a culture of recycling*. The "culture of recycling" for charitable uses is well established in other developed countries but *relatively new in Korea*. With fresh ideas and an expertise in management, *Beautiful Store* hopes to leave its mark (sic) on the *Korean civil society movement* toward sharing within communities.
(<http://www.beautifulstore.org/english/sub1/sub11.asp>, my emphasis in italic)

The above statement encapsulates the extent to which Korean consumers had been unfamiliar with the practice of recycling and emphasizes the leading role of *Beautiful Store* in this new wave. As can be seen in the beginning of the statement, *Beautiful Store* is the first foundation of this kind of practice in South Korea and has been established since May 2001 aiming to be a 'Korean Oxfam'¹⁹ as demonstrated below (see the bottom part of Figure 3).

We aim to become a Korean Oxfam

Beautiful Store aims to become a Korean Oxfam in the future. A world-renowned British Oxfam uses their profit from selling second-hand goods to relieve the poor and aid society in the Third World. *Beautiful Store* will follow Oxfam as a model, develop the nationwide network and furthermore, strive to support and cooperate with the people in the Third World. (<http://www.beautifulstore.org>)

¹⁹ www.beautifulstore.org/beautiful/is/beautifulstore.asp
See also 'Korean version 'Oxfam' opens' in *Chosun Ibo*, 9 October 2002.



Figure 3 an introduction page from the *Beautiful Store* website.



Figure 4 the exterior and the interior of the immaculate *Beautiful Store*.
(<http://stuff.nayana.com/nayaboard/board/view.php?boardname=gallery&no=1>)



Figure 5 Sorting process of collected items

The establishment of charity shops was much slower in South Korea than its neighbouring countries. For example, according to Clark (2005: 159), a country like Hong Kong, where superstition had a huge effect upon used clothing

consumption until the 1990s, has had Oxfam since 1977. Clark states that “unlike in the United States or Britain, the thrift or charity shop is not common place in Hong Kong” (Clark 2005: 158). It can be argued that Oxfam or Salvation Army shops in Hong Kong have been largely used by expatriates in the colony, but, such movement had not been identified in large scale-American forces (over 30,000 troops) stationed South Korea in the late 1900s. It was only in 2002 that members of the *Beautiful Store* have visited the Goodwill and Salvation Army in the United States.²⁰ Although recycling culture is coming to South Korea in a very slow pace, *Beautiful Store*’s promotion of ‘a culture of recycling’ has been indeed successful. Now, there are myriads of recycling markets all over the country, whether they are philanthropic or not, or whether they are small or big.

In South Korea, the first charity shop chain *Beautiful Store* can be still considered more as a collective civil campaign, as it is written in their statement, rather than as a result of individualisation in fashion. While keeping immaculately clean standards in both the exterior and interior of shops (see Figure 4), they also actively promote the collective and romantic idea of ‘sharing [things and compassion] within community’ by constantly emphasizing the ‘beautiful’ness in human activities with carefully selected wording such as, beautiful People, beautiful Saturday, beautiful Foundation and Angel as a title of their volunteers who work in the shop and the organisation. In this regard, the philosophy behind the first Korean charity shop can be regarded as a collective civil movement and reiterates national conformity rather than undermines it.

Beautiful Store is not strictly a second-hand clothes shop as they trade all sorts of everyday necessities. However, their cultural and social impact on recycling (used) clothes is extensive as more than 50-55 percent of their total collections consist of domestically used garments²¹ (see Figure 5). The philanthropic and environmental idealism, the ethos strategically imposed by *Beautiful Store* against emotive material culture, has therefore diluted the strong stigma traditionally attached to

²⁰ <http://www.beautifulstore.org/english/sub1/sub12.asp>

²¹ http://www.beautifulstore.org/beautiful/media/bbs_list.asp?cPage=9&getflag=N&vsid=1282&sid=1034&sdiv=0&sword=&area=&cmd=view

buying second-hand garments, which is similar to the case of used clothing consumption in Hong Kong in the past in Clark's account. As a result, the stigma has been substituted for individual pride based on social consciousness.

I have split this section into two categories of aesthetic and ethical consumption. 'Wellbeing Industry has achieved both Environment and Design', the title of recent articles of the Natural & Wellbeing Fair exhibition in 2005 in Coex²², Seoul, where *Beautiful Store* displayed their inventive and unique design works, also reflects the fact that design aspects have been overlooked in ethical consumption. Having had 100,000 pieces of clothing in one year²³, *Beautiful Store* has launched a recycling fashion brand 'Eco Party Mearry' in collaboration with four young designers against the 'fast fashion' culture first noted in 2007 (see Figure 6). Second-hand clothes which are not in a suitable condition for sale in *Beautiful Store* are supplied to the Eco Party Mearry's designers for a new design.

Eco Party Mearry's appreciation for "the only one clothes in the world"²⁴ and stylisation of used clothes are certainly different from the conventional ways of environmental and ethical second-hand consumption, serving to emphasise and glamorise the aspect of thrift. Eco Party Mearry's creative efforts are increasingly similar to the motivations normally found in the aesthetic-led *guje* fashion.

However, "the [Eco Party Mearry's] designers argue that used clothes and recycling fashion should be differentiated"²⁵ (see Figure 7) even though they are using the donated second-hand clothes. Are they not supposed to eliminate the stigma towards second-hand clothing consumption which is still prevalent in Korea? On the contrary, their remark seems to be reconstructing discrimination between used garments and designer's (creative) clothes. Surely, the importance should not lie in the fact that used clothing has been processed by designers, but in the

²² COEX is the Convention & Exhibition Centre.

²³ 'Recycling fashion Eco Party Mearry' in Hankook Ibo, 2 February 2007.
<http://nadri.hankooki.com/lpage/weekzine/200702/wz2007020116561173240.htm>

²⁴ 'Recycling fashion Eco Party Mearry' in Hankook Ibo, 2 February 2007.
<http://nadri.hankooki.com/lpage/weekzine/200702/wz2007020116561173240.htm>

²⁵ 'Recycling fashion Eco Party Mearry' in Hankook Ibo, 2 February 2007.
<http://nadri.hankooki.com/lpage/weekzine/200702/wz2007020116561173240.htm>

creative and autonomous fashion practices, whether by designers or consumers, whether cast-off clothes are recreated or used as it has been.



Figure 6 an invitation card of Eco Party Mearry in 2007



Figure 7 a deconstructed design bag made of used clothes donated to *Beautiful Store*, designed by Eco Party Mearry (<http://nadri.hankooki.com/lpage/weekzine/200702/wz2007020116561173240.htm>)

In this chapter, second-hand clothes markets in South Korea have been divided in two sections to make it easier to understand. Based on the brief explanation of the landscape of the current Korean market, second-hand shops can be split roughly in four types: *guje* markets: luxury consignment stores: charity shops: reworked

designer brands (if the pioneering Eco Party Mearry is successful). Firstly, a charity shop like *Beautiful Store* has wider consumer demography because it is used by all generations and is less gender-biased whereas the other three forms of fashion business tend to have regular groups of customers. Secondly, it is obvious that luxury consignment stores and the last two movements of charity shops and reworked designer shops are in confrontation with each other as conspicuous versus anti-conspicuous consumption.

On first glance, consumers of *guje* markets and reworked designer brand like Eco Party Mearry are almost in direct opposition regarding issues of sustainability. However, although these brands many seem to belong to radically different categories of aesthetic and ethical consumption, their consumers' preoccupation with individual fashion styles ironically resemble other forms of second-hand consumption in South Korea more than Eco Party Mearry customers would be comfortable in admitting. In fact, 'reformed' clothes are already prevalent in *guje* markets. However, the chief difference is the practitioners' –consumers, designers and retailers- intentionality; the concept of ethical or environmental awareness has almost never interfered in *guje* consumer practices, whereas it is the prime interest in recreated designer works.

In this respect, ethical consumption seems not to be influenced by Westernisation at first, but constant references to the Western or 'advanced' countries highlight the fact that it might be actually an outcome of Westernisation, or globalisation. *Beautiful Store* has been benchmarking American 'Good Will' and British 'Oxfam'²⁶, and Eco Party Mearry also stated, "*Culturally advanced countries like Switzerland and Japan [my emphasis] have famous recycling brands. Now, it is the time we need to have nice recycling brands.*"²⁷ Therefore, the IMF crisis has not put off Westernisation in South Korea; on the contrary, it has fertilised the cultural impact of Westernisation and globalisation.

²⁶http://www.beautifulstore.org/beautiful/media/bbs_list.asp?cPage=41&getflag=N&vsid=9&sid=6&sdiv=0&sword=&area=&cmd=view#

²⁷ <http://nadri.hankooki.com/lpage/weekzine/200702/wz2007020116561173240.htm>

As discussed, the long-term economic slump since the IMF has diminished public dislike for using (and particularly wearing) second-hand goods. As a result, this social and economic transition has given salience to the second-hand clothes business in general -not only in ecological and thrifty consumption like *Beautiful Store*, but also in the resurgence of *guje* markets and in the emergence of luxury consignment stores²⁸ as was suggested above. Regardless of the despair towards the world economic order, Westernisation in South Korean fashion culture has not lessened, and even has effectively introduced the new vintage trend and the concept of charity shops. Given the overall view of the development of (imported) second-hand clothes markets in current South Korea so far, the following section will deal with the on-line sites of *guje* consumption as a new business opportunity for the young self-employed.

Qualitative Interviewing

Prior to my first fieldtrip to Seoul, I conducted a pilot study for vintage clothes consumption in Edinburgh to gain a basic experience, especially for the interview skills at the research setting during my pre-fieldwork phase. This pilot research was helpful not only for practicing the practical research methods such as “techniques like observation, interviewing and audio recording” (Seale 2002 [1998]: 104), but also for providing analytical guidelines which made me aware of a need for more detailed questions in South Korea than those posed initially in Edinburgh.

Firstly, I should discuss my general record keeping strategies and the problems that came to light over the course of the interview process. Two field trips were taken to Seoul, South Korea in 2006 and 2007. Both street interviews and archive studies took place over these periods, in addition to four interviews with Koreans in Edinburgh in 2007. Nearly all interviews were audio-recorded; the English transcription of these interviews can be found in the appendix. There were the two to three exceptions which were accompanied by note-taking instead, as the

²⁸ See more details in ‘What about second-hand things? Still luxury brands ...’ in *Weekly Dong-A*, 24 June, 2004, pp.72-73, http://www.dongailbo.co.kr/docs/magazine/weekly/2004/06/17/200406170500016/200406170500016_2.html

interviewees refused my request for recording. Only in a few cases was photography permitted. The overall records of the interviews are presented below (see Figure 8).

Interview Records (total 26 interviews with 30 interviewees)			
Gender		Age	
Women:	8	Vendors:	7
Men:	22	Consumers:	23
		15-19:	5
		20-29:	17
		30-39:	5
		40-70:	3

Figure 8 Contents of the interviews during the fieldwork

I conducted twenty-six interviews in total. Those were mostly one-to-one interviews, but in some cases, friends or colleagues joined in as well. I tried to get opinion from both consumers and retailers (owners and sales persons). It is notable that the higher age groups are largely retailers. The records also show that there are equal numbers of consumers between their teens and thirties. However, teenagers are formed from fifteen to nineteen years old which made them a smaller age bracket in the first place. In addition, three of the consumers referenced, those in their thirties, are individuals living in Edinburgh, not those consulted in street interviews. These three people are a small minority of a “snow ball sample” (Seale and Filmer 2002 [1998]: 139) over the course of my research; they were introduced by mutual acquaintances who considered that their friends would be a good example for my research. Therefore, my research reflects a point already made, namely that, the majority of consumers are in their teens and twenties. This is more evident considering the demography in on-line community.

Similarly, whilst men outnumber women greatly in my research, this should not weigh too heavily. It is not the case that *guje* fashion is a male-oriented consumer practice, rather that during my interviews, I have found an extreme difficulty in contacting Korean women. A few women even fled away from me hastily, something I had not experienced during my pilot study in Edinburgh. The cultural inappropriacy of engaging with a stranger on the street meant that they were

reluctant to talk. However, three of the total five teenagers are girls; from this, it can be concluded that as they get older they become more and more hesitant to speak either to stranger, or in public. The disproportionate numbers in both genders can be seen as the outcome of random sampling, which “*relies on chance* [my emphasis] to get a group of people (or elements) whose characteristics mirror those in the population concerned” (Seale and Filmer 2002 [1998]: 137).

This type of limitation is inevitable, considering the scarcity of the *guje* consumer found at the actual site, as pointed out at the outset, yet on the other, the very nature of dependence on chance in random sampling brings unexpected findings like the example below.

Guje fashion practice is profoundly intimate and private. Even though there are numerous cases of interviewees citing shopping trips taken with their friends in my research, these people will also buy *guje* clothes on their own and will not necessarily share the detailed knowledge of their *guje* purchase with each other. The following interview was conducted at Kwangjang Market during my research trip in Seoul. Two twenty-year old male friends (speaker 25 and 26) answered my question.

JH: What about the clothes you are wearing now?

- Speaker 26: They are all *guje*.

JH: What is the price of this [leather jacket]?

- Speaker 26: I bought this for 50,000 won.

- Speaker 25: You told me it was 150,000 won! [laughs]

- Speaker 26: I bought the shirt for 8,000 won, T-shirt for 4,000 won and the trousers for 28,000 won.

JH: But, you told your friend that you paid 150,000 won?

- Speaker 26: I just wanted to show off a bit. [laughs]

(Interview 16, pp. 305-306 in Appendix, 2006)

‘Speaker 26’ responded to my question sincerely and therefore, unwittingly told the actual price that he paid for his leather jacket. When his friend pointed it out, ‘Speaker 26’ forgot that he told the truth in front of his friend. It was possible for ‘Speaker 26’ to give exaggerated information to other people because *guje* clothing does not have a fixed price normally, and it is unlikely to find the same garment

elsewhere. This case is a white lie, more like a joke as we all had a good laugh over the disclosure of the unexpected truth of Speaker 26's *guje* purchase.

Not all *guje* consumers are secretive about their acquisitions, but it is certainly a distinctive disposition among them. The intimate details like this case are one of the collections from "whatever data are available to throw light on the issues" (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 1), which was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Therefore, despite of the criticism of lacking "rigorous scientific analysis" (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 6) towards the ethnographic research methods, I heavily rely on the qualitative approach against the quantitative methodology.

Contents of the Questions

The main difference between the way in which ethnographers and survey interviews ask questions is not, as is sometimes assumed, that one form of interviewing is 'structured' and the other is 'unstructured'. All interviews, like any other kind of social interaction, are structured by both researcher and informant. The important distinction to be made is between standardized and reflexive interviewing. Ethnographers do not usually decide beforehand the exact questions they want to ask, and do not ask each interviews with a list of issues to be covered (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 151-152).

It is not an easy task to develop structured questions, but at the same time, is equally difficult to ask questions spontaneously at the research settings. As my research is based on the ethnographic methods, I try to keep the format of open-ended questions as much as the circumstances allowed. Furthermore, as Hammersley and Atkinson point out in the above quotation, I did not exactly plan what to ask. However, I found myself unavoidably repeating more or less a list of core questions to initiate the interviews and to obtain the basic knowledge of how the interviewees' personal backgrounds influenced their *guje* consumer practices, as presented below:

- What is your name? You can pick an assumed name, if you want.
- How old are you? What is your occupation?
- What did you buy today?
- How often do you come to the market?
- Do you like *guje* clothes, and why?
- When did you first start buying *guje* clothes? Did you have any motivation then?

- Do you purchase *guje* clothes on the Internet? Why do (or don't) you like Internet shopping?
- Do you consider the issues of environment or recycling when you buy *guje* clothes?
- Doesn't the issue of hygiene put you off from buying *guje* clothing?
- What do your parents (older generations) say about *guje* clothing?

It is important to note that these questions were not organised before my interviews and were only summarised after my fieldwork when I transcribed the audio-recording and found frequent repetitions. These are only a common ground to start with the interviews, and by no means, repeated in the same manner and sequence to everybody. Here, interplay between myself as a researcher and an interviewee becomes important. Therefore, the length and the contents of each interview varied depending on the interviewee's response and nature.

As an interviewer, I tried to keep my role as *non-directive* as possible, as Seale suggests in his explanation of qualitative research methodology.

This [qualitative interviewing] can involve drawing a person into telling a story in their own words by using interventions such as 'tell me more' or semi-verbal cues like 'uh-huh' which encourage an interviewee to continue speaking. The emphasis is on allowing the speaker to say how they see things, in their own words, rather than making them follow the researcher's agenda. Thus the interviewer's role is explicitly *non-directive*. (Seale 2002 [1998]: 207)

My non-directive role can be seen in the earlier mentioned example of the interview with two male friends at Kwangjang Market when we all laughed and had fun together, while obtaining the research materials. In addition to this, I opted not to sound too eloquent and articulate during the interview; instead, I tried to maintain my speech in a casual and less formal manner to make the interviewees more comfortable, because *guje* consumers tend to be freer and less rigid than regular high street or luxury consumers.

Participant Observation on the street and in on-line community

[A]ll social research takes the form of participant observation: it involves participating in the social world, in whatever role, and

reflecting on the products of that participation. (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 17)

In regard to participant observation, a researcher's reflexivity became influential and instrumental to the progress of the research, in my case. Earlier, I explained the way in which the non-mainstream nature of *guje* consumption and the cultural reluctance of South Korean women to engage with strangers necessitated a qualitative research methodology due to the scarcity of the numbers of research objects. In a similar way to this, my role in participant observation had defined nearly in an automatic manner because my reflexivity limits the complete participation in the research settings.

By the research settings here, I mean both on-street market places and on-line communities. I played the overt role at the on-street market sites; and the covert role in on-line fashion communities. The meaning of reflexivity in relation to the characteristics of research locations is well put in Hammersley and Atkinson's explanation below:

Reflexivity thus implies that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them. (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 16)

As the research location crosses between on-line and off-line, my role as a researcher shifted in accordance with my reflexivity within the settings. Firstly, at the on-street markets, my appearance stood out among *guje* clothing styles at the scene. Although I am a native Korean, I strongly felt that I was alienated amongst these people and the atmosphere in *guje* markets. This aspect was even more evident when I visited a (informal) military clothes market district in Namdaemun. It almost looked as if I was the only woman at the location, except the female vendors. In my case, this alienation was felt greater than, for example, the ethnic differences. Without a complete disguise of myself at *guje* markets, which I felt would have been insincere, my research role was clearly overt.

Secondly, in accessing the sites of Internet communities, I observed *guje* consumer practices covertly. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the majority of these On-

line community boards, so called the Internet Café²⁹ in South Korea, operate under the membership. The initial subscription which I made was not very useful as there were further steps ahead to the higher levels of membership which allow the access to more pertinent information and conversation. My outsider status would not allow me to continue by myself, but luckily, one of my interviewees offered me the chance to use his login details. Secondly, I only observed *guje* consumers discussions at these Internet Cafés – not literally cafés, but the Korean equivalent of online Internet forums – without active participation because I did not intend to affect my informant's membership. I tried to avoid any chance of receiving a cancellation of this membership to view their Internet Cafés because it is possible for them to expel me, and therefore him, if they came to consider me as an intruder, not being one of them.

So far, the basic issue of reflexivity has been described in relation to the research locations. Between on-street and on-line researches, major difficulties lie in on-street observation as it encompasses more social interactions involved due to my overt role. This section will account for the detailed analysis of participant observation. Sociologist David Walsh's (Walsh 2002 [1998]) introduces Junker's (1960) model of four different observer roles in ethnography, which divides as, the 'complete participation': the 'complete observer': the 'participant as observer': 'the observer as participant'.

It is rather obvious that my research role in the Internet community was the 'complete observer', as I played an absolutely covert role. However, it is considered to be closer to the 'participant as observer' during the on-street interviews. Walsh explains the characteristics of the 'participant as observer' as follows:

Here, the observer and the people being studied are aware that theirs is a field relationship which *minimizes the problems of pretence* [my emphasis]. [...] The problem is that it carries *the danger of reactivity* [my emphasis] and of going native through identification with the subjects of study, unless the intimacy created in social interaction is

²⁹ One of the largest Internet sites in South Korea www.naver.com has mainly been used for the research.

restrained by attempts to maintain the role of the stranger on the part of the observer. (Walsh 2002 [1998]: 222)

The choice of being myself under no disguise at the research location might cause ‘the danger of reactivity’ as described above. This dangerous reactivity can become an obstacle to access or approach to research subject. It is often considered that the problems of access are not the case in the public settings as Hammersley and Atkins explain:

Access is not simply a matter of physical presence or absence. It is far more than the granting or withholding of permission for research to be conducted. [...] It might be thought that the problems of access could be avoided if one were to study ‘public’ settings only, such as streets, shops, public transport vehicles, bars, and similar locales. (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 55)

Hammersley and Atkins explain the difficulties of access in public settings by taking an example of Karp’s (1980) research experience. The obstacle of “a very particular sort of public setting” (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 56) was inevitable due to the subject of Karp’s research ‘public sexual scene’ around Time Square in New York. Karp’s failure to establish a contact with pornographic bookshop managers or regulars on the street and to overcome the uneasiness with the research atmosphere made him change his role to “observation alone” (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 57). It is interesting for me to find an analogous experience with Karp. He was sometimes considered as “a hustler, or a cop” at the public sexual scene (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 56). In *guje* market, I was often being asked whether I am not a journalist or a reporter by vendors, which was one of the main reasons why they did not want me to be there. A male vendor of a *guje* shop (Speaker 6) at Kwangjang Market asked me back in the middle of our conversation;

- Speaker 6: By the way, could you be an under-cover journalist investigating something?

JH: No, I’m not. I am doing my PhD course.

- Speaker 6: I have had some trouble before because of that; photographs were being taken without asking and=

JH: =Would you like to see my student card?

(Interview 3, pp. 278 in Appendix, 2006)

‘Speaker 6’ was one of the kindest interviewees among all who I have met, and yet, he expressed his concern towards my real identity. I had faced with this kind of suspicion in a number of occasions (about a half of vendors whom I attempted to talk to). Many of these vendors refused to talk to me or did not allow me to take any photographs of their shop by fearing that I could be a journalist. I did not have enough time to find out the exact reasons for this, as they hastily requested me to leave. Even in the case like the above, I dedicated more time to ask my primary interests about *guje* fashion consumption itself rather than figuring out the happenings between journalists’ news report and vendors at the *guje* clothing market.

The problem of obtaining access to the data one needs loom large in ethnography. It is often at its most acute in initial negotiations to enter a setting and during the ‘first days in the field’; but the problem persists, to one degree or another throughout the data collection process. (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 54)

The above described problem occurred to me as well, on the first day of my interview at Kwangjang Market. Not only was this a difficulty in negotiation, but also a threatening experience. One male (Speaker 4) and two female (Speaker 3 and 5) vendors interrupted my interview with a male *guje* consumer in the corridor of the shopping area, accusing me of being an undercover journalist, and other vendors starred at me curiously.

JH: [To the vendors] I am not covering News materials here.

- Speaker 3: It’s obvious that you are going to report a story in the newspaper by asking questions to customers and digging things out here.

JH: No, it’s not for the newspaper (.) I think you have misunderstood. It is only for personal use. I am writing my thesis. It is only to be used within academia like showing my tutors, not to be printed in public.

- Speaker 4: Where are you doing your thesis?

JH: I am studying in England.

- Speaker 5: If you are studying in England, then you should do this in England. Why here?

JH: I do this in England, too.

- Speaker 4: Writing itself is good, but=

JH: =There have been many studies about Hong Kong or Africa, but none about Korea so far. So, I am doing this only with good intentions.

- Speaker 4: I’ll give you a piece of advice young lady. Everything can be taken from you (.) uh, permission=

JH: =Permission? Is there somewhere I can get it?

- Speaker 4: You can't get permission. Only people who have businesses here are allowed to work here.
(Interview 2, pp. 277-278 in Appendix, 2006)

Firstly, as can be seen from the first question by 'Speaker 3', she was afraid of the story about *guje* market being published in the newspaper. She, too, must assume that I was a journalist because she asked me if I was going to write an article in the newspaper which seemed the main reason why she did not want me 'to be there' as an ethnographic researcher. Secondly, 'Speaker 4' also asked me questions in a tone of interrogation, and the glance of these vendors was very resentful. For a moment, I felt that I was in extreme endangerment in the middle of this traditional market. Although it could be considered an exotic atmosphere with its distinctive lights, smells and spaces, it was very unpleasant in this context. One of Hammersley and Atkins' suggestion to overcome the failure of contacts is "very extensive 'hanging about'" (Hammersley *et al.* 1995 [1983]: 57).

The final obstacle that I should point out in qualitative interviewing is one that owes itself to a national trait in South Korea. During my interviews, I have found that Koreans tend to (or do not opt to) be verbally ineloquent, even becoming inarticulate in conversation, for example, compared with the interviewees in Edinburgh from my pilot research.

Rebecca N. Rulen's work 'Korean Alterations: Nationalism, Social Consciousness, and "Traditional" Clothing' in *Re-Orienting Fashion* (2003) reflects one of the Koreans' essential characteristics. After Rulen's in-depth examination for the socially conscious, feminine activists, she concludes her final remark by quoting an answer from interview, "Rebecca, you don't understand; wearing hanbok is just something we Koreans *do* [original emphasis]" (Rulen 2003: 134). Hanbok, Korean traditional costume, can be substituted for any other type of dress. The importance here lies in the way in which Koreans have a proclivity to avoid the logical and expressive reasoning by saying "I (or we) just do (without specific reasons)." This holds true even in the case of one of the most opinionated groups of people in South Korea, the feminist activists in Rulen's (2003) study. The following interview with a twenty-five year old male consumer (Speaker 1) from my fieldwork illustrates this type of national trait.

JH: Alright. Why do you look for *guje* clothes? Do you have any special reason?

- Speaker 1: No, I don't. I just wanted to come here [laughs].

JH: Well, do you have any preferred *styles* of clothes? If yes, what's the reason you prefer *guje* clothes to others?

- Speaker 1: Well, no, I don't have any special reason. It is just (.) I am here today just because I felt like coming.

JH: So, do you have any reason for coming over here?

- Speaker 1: I just feel like it.

JH: You just feel like it?

- Speaker 1: Yes.

(Interview 1, pp. 276 in Appendix, 2006)

There were numerous cases when I received answers such as 'I just like it' or 'it just looks good'. This type of indecisive answer not only contributed to analytical difficulties when considering my research findings, but also presented obstacles for the continuation of the interviews; yet, it truly mirrors how Koreans practice and internalise their consumption.

The Use of the Internet in *Guje* Fashion Consumption

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned the Internet Cafés as an online site of *guje* fashion practice in relation to my role as the 'observer as participant' conducting this research. Until recently, the majority of the trade of imported second-hand clothing in South Korea has taken place through the traditional sales channels such as street markets and stalls on a small scale. However, there has been a drastic transition of the site of imported second-hand clothing retails and individuals' fashion practice.

As Miller and Slater state, "the Internet is not a monolithic or placeless 'cyberspace'; rather, it is numerous new technologies, used by diverse people, in diverse real-world locations" (2000: 1). A Korean English term of the 'Internet Café' reflects Korean consumers' perception of an online space which they consider this rather abstract cyberspace as a "real-world location." It will be useful to indicate the primary aspects of a "real-world location" in comparison with that of cyberspace. For example, John A. Walker highlights the importance of visual representation tools used to create retail spaces:

Customers do not, of course, buy a shop's interior décor and display style, but these factors are part of a shop's 'image', part of the shopping experience, and customers certainly buy this 'image' along with the goods they purchase (Walker 1989: 176).

This is by far enhanced in the practice of on-line shopping whereby all products are presented only as images, and these visual signs and languages create consumers' desires and fantasy instead of the experience of window shopping on the street. In these kinds of spaces, 'the use of verbal banter in buying and selling' (Rappaport 2000: 11-12) used in retailing in the late-nineteenth century in England comes into being in the form of written words. Thus textual analysis of the on-line sites is prerequisite. Furthermore, both the consumer experience of window shopping and 'the omnipresent gaze' on the street should be explored.

In the crowd all sorts of fetishes and 'perversions' are born. Frotteurism, exhibitionism, voyeurism (illicit touching, showing and looking) are sexual aberrations that rejoice in the stealth and irresponsibility of the crowd (Wilson, 2005 [1985]: 136).

Wilson's incisive description of what happens on the street whilst shopping is one of the primary issues that needs to be examined in relation to on-line shopping and consumer experience, particularly in regard to specific second-hand consumer practices if there are any.

Diverse fashion discourses on the Internet Cafés will be dealt with more detailed case studies in Chapter 6 in relation to jeans consumption. It will be sufficient here to briefly illustrate a typical case of the use of the Internet regarding *guje* consumer practice. For example, one of the biggest search engine sites in South Korea, Google.co.kr shows 5,690 findings of a Korean word “구제옷(*guje ot*),” which stands for 'guje clothing' in English, in the beginning of 2006. In 2009, the same search word gave 2,020,000 results (see Figure 9). The reason why the term “guje clothing” has been used instead of *guje* alone was discussed earlier in this chapter. Even if typing simply “guje” in the search field, the first few pages of the result appear to be about shops and newspaper articles about imported second-hand clothing.

Even though a majority of Korean consumers considers a cyberspace like the Internet café almost as a “real-world location;” on the Internet, ‘spatialized practices of shopping’ (Gregson *et al.*) exist virtually. Consequently, on-line shopping effaces the distinction of first and second-hand retail spaces³⁰ and also, withdraws the boundaries between nations which can encourage global free trades with accelerated cultural and material flows. In addition, the spatial changes have brought about multiple social consequences in speed and visual language or representation. Alexandra Palmer observes, “Shopping vintage on-line completely removes consumers from the unsavoury and conventional elements of second hand markets” (Palmer 2005: 204).



Figure 9 A search result of 2,020,000 by using the Korean word ‘구제옷’ (*guje* clothes).

³⁰ ‘first-hand’ – a linear and temporal concept against ‘second-hand’ in Gregson and Crewe’s (2003) account.

The importance of the on-line activities in consumption of *guje* lies in exchanging information among individuals through articles or message boards, surfing for various styles and shops according to their taste and current vogue, and last but not least, purchasing *guje* items through on-line shops. Having suggested the prevalent usage of the Internet for shopping, the studies of on-line shops as well as traditional markets should be given weight as an underpinning site of *guje* consumption.

Both the site of consumption (on-line and off-line shops) and the object of consumption (imported second-hand clothing) in this research inevitably intersect socio-cultural, economic, political, and technological boundaries across diverse nations. Thus, theories of consumer culture will be employed by drawing particular attention to the issues of semiotics, fashion studies, and new media and communication technologies.

Archive Research: Fashion magazines

Clothing that is meaningful in its entirety is to be found in the Fashion magazine (all the more so since the 'readership' here is massive), and therefore it is Fashion magazines which must constitute the corpus for our analysis. (Barthes 2006: 79)

Besides qualitative methods of on-street interviews and on-line observations, textual analysis of fashion magazines is one of the primary sources of this research. In their study of 70s revivalism in 90s fashion consumption, Gregson, Brooks and Crewe (2001) offer an analysis of a number of retro-themed articles in lifestyle and fashion magazines such as *GQ*, *FHM*, *Marie Claire*, *Vogue* and *Elle* from the late 1990s. On the one hand, they warn that if not combined with more diverse research methods, textual analysis could easily lead into fallacy by providing simplified answers only; on the other hand, they acknowledge that reading magazine texts allows the researcher to capture the wide and general currency in the fastest way. The latter is more valid on account given the fashion culture of South Korean *guje* /vintage consumption. *Guje* clothing has recently started to be re-accommodated based on vintage fashion trends and therefore, is still an embryonic cultural phenomenon in South Korea. At this stage, reading popular texts is the most viable

and efficient way to approach the subject matter. Therefore, textual analysis, semiotics in particular, of fashion magazines is one of the core research methods in this thesis. The relevant TV adverts and programmes as well as fashion /lifestyle magazines are used as primary sources for my research.

I should also point out the importance of the role of fashion magazines in Korea, particularly since the 1990s when the major global magazines launched Korean versions. This implies the influences of Korean editions of global fashion magazines towards their readers and fashion in general. For example, in Britain, McRobbie emphasises the significance of fashion magazines in British fashion industry during the 1980s and 1990s;

Had it not been for the appearance of *The Face* magazine in 1980 and *i-D* in the same year, British *Elle* magazine in 1985, and the British edition of *Marie Claire* in 1988, the boom in United Kingdom designer fashion through the 1980s and into the 1990s could hardly have happened. (McRobbie, 1998: 151)

It is not quite the same as a South Korean case because the United Kingdom already had a success of their own style magazines like *The Face* and *i-D* before they imported some foreign editions of fashion magazines. Therefore, the publication of a Korean version of global magazines must be regarded as even more influential, as there were hardly any distinctive style magazines previously available. As a consequence, Korean versions of foreign fashion magazines have influenced readers, other Korean magazines, and fashion culture by and large.

Coincidentally, the arrival of global magazines in Korea accords with the influx of vintage fashion. Therefore, fashion texts in these magazines do not only provide a methodological means, but may in fact be one of the major reasons for the boom in vintage styles in Korea. For reference of my research, I will use numerous fashion-related articles from newspapers, magazines, Internet message boards, TV adverts and entertainment programmes which have been published or broadcast between the 1990s to the 2000s, because the use of the communication media is one of the most important resources in fashion consumption.

A considerable amount of time was spent researching the archives of *guje* /vintage fashion at the National Library of Korea and Seoul Fashion Centre and also finding

resources of social networking and trading sites on the Internet. The National Library of Korea has the most extensive collection of magazines in South Korea. To start with, I used key words like ‘women’s magazine + Fashion’ and had a result of 34 findings in the category of book and two academic theses; three for the key words with ‘men’s magazine + fashion’³¹. Especially, men’s fashion magazines (Esquire, GQ, Men’s Anan) in the result all have the foreign origins. I referred most closely to the ‘best monthly fashion magazines’ section at the largest bookshop chain Kyobo Bookshop (www.kyobobook.co.kr) because these most accurately represented popular opinion.

Semiotics and Discourse Analysis

Anthropologist Grant McCracken, in his book *Culture and Consumption*, argues the differences between the systems of material culture and language by contesting the structuralist perspectives which consider the system of clothing identical to that of language. “Clothing is constant in its semiotic responsibilities, language is changeable” (1988: 68), he claims. In this respect, as McCracken suggests, clothing can be seen as a “closed” code, whereas language is an “open” code in their communicative levels (McCracken 1988: 68). Furthermore, McCracken asserts that “it [material culture] cannot exercise the rhetorical powers which language possesses” (McCracken 1988: 68).

However, the main academic interest of my research is to demonstrate not clothing as an article of material, but the ways in which the idea and concept of clothing have been constructed and mythified in the discourse of fashion, with a particular focus of the adoption of *guje* /vintage fashion in South Korea. Moreover, clothing and language cannot be separated in this fashion consumption, as the arrival of vintage fashion would not be possible if the process of ‘mythologization’ via ‘written-clothing’ (Barthes 1990) had not been put forward in the case of Korea. Therefore, even though *Culture and Consumption* (McCracken 1988) offers me

³¹ There were more men’s fashion-related magazines in the bookshop, but as these (including women’s magazines) were already too wide for me to cover, I did not consider other magazines which were excluded in The National Library of Korea. Even if I opt to do this, there would be hardly any ways of access the information outside of The National Library of Korea.

valuable theoretical considerations for my study throughout this thesis, I dissent from McCracken's assertion that clothing should be treated differently from language in understanding material culture.

Finally, as a semantic object, Fashion clothing has a fundamental link to what is generally called *global society* in that to practise semiological analysis, however narrowly focused, is to rediscover this society in all its anthropological generality. But to uncover this link, we must paradoxically – accept that sociology and semiology, though starting with the same object, namely Fashion, develop in two entirely different directions (Barthes 2006: 76).

Barthes distinguishes the semiology of fashion from the sociology of fashion as follows: “The sociology of Fashion is tuned entirely to a sociology of real clothing; the semiology of fashion to a sociology of representations” (Barthes 2006: 77). While the ethnographic methodology of qualitative interviewing, which was explained earlier in this chapter, deals with the former - a sociology of real clothing, the semiotic analysis will concern the latter - a sociology of representations. Therefore, in this research, semiotics offers the understanding “not of practices but of images” (Barthes 2006: 77) in the vintage fashion trends of South Korea and accounts for the construction of fashion ideology by institutionalising the concept of vintage within its verbal and visual representation.

Above all, semiotics is essentially preoccupied with precisely that cultural feature which content analysis treats as a barrier to objectivity and seeks to avoid: the process of interpretation. (Slater 2002 [1998]: 238)

Followed by the above statement by Slater, the distinctive features of *guje* /vintage fashion will be considered within two interpretative dimensions: firstly, the diachronic analysis of a word *guje* and secondly, the synchronic analysis of the discourse of vintage as an article of clothing which has been featured in fashion magazines.

Firstly, this section will briefly investigate the meaning of a word *guje* in terms of both the diachronic and synchronic analysis. Synchronically, *guje* can be analyzed employing Saussurian understanding (Slater 2002 [1998]: 239) of the systems of signs and the arbitrariness between words and things (see Figure 10):

a signifier (<i>guje</i> /vintage)	a signified (used, nostalgic fashion style)
the referent (imported second-hand clothes)	

Figure 10 the system of signs in understanding the imported second-hand clothes

Don Slater incisively explains Saussure’s (1974) theory of the system of signs, which can be helpful to account for the above plate.

Saussure argued that these two [a signifier and a signified] were like the two sides of a sheet of paper or a coin, aspects of the same entity which can only be analytically separated. Nonetheless, the relationship between the two is arbitrary. [...] There is no natural correspondence between signifiers and signified: other languages will use different words for the same [clothing]. [...] The relationship between signified and signifier is a conventional social or cultural one, on that is internal to the systems of meaning operating in a particular culture at a particular time. [...] The meaning comes about not because of the relationship between the sign and the referent but because of the relationship between the signifier and the signified. (Slater 2002 [1998]: 239)

According to Slater (2002), a sign is composed of a signifier and a signified, but the connection between the two is arbitrary and can also be changed over time and across culture. This section explores the synchronic and diachronic changes in a word *guje*. First, In terms of synchronic analysis, it can be considered that *guje* in South Korea is named differently across countries, for example, *salaula* in Zambia (Hansen 2000) and *ukay-ukay* in the Philippines (Milgram 2005), as indicated in Chapter 2 in literature review.

From etymological perspective, the meaning of *guje* has been evolved and diversified over a half a century since the 1950s in South Korea. The literal meaning of a word *guje* (구제 in Korean language) is ‘relief’, ‘salvation’ or ‘aid’ in English language. The current *guje* clothes (*guje ot* 구제옷) fashion is therefore considered to be started from the relief supplies (*guje poom* 구제품 or 구호물품 in Korean language) during the mid 20th century.

However, in contemporary consumption, *guje* clothing generally signifies imported foreign garments. It even includes Japanese imports, the nation which used to

connote the exact opposite to the original concept of *guje* at the beginning of its history. Moreover, my research findings demonstrate that some consumers are not even aware of *guje* as a term used to refer to second-hand garments and only acknowledge it as a denoting word for its old and torn-out fashion styles. All these issues will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5 along with the historical account of the *yasahng* jacket.

In addition to the synchronic and diachronic account of *guje*, I should briefly indicate the issue of newly-coined words in South Korean fashion scenes. Some of this will be explained in the next chapter like *bean-paste woman* and *Jeeyoung's bag* in luxury (foreign imports) consumption. In a subcultural fashion context, a word like *ganzi* can be considered in terms of Tonkiss' example of expert medical language.

Such an expert language has three important effects: it marks out a field of knowledge; it confers membership; and it bestows authority. (Tonkiss 2002 [1998]: 248)

The following is a part of my interview at Kwangjang Market with two 20 year-old male college students.

JH: I see. Then, why do you like *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 7: Well, they just look *ganzi*. Yeah, I like that kind of *ppil*.

JH: What does *ganzi* mean?

- Speaker 7: It means just looking cool.

(Interview 4, pp. 279 in Appendix, 2006)

Both *ganzi* and *ppil* have attained currency recently among younger generations in South Korea. They both have foreign origins which cannot be identified in the lexigraphy of the country of its origins any longer, as they have been twisted in their meaning and pronunciation. For example, *ppil* seems to be a deliberately over pronounced re-rendering of the English word 'feel', used for fun when considering its usage among South Korean youth, for example: *guje-ppil*, vintage-*ppil*, Nippon-*ppil* and so on.

In addition, words like *ganzi* and *-ppil* are rarely used for luxury consumption and are distinctive for youth fashion, therefore, in one way, they also reflect social

hierarchy in an extremely intrinsic manner. McCracken has noted the identical phenomenon of the discrimination for the use of fashion language within a society.

[W]ithin a single speech community that shares a relatively uniform code for language, there can exist quite marked differences in the code for clothing. Different age-groups and classes will encode and decode clothing messages in a strikingly disparate manner and with a low degree of mutual intelligibility (McCracken 1988: 69).

In this respect, discourse analysis offer a useful tool in understating the transformation of language as a reflection of society, as Tonkiss puts it as:

For the discourse analyst, language is both active and functional in shaping and reproducing social relations, identities and ideas. [...] In this context, 'discourse' refers to a *system* of language which draws on a particular terminology and encodes specific forms of knowledge. (Tonkiss 2002 [1998]: 248)

I consider the new words mentioned above among South Korean consumers as expert fashion language by extending the Tonkiss' explanation of expert medical language. My lack of knowledge and appropriation of this type of expert language was one of the barriers for me to enter and access the on-line space of *guje* community sites as their member. These newly-coined fashion words operate in a similar way to expert medical language in terms of their production of knowledge, membership and authority.

Having considered the change in meaning of the word *guje*, along with the production of new fashion-related words, the following comment demonstrates the significance of such language in the analysis of any society.

Language is seen not simply as a neutral medium for communicating information, but as a domain in which our knowledge of the social world is actively shaped. [...] Discourse analysis involves a perspective on language which sees this not as *reflecting* reality in a transparent or straightforward way, but as *constructing* and organizing that social reality for us. In these terms, discourse analysts are interested in language and texts as sites in which social meanings are created and reproduced, and social identities are formed. (Tonkiss 2002 [1998]: 246)

Discourse analysis can be used along with semiotics in understanding cultural texts, as both occupy their concerns with the process and construction of social conditions and phenomenon.

Semiotics was for Barthes not simply the description of sign systems but the analysis of this process of ‘mythologization’ whereby conventional social systems of meaning come to appear natural. (Slater 2002 [1998]: 241)

Barthes’ concept of ‘mythologization’ will be used for my analysis of fashion magazines in their introduction of vintage in South Korea in Chapter 6. Even if vintage and *guje* indicate the same kind of garments in many cases, these fashion magazines largely deal with the conceptualisation, or what Barthes calls ‘mythologization’, of vintage clothing. Therefore, Barthes’ (1990) structural account of fashion magazines provides an important ground for my research.

Barthes analyzes three different features of garments which can be identified from the pages of fashion magazines, that is, ‘the plastic structure of image-clothing, the verbal structure of written clothing and finally the technological structure of real clothing’. (Barthes 1990: 5) My research will highlight the first two, “image–clothing from photography [and] written-clothing from language (Barthes 1990: 3-4)” and argue that the ways in which the Western-centred fashion has been fantasised and institutionalised especially through the written language.

Finally, before setting the topic of methodology aside, I should mention ethnographic analysis of television research as it is a good opportunity to compare the issues of passive and active audience responses in reading cultural texts. As Slater mentions, “there has been a decisive turn away from textual analysis towards ethnographic research into cultural consumption and a major revival of audience research (for example, Ang, 1991; Morley, 1992)” (Slater 2002 [1998]: 234). This academic wave has resulted in the popularity of ‘active audience theory’ which is largely based on cultural studies from the perspectives of postmodern and deconstructionist theory (Morley 1997: 122).

Professor David Morley strongly believes that the ‘active audience theory’ is “the unproductive excesses” and has “moved into an unhelpful romanticization of ‘consumer freedoms’ which forgets the very question of cultural power” (Morley 1997: 137). The following comment by Morley incisively summarises a blind point of the ‘active audience theory’.

I would agree with Curran that recent reception studies which document audience autonomy and offer optimistic/redemptive readings of mainstream media texts, have often been, wrongly, taken to represent not simply a challenge to a simple-minded effects or dominant ideology model, but rather as, in themselves, documenting the total absence of media influence, in the ‘semiotic democracy’ of postmodern pluralism. (Morley 1997: 125)

A similar disposition to the ‘active audience model’ in media consumption was shown in the previous chapter of Literature Review. It was explained that there is a popular academic fashion to view the consumption of the ‘imported second-hand clothes’ in the non-West as a celebration of individuality and diversity against global homogenisation. This kind of optimistic outlook can be also considered as “an unhelpful romanticization of consumer freedoms” as seen in Morley’s argument.

Moreover, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Diana Crane comments, “Democratization of clothing has led to diversity, not standardization” (2000: 240). This can also fall into the same fallacy of the ‘semiotic democracy’ in the active audience theory’, by disregarding the power of fashion authority, especially the tremendous influence of the Western fashion hegemony in South Korea, if not across the world, in my thesis. Therefore, to avoid this kind of naïve fallacy, I will utilize Barthes’s theory of myth to demonstrate the ways in which fashion magazines convey and even institutionalise their hegemonic discourse successfully as if it is to be considered as a natural phenomenon.

4. Westernisation and Globalisation in Consuming Imported Goods

This chapter will explore the ways in which “new” Koreans construct and represent their identity by assimilating the Western styles and history. The aim of this chapter is to provide a general socio-cultural backdrop of contemporary South Korea in regard to the consumption of imported goods. South Koreans’ national susceptibility towards the foreign products and culture will be examined within the perspectives of Westernisation and globalisation. As the distinctiveness of *guje* clothes arises from its ‘foreign’ and Western origins, it seems inevitable to account for the public discourses about both the acceptance and the rejection of foreign products that occurs in South Korea. This analysis of the existing consumer sensibility towards the accommodation of foreign products in South Korea will therefore be helpful to understand and compare the possible implications of *guje* consumption later.

It was briefly mentioned, in the Introduction, that non-Westerners have a proclivity to view Globalisation as Westernisation or Americanisation; also that academics like Giddens (1999: 15) asserts that contrary to appearance, countries can undergo widespread globalisation, yet still remain culturally distinct. This chapter delves into the issues of globalisation and Westernisation from both Western and South Korean perspectives, and demonstrates the negative public discourses and the buoyant attitudes towards individual consumption displayed in relation to imported goods that is widely practiced in South Korea, paying special attention to the argument between conformity and diversity.

Western perspectives: a global world, neither westernised nor homogenised

One of the most relevant theories for my argument can be found in Samuel P. Huntington’s (2002 [1997]) *The Clash of Civilizations*, in particular one of the chapters ‘A Universal Civilization? Modernization and Westernization’. A question mark in the title suggests Huntington’s negation of both the idea of a universal civilization and the interconnectedness between modernisation and Westernisation. According to Huntington, cultural fads and innovations which are disseminated from one civilization to another are transient by nature “without

altering the underlying culture of the recipient civilization” (Huntington 2002 [1997]: 58). In this context, modernisation is not necessarily accompanied by Westernisation, and therefore, a realisation of a universal civilisation will not take place in the world. Huntington asserts, “In fundamental ways, the world is becoming more modern and less Western” (Huntington 2002 [1997]: 78).

Huntington’s view can be helpful in explaining national identity at a macro level, as each country still possesses their distinctive cultural values under the massive forces of globalisation. Yet, the individual consumers in non-Western countries can be tremendously affected by the Western cultural fads and innovations, and these can result in altering their social norms and behaviours progressively over time. Be this as it may, in regard to the consumption of Western goods by non-Westerners, Huntington considers that Western products are one thing and Western culture is another, and moreover, that Western goods do not represent Western values, as can be seen in the following text.

The argument now that the spread of pop culture and consumer goods around the world represents the triumph of Western civilization trivializes Western culture. The essence of Western civilization is the Magna Carta not the Magna Mac. The fact that non-Westerners may bite into the latter has no implications for their accepting the former (Huntington 2002 [1997]: 58).

Raising an objection to Huntington’s comment, a journalist Ejaz Haider (2006) suggests in his newspaper column in *Daily Times* in Pakistan that “Sam Huntington can revise the line [...]. Clearly, today, to have Magna Carta first we need Magna Mac.”³² He highlights that Western material goods such as hamburgers and *Playboy* play a key role even in the political happenings like war and peace and may be the first prerequisite for the introduction of Western culture and ideology in non-Western world. Such a view can be understood as ‘Coca-colonization’ (Hannerz 1992: 217 quoted in Howes 1996:3). Predictably perhaps, Huntington remains unconvinced by the Coca-colonization theory:

Advocates of the Coca-colonization thesis identify culture with the consumption of material goods. The heart of a culture, however,

³² http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C04%5C16%5Cstory_16-4-2006_pg3_5

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involves language, religion, values, traditions and customs (Huntington 1996).

For Huntington, Coca-colonization is only an insignificant and trivial aspect of culture in comparison with more substantial social elements. However, the importance of Coca-colonization or material culture in general has continued to grow. A classic example of this thesis can be found in *Cross-Cultural Consumption: global markets, local realities* by an anthropologist David Howes' (1996).

[I]t is commonly supposed that the recent collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe was precipitated by the irrepressible demands of the youth of those countries for Coke, blue jeans and all the other 'good things' of American consumer democracy. The consumption of Coca-Cola is thus apparently allied with the internalization of American political ideology and economic values. Coke offers a taste of 'freedom' (Howes 1996: 3-4).

Here, 'good things' like Coca-Cola and blue jeans play a pivotal role in changing political ideologies and introducing 'Americanness' and 'freedom'. Similar to the ways in which Coke provides 'a taste of 'freedom'' in Howes' explanation of Coca-colonization, the West's cast-off clothes which have been circulated in non-Western countries can be seen to represent the 'progress' and 'modernity' of the Western values and ideology, as shown previously in my literature review. This kind of widespread consumption of Western material goods across the world cannot escape the criticism of uniformity and homogeneity. Howes mainly explains the phenomenon of Coca-colonization under the global homogenization paradigm in contrast to the creolization paradigm, whereby foreign goods are recontextualised according to the socio-cultural conditions in the recipient countries. From the viewpoint of the creolization paradigm, Howes accounts for the diverse meanings and uses of Coca-Cola in several countries in the non-West (Howes 1996: 3-8).

Hansen also states a view similar to the creolization paradigm, which seems obvious for a scholar who refuses the universalist account of global homogenization. Hansen writes, "While Coca-cola and McDonald's are enjoyed almost everywhere today, predictions of the world becoming a global village have

never come true” (Hansen 1999: 345-346). However, I would insist that the impact of these Western consumable goods in regard to the transformation of non-Western cultures should not be overlooked only because the world has, and will, not become a single global entity. In order to expand this, relevant cases in South Korea will be demonstrated later in this chapter.

Huntington also argues, “Drinking Coca-Cola does not make Russians think like Americans any more than eating sushi makes Americans think like Japanese” (Huntington 1996). Firstly, it is necessary to reconsider Howes’ remark (1996: 3-4) here; Drinking Coca-Cola might in fact have had a crucial effect on the collapse of the communist regimes towards the 21st century, as Howe suggests, which proves the enormous impact of the flow of American or Western material goods in transforming the political institutions and social ideology in non-Western countries. Secondly, the unequal relationship in regard to consuming each other’s products between the West and the non-West should be pointed out. The extent to which Coca-Cola has been popularised across the world when seen in comparison with that of sushi, for example, makes the Japanese contribution seem relatively diminutive. This is even more evident in the Western-style dress practices of many non-Western countries - especially in the case of consuming the West’s cast-off clothing as displayed throughout this thesis.

South Korean perspectives: westernised South Korea in a global world

So far, Western perspectives which advocate globalisation as being irrelevant to Westernisation have been discussed. This section will briefly examine the South Korean viewpoints towards globalisation, Westernisation and modernisation. To counter-argue Huntington’s (2002 [1997]; 1996) assertion, I would lay importance on material culture as a representation of national and individual identity; especially, in the non-West, Western material goods have an enormous influence on the established ideologies and lifestyles of the countries which adopt them, and can also cause the cultural clashes among its people.

South Korea has become rapidly modernised since the late 20th century, and its social and cultural changes have had a great influence over the ways in which

individuals perceive and reconstruct the discourse of consumption, especially of foreign products. In this respect, Laura C. Nelson (2000), in *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea*, offers one of the most current sociological accounts of consumption in South Korea written in English. As a non-Korean observer, Nelson pinpoints the sensitive details that South Koreans would take for granted in their consumer practice in everyday life. Firstly, the significance of foreign products, when they first started to enter the South Korean marketplace on a massive scale, is well-described in the following comments.

[F]ollowing the Olympics [(1988)], local markets offered a greatly increased supply of imported consumer goods. These imports entered into *the material and imaginative lives* [my emphasis] of people in Seoul³³. Imported goods linked South Koreans *to the rest of the world* [my emphasis] and expanded their knowledge of the lifestyles of other people, but imported goods were simultaneously seen as a potentially dangerous infiltration into South Korean space, posing a threat to South Korean businesses. (Nelson 2000: 22)

This remark is important in four aspects. Firstly, it provides a social ground for Nelson's concept of 'consumer nationalism', which will be discussed later in this chapter. Secondly, the South Korean habit of incorporating imported goods into their 'material and imaginative lives' is a substantial characteristic also in the case of *guje* /vintage consumption. Imagination, expressed through a medium of the imported second-hand clothes, plays a crucial role in the construction of the historical and geographical narratives of both the West and South Korea. Thirdly, when considering the rest of the world, the entirety of the world should not be interpreted literally as the global. At least in the consumption of foreign goods, the world can be understood as being split in accordance with the dominant powers, such as Europe and North America, as mentioned earlier in Giddens' comment in the Introduction; and also the inclusion of Japan in this 'world' should be noted as Japan is renowned for either their advanced technology or exquisite taste. As with the second point, this categorisation of the world will be also applied for *guje* consumption for its (material) importing and (culturally) aspiring nations.

³³ Seoul is the capital city of South Korea, and most importantly, at least one fifth of population reside in Seoul.

Finally, it can be a currently valid standpoint to consider foreign infiltration as a threat to South Korean business. The recent report ‘collapse of South Korean luxury shoe industry’ (Hwang 2009) in a daily newspaper *Herald Biz* can support this account. The article reports that in 2009, only one of the three largest South Korean shoe brands, which used to be popular till the late 1990s, has survived, and that barely, whereas the other two were sold to foreign companies. Furthermore, even the remaining company has been withdrawn from Hyundae Department Store in luxurious fashion district Apgujeong-dong, and currently, 70 percent of the total sales of shoes in South Korea are imported (Hwang 2009).

There must be positive aspects in global economic trades; however, what I attempt to indicate in this thesis is that there is also a tension and vulnerability arising from the widespread consumption of imported (fashion) goods, when both local consumers and industries have not achieved a certain degree of autonomy against the dominant forces of Western cultural industry.

Returning to the first aspect, the hasty introduction of a vast volume of imported products in South Korea has caused both an enchantment with unfamiliar goods and widespread anxiety about domestic industries. Wilson states that “in the socialist countries of the ‘third’ world, western fashion may represent both the lure and the threat of neo-colonialism” (2005 [1985]: 14). South Korea has been a capitalist country (and not the ‘third’ world, either), however, Wilson’s observation exactly explains what South Korea has undergone in the course of globalisation, Westernisation and modernisation.

This public anxiety has led especially to the phenomenon of “consumer nationalism,” a term coined by Nelson (2000). Consumer nationality governs national identity and consumption choices in South Korea (Nelson 2000: 25-26); for example, anti-*kwasobi* (excessive consumption) campaign (Nelson 2000: 107, 115) and ‘the Korean anti-import drives’ both of which “urge Koreans not to buy imported products” (Nelson 2000: 134). Consumption of imported products can easily be viewed as a part of *kwasobi* by the public in South Korea. The following remark represents South Koreans’ sensibility of “consumer nationalism” towards

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foreign influences since the 1980s, with a specific reference to these goods whose origins are the West or Japan.

A large part of public discussion of the new consumer market focused on whether consumption [...] was in itself a corrupt Western influence. Moreover, it was through consumption of foreign products, people feared, that “Korean” culture would fall victim to Japanese or Western infiltration. (Nelson 2000: 25)

Considering Nelson’s comment, ‘Japanese and Western infiltration’ seems prevalent across the South Korean consumer society, let alone the case of *guje* fashion. As can be seen above and stressed in the Introduction, the term ‘West’ is more widely and frequently used than the word ‘global’ in South Korea. Furthermore, this foreign cultural invasion causes adverse public criticism of Westernisation. The central critique of Westernisation lies not only in the protection of domestic industries, but in the maintenance of national identity. Therefore, in the wake of industrialisation and modernisation, those omnipresent foreign influences have been a great national concern in regard to the transition of South Korean identity.

Industrial change has progressively moved Koreans away from the style of life that once defined being Korean. Certainly these “new” Koreans are not simple copies of Americans or anyone else. But just as certainly, they are not copies of their grandparents either. (Hart 2001: xvi)

It can be understood that the new breed of South Koreans has evolved and differentiated themselves from their Korean ancestors and yet, their new ways of thinking, behaving and dressing are not identical to Americans - or Westerners in a broad sense. Even though contemporary South Koreans are “not simple copies of Americans,” they are more likely to possess a higher degree of, for example, Americanness (or Westernness) within themselves. In addition, at least in fashion practices, the styles and appearances of these emerging “new” Koreans are more close to that of Americans or Westerners than that of their grandparents.

Then, would the previous generations be considered as ‘genuine’ Koreans without being affected by any external influences from America or anywhere else? According to a well-known socio-cultural columnist Kyu-tae Lee (1983), foreign cultures have been tremendously influential throughout Korean history. In his book

Structure of Koreans' Consciousness [Korean Ways of Thinking] series, Lee identifies the essential reasons for, what he calls, the longstanding 'inferiority complex' among Koreans as follows:

Have we ever been proud of Korea and Koreans' identity? We have been possessed by an inferiority complex up to the present; since the period of the Three Kingdoms of Korea to Tang Dynasty [A.D.618 - A.D.907]; Goryeo to Yuan Dynasty [(1271-1368)]; Joseon to Ming Dynasty [(1368-1644)]; and from the era of the civilization [in the late 19th century] to Western culture. (Lee 1983: 5-6)

According to Lee's explanation, foreign influences have been dominant in Korean history³⁴, and only the power dynamics have shifted from China to the West towards the 20th century. Whether the object of aspiration is China or the West, Koreans have had a proclivity to rely on the hegemonic power throughout its history. Currently, the inferiority complex still plays an important role in the accommodation of foreign imports and culture among South Koreans and furthermore, affects their attitudes towards globalisation and Westernisation. In addition, similarities with this notion of the inferiority complex can be found in the discourse of Orientalism. Jones and Leshkovich, in their discussion of Asian dress and globalisation, indicate the ways in which "the Orient" is considered "as fundamentally Other, feminine, and *perpetually inferior to the West* [my emphasis]" (2003:6). The importance of inferiority complex lies in the fact that it is not forced from outside, but occurs on South Koreans' own initiative.

Analogous to the inferiority complex, a prominent political scientist Jung-in Kang (2004) provides a keen insight in his book *Beyond the Shadow of Eurocentrism*. Kang calls this an 'outer complex' (2004: 15) and says that "the West is the world, and we [Koreans] are the provincial" (2004:13). If the West is the world, then Westernisation can be equivalent to globalisation. Kang's remark demonstrates the way in which South Koreans consider Westernisation as globalisation, as suggested earlier by Giddens (1999).

³⁴ I use Korea here instead of South Korea, as this history reflects the period before the division of Korea into north and south in 1945. Equally, Korea will be used when it denotes the language and ethnicity.

Kang reinforces this notion of a world in thrall to the West, pointing out that Korea's longheld reliance on China in the past is not so dissimilar to contemporary South Korea's cultural dependency on the West, "Of course, we were the provincial to China in the traditional era" (2004: 32). He also emphasises how prevalently the Western-centred outlook governs the South Korean's ways of thinking from sports, fashion, politic to academia. According to Kang, this 'open secret' has been disclosed "when South Koreans consider that they have already overcome their outer complex" (2004: 15). The outer complex often appears in the form of national pride during South Koreans' intensifying participation in keen competition for the world's sport games or international beauty contests, like the World Cup football match and Miss Universe. (Kang 2004:16) It is interesting to find a similar example of Kang's outer complex in fashion research in China. China, which was once considered as the world to provincial Korea, according to Kang (2004: 32), is no longer the centre of the world in the current cultural hegemony, at least in the world of fashion and beauty.

In 'Fashioning the Body in Post-Mao China', Xiaoping Li explains that the discovery of Chinese model Peng Li, as a winner of the International New Models Competition 1988 in Italy, can be seen as "a sign that China's new beauty industry *finally* [my emphasis] could match international/Western standard" (Li 1998: 79). First of all, this kind of feeling of achievement, which is gained from the international scale of competition, whether in beauty or sports, is exactly what Kang (2004) calls the outer complex in South Korea's case.

Secondly, it should be indicated that the recognition or approval of these accomplishments is deeply rooted in the Western hegemony. In the introduction of *Re-Orienting Fashion: the Globalization of Asian Dress* (Niessen *et al.* 2003), Carla Jones and Ann Marie Leshkovich comment about the Western fashion establishment being an authoritative power towards the non-West by "telling them what was precious in their cultural heritage [or beautiful] and what was not."³⁵

³⁵ A similar case can be found in South Korea. A South Korean girl Seung-Hyun Kang won Ford Supermodel of the World in New York in January 2008. However, her face is far from being a typical beauty by South Korean standards, especially her "oriental mask

(2003: 20) In this context of prevalent hegemonic power, the standards of both regional cultural heritage and ethnic beauty are predominantly demarcated according to the Western taste in aesthetic.

The use of the word ‘finally’ in the above remark by Li (1998) implies here the extent to which the Chinese have longed for this approval of the Western/International fashion establishment since the modernisation of post-socialist China. Li acknowledges, “In the process [of modernisation], fashion has come to be associated with the world of spectacle and defined primarily by Western fashion trends” (Li 1998: 87). However, Li claims that the modernisation of fashion in China should not be regarded as Westernisation, nor colonisation, but should be understood within ‘the dynamics of globalization’ (Li 1998: 84). Li’s perspective of globalisation is highly analogous to many Western scholars’ views, notably those of Hansen, Giddens and Huntington.

One problem for the majority of non-Asian academics is the fact that they continue to follow and repeat what Western scholars have offered. If Huntington’s (2002 [1997]) assertion of the impossibility of the existence of a universal civilisation in the world is valid, then how is it possible for academics in different cultures to have the same view towards Westernisation and globalisation? In this sense, the way academia operates is no different from the international beauty industry, both are chained to the might of Western authority. It seems that these scholars advocate self-reliance only in their cultural heritage or beauty, but not in their theories.

Furthermore, Li points out, “While fashion is largely Westernized, its use can be highly localised” (Li 1998:84). In this thesis, I do not refuse the localisation of the Western-centred fashion, but argue that the convergence of ‘global and local forces’ (Li 1998: 87) in fashion practices do not seem as harmonious and equal as one might expect. It is more accurate to say that ‘local forces’ are immensely dependent on the transition of Western fashion trends from time to time, and furthermore, hardly influence back to the West. One possible explanation for this

consisting of single eyelid.” (<http://www.nowpublic.com/people/korean-female-model-wonford-supermodel-world>)

can be found in Kang's assertion of the outer complex. As long as one has the outer complex, an equal relationship between the both sides almost cannot be possible. One of the purposes of this thesis is to explore this 'open secret' of outer complex which is also represented in imported fashion consumption.

Additionally, the official statement of Seoul Fashion Center (a subsidiary organisation which is supported by the City of Seoul for the purpose of supporting the fashion industry in South Korea) reflects the way in which South Korea views globalisation under competitive pressure from the rest of the world. Beneath their catchphrase "Seoul as Global Fashion City," the objective of this centre is shown as below:

The SFC aspires to:

- foster the fashion industry as a strategic industry with global competitiveness
 - promote Seoul as a fashion capital city of the world like Paris, Milan, London and New York
 - promote the Dongdaemun & Namdaemun trading areas with a core emphasis on casual fashion for young people
 - provide integrated services including education & training, offering information, creating designs, planning, marketing domestically and internationally, business development
- (<http://www.sfc.seoul.kr/about/eng/introduction.asp>)

As stated, globalisation is an opportunity for competition rather than for accepting diversity across the world, and therefore, offers a shortcut to access the most fashionable Western cities more rapidly and frequently. Therefore, SFC intends to develop Seoul as a global fashion city who can be an equal competitor with the world's most fashionable cities, not to exchange cultural diversity with the Other, which is considered marginal to the West. In this respect, it seems certain that globalisation is no different from Westernisation.

So far, I have reviewed three distinctive critiques of Korean sensibility in the accommodation of foreign culture and products. Consumer nationalism, the inferiority complex and the outer complex explain the ways in which South Koreans deal with the Western material and cultural influences. Into this social backdrop, Western cultural commodities have brought about both aversion and

favouritism, often simultaneously, among the public and sometimes raise public debates on individual consumption practices.

Myth of the Arrival of Miniskirts as a Western Object in South Korea



Figure 11 Government control of the wearing of miniskirt in the 1960s and 1970s in South Korea.

Based on these cultural accounts, I will now turn to more practical examples in order to illustrate the ways in which the consumption of imported material goods has been developed in South Korea. The first example demonstrates the introduction of the miniskirt, as an object of foreign fashion style, and its cultural impact in the 1960s in South Korea with a reference to a similar case found in current Zambia. In contrast, the other two examples focus on the latest issues in regard to the widespread use of foreign (fashionable) brands in South Korea, which can be considered more symbolic and luxurious than the case of the miniskirt. All these examples have been developed as ways in which to account for the imported second-hand fashion within the South Korean cultural context in this thesis.

The miniskirt can be considered as one of the most sensational western (-style) clothing items in South Korean fashion history. The book *Fashion 1900-2000* describes how the introduction of a miniskirt, which was worn for the first time by a female singer Bokhee Yoon in 1967 in South Korea, aroused “a great shock not only to dress culture, but also to society” (Keum et al. 2002: 227) under a rigid political climate at the time. South Korea had also undergone the acceptance of, and the resistance to, miniskirt fashion in the late 1960s and 1970s (see Figure 11).

Since 1967, Bokhee Yoon has remained a unique fashion icon of miniskirts in South Korea. While she typifies the introduction of miniskirts to South Korea in this period, even a strong myth has been carefully created to illustrate the very first moment of importing it from abroad. The following articles are only a small part of the propagation of these myths; they are from one of the three major daily newspapers and the most typical Internet-based newspaper respectively.

It is well known that a singer Bokhee Yoon set the miniskirt fashion in this country. She worked in Las Vegas and returned home for the New Year's greetings in January 1967. Upon her arrival at the airport, Yoon surprised everybody by appearing with her short skirt. It was also said that a few conservative men threw eggs on the scene. (Sangkook Lee 27 April 2009, JoongAng Daily)

It is not difficult to identify that this is overstated, if not fictional. In 1967, only a small number of people used the airport, as the restrictions on overseas travel were not removed until 1989³⁶, and it is unlikely that these small number of travellers brought fresh eggs to the airport.

A presenter at a broadcasting programme asked to Bokhee Yoon the reason why she wore a miniskirt when she returned from abroad [at the airport] in 1967. Bokhee Yoon's answer was unexpectedly simple. She said that she wanted to look pretty to her boyfriend. (Hunshik Kim 3 August 2007, Ohmynews.com)

It is true that Yoon had played a key role in pervasion of miniskirts in the beginning, but recently, she has repeatedly denied the fact that she wore a miniskirt at the airport in 1967, at several newspaper and radio interviews. Yoon made it clear that she did not even wear a skirt, but a pair of trousers (Lee 2009; Kim 2007). The cultural columnist SangKook Lee supposes that a company advertisement in

³⁶ http://www.0404.go.kr/call/Call01_1.jsp

1996, which produced the supposed scene of the first arrival of a miniskirt, has made this rumour even more concrete (Lee 2009). Yoon is in her sixties now and still explains the truth about her miniskirt. What could be the reason for these kinds of myths to have been circulated at the outset, reproduced as an image in the late 1990s, and why are they still widely believed by the general public in South Korea?

It is worth noting three features: the material goods, time and space; that is, a miniskirt, the 1960s and the airport, respectively. Firstly, in this myth, a miniskirt represents the latest Western fashion. Secondly, in the 1960s in South Korea, travelling abroad was not open to everybody, as pointed out above, so celebrities like Bokhee Yoon who frequently travelled foreign countries were an appropriate figure to convey this latest Western fashion to South Korea. Finally, an airport was almost the only possible path to connect South Korea to overseas as South Korea is a peninsula laying adjacent to North Korea. Therefore, an airport symbolises the gateway to ‘foreignness’, more specifically to Westernness or Americanness.

These three elements were woven together to highlight what was the latest Western fashion, and can be understood as “crazy for foreign” (Hansen 2000: 38, 92) the term Hansen uses in her account of salaula. In this perspective, Hansen’s comment about salaula, which is mentioned in the Literature Review, can be easily replaced with a miniskirt: “The fact that [a miniskirt] is imported [fashion style] and not local enhances its attractiveness to local consumers” (Hansen 2000: 92). I therefore assert that the miniskirt became increasingly popular in the 1960s because it was a foreign /Western import; and if it were from South Korea, then the socio-cultural consequences of the miniskirt’s popularity may well have been completely different.

Prior to proceeding to the current issues of consuming luxury imports in South Korea, it will be useful to consider the similar fashion practice of miniskirts in Zambia; as it is interesting to find a cultural resonance between South Korea and Zambia not only in imported second-hand clothes consumption, but also in miniskirt fashion. Moreover, in conjunction to salaula, miniskirt consumption demonstrates the repeated and continuous foreign influence on the Zambian

fashion scene, which seems to weaken Hansen's claim that the appropriation of these styles incurs no loss of autonomy.

'Dressing Dangerously: Miniskirts, Gender Relations, and Sexuality in Zambia' (Hansen 2004) can effectively illustrate how the West's (second-hand) clothes have influenced and gradually transformed the conventional norms of behaviour in a non-Western country. In a broad sense, this case can also exemplify one aspect of the consumption of the West's second-hand clothes in the non-West as a Western used clothes shop like "Sally's Boutique" is a major resource of providing miniskirts for Zambian consumers (Hansen 2004: 174).

Hansen asserts that the wearing of miniskirts is a hazardous dress practice for Zambian women since the late 1960s, because a large number of these women have frequently faced severe sexual attacks on the street as well as public criticism on their morality in general (Hansen 2004). However, instead of focusing on Zambian reactions against the length of skirts in terms of gender and power relations, I shall concentrate my attention on the issues of foreign influences upon accommodating miniskirts in a non-Western country.

When the miniskirt first burst onto the Zambian fashion scene, it provoked a debate that centered on women's proper place in the new nation and blamed "foreign" influences, among them miniskirt fashions, for independent women's lack of morality. (Hansen 2004: 180)

The above text describes the initial conflict of accommodating miniskirts in Zambian society. According to Hansen, miniskirts first came into fashion among young urban women in Zambia in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Hansen 2004: 169), which is similar to the South Korea's case. At this period, the introduction of miniskirts triggered an immediate confrontation between the progressive fashion fad, which originated in the West, and the newly established, conservative national culture in Zambia. In contrast to the earlier epoch, Hansen does not consider the foreign influences that Zambian women might be seen as buying into in conjunction with their miniskirt purchases as being of any great importance, and insists that "people in Zambia have made Western-styled clothing their own" (Hansen 2004: 169). This view exactly echoes with Hansen's previous claim on salaula consumption; Hansen states that "by the postwar [the post-WWII] era

Africans had definitely made Western-style clothing and dress practices their own” (Hansen 2000: 40).

Having considered Hansen’s persistent comments on Zambians’ fashion practices of both salaula and miniskirts, it is highly important to notice the discrepancy of time here. In case of salaula practice, Zambians made Western-style clothing their own by the postwar period; but in regard to miniskirt fashion, they repeated the assimilation of Western fashion throughout the late 1960s and 1970s. Even if Zambians have fully accommodated Western-styled clothing as daily dress by the postwar period, “foreign” influences reappeared as a centre of a public dispute in the wearing of miniskirts in the latter period; “It viewed independent women in miniskirts as warped by “foreign” influences that threatened cultural notions of authority” (Hansen 2004: 172). Ultimately, even if Hansen believes that the women reclaimed the wearing of miniskirts as an autonomous fashion practice, society disagreed.

To summarise, twenty to thirty years from the postwar era, some Zambians are still making an effort to reclaim Western-style clothing, making items like miniskirts their own, while others have resisted Western fashion. Furthermore, I will suggest that this Western-oriented fashion practice might still be in progress “in the wake of the miniskirt’s return in the 1990s” (Hansen 2004: 180) in Zambia, in contrast to Hansen’s claim.

The “foreign” origin of the miniskirt was no longer an issue; what was at stake now was the item of clothing itself and the local interpretations it engendered. (Hansen 2004: 180)

If ‘foreign’ influences were, first and foremost, blamed in the introduction of miniskirts, then the impact of foreign styles on Zambian fashion practitioners cannot easily recede into the background. ‘The item of clothing itself and the local interpretations’ bring sharply into focus its importance in relation to sexual inequality of dressing, according to Hansen. Yet, it might be rather imprudent to say that “their [contemporary young Zambian women’s] pursuit of “the latest [fashion]”” (Hansen 2004: 174) is outside of the power of Western-if not, global-fashion; for example, shops like “Sally’s Boutique” play a key role in supplying

miniskirts (and salaula clothing) which are imported as second-hand clothes from the West (Hansen 2004: 174).

Unlike the case of Zambia, miniskirts, as an item of clothing, are no longer an object of adverse moral criticism in South Korean society. Therefore, forty years on from the background of this fabricated story of the arrival of the first miniskirt, it can be said that South Koreans 'made miniskirts (as an item of clothing) their own', as Hansen claims is the Zambian case. However, even if South Koreans' miniskirt fashion has been normalised, it does not mean that the omnipresent influences of Western fashion and styles have reduced over time. Later in this chapter with the current South Korean examples and also throughout this thesis, the ways in which South Koreans continually reproduce the discourse of the West will be carefully examined by presenting the consumer practice of fantasising about Western fashion styles.

One of Hansen's examples regarding miniskirt fashion practices is a popular Zairean music and dancing star Tshala Muana who performed in Zambia in 1996 (Hansen 2004: 175-176). While Tshala Muana whose overall styles have the semblance of Tina Turner is presented as an exemplification of free and rebellious Zambian fashion in Hansen's (2004) argument; a South Korea singer and actor Rain, who has even launched his own fashion label in 2008 was the target of criticism for imitating Michael Jackson and Justin Timberlake when he performed in the United States.

As a summary statement the review directly linked the lack of individual character of Rain's music to the 'globalization that pumps American products through worldwide media channels' – and not surprisingly noted that Rain was 'mimicking Mr. Jackson's costumes' as well (Pareles 2006, quoted in Lynch and D. Strauss 2007: 7)

So far, most academics, like Hansen (2000; 2004), Howes (1996), Huntington (2002 [1997]) or Li (1998), assert that globalisation does not produce uniformity by advocating that, for example, even drinking Coca-Cola has a different meaning in each culture, and they also vindicate non-Western consumers' autonomy. However, in Rain's case, globalisation is regarded as spreading the uniformed cultural products and styles to non-Westerners. Similar to Tshala Muana in Zambia,

Rain is highly popular across many Asian countries³⁷, and his music, dance and fashion styles have always set the latest fashion in South Korea. If Rain had never been to the United States as a singer, then he might not have been faced with such criticism as above. On the contrary, it is also possible that Western academics or journalists might consider Rain as an individual practitioner who brings diversity and freedom to South Korean society in the context of globalisation, instead of condemning him for mimicking Michael Jackson, but only, presumably, if he had stayed in Asia.

Rain's example affirms the ways in which the impact of globalisation governs the media and material culture including music and fashion styles, in a comparatively less powerful country. Fashion (textile and apparel) professors Annette Lynch and Mitchell D. Strauss indicate this unequal relationship in fashion development which depends on the level of power of a country.

[O]n an international level, it [the impact of the increasing divide between those of power and influence and those isolated by poverty on fashionable behaviour] points toward the continuing influence of affluent nations on fashion-trend development, with the countries of lower power and influence always in the imitating mode. (Lynch and D. Strauss 2007: 7)

Dissimilar to some anthropologists' – like Hansen's – sympathetic understanding of globalisation in terms of bringing diversity into the non-Western world, the previous account of Rain's perceived lack of individuality in tastes of both music and fashion suggest that fashion-related scholars and professionals might critically view globalisation as a homogeneous power, especially across non-Western countries.

Bean-paste Girl and Jeeyoung's Bag, a Social Controversy over the Excessive Consumption of the Western Goods

³⁷ Rain is often named as a 'world star' in South Korea due to his activities abroad, particularly in the U.S. This emblem exemplifies an example of South Koreans' 'outer complex' (Kang 2004) which indicated earlier in this chapter.

Returning back to South Korean consumption practice of imported goods, this section will give two examples of newly-coined fashion-related words which have rapidly gained public attention and have been widely used by the public.

A *(soy)bean-paste woman (or girl)* and *Jeeyoung's bag (or a 3-minute bag)* are all newly-coined terms in the 2000s concerned with the consumption of foreign imports and the gender issues; a *soybean-paste woman* is related to Starbucks coffee and the American TV show *Sex and the City*, while both *Jeeyoung's bag* and a *3-minute bag* indicate *Speedy* bags³⁸ by Louis Vuitton. These new terms bear negative and pejorative connotations about women who 'excessively' spend their income on the purchase of foreign (luxury) goods, including globally franchised coffee. It might be contentious to be publically judgemental about the excessiveness of an individuals' expenditure when they do not even suffer due to, or complain about their financial status. However, this type of socio-cultural climate reflects the general South Korean moral codes and sentiments towards the consumption of imported goods. The etymology and delineation of the epithet of a *bean-paste girl* is well-described in the following daily newspaper article.

Most recently, there has been the debate on "bean-paste girls" (known in Korean as *doenjang-nyeo*), a term for young Korean women who imitate the glamorous lifestyle of New Yorkers. The term spread over the Internet after anonymous writer lampooned the girls. [...], they get male classmates to buy them coffee at Starbucks. The pathos of a bean-paste girl is that they are vain and miserable while lacking the style and wit of the girls in "Sex and the City." No matter how they try, they can't fake their personalities. (Park 2006)

Ironically, *(soy)bean-paste* has been one of the most popular and traditional Korean sauces for centuries. As the word *bean-paste girl* came into being anonymously, the exact reason why this traditional food has been connected to the slur on women and the consumption of foreign cultural goods is not known. Nonetheless, the word has come into wide use rapidly. It is however worth noting the aspect of imitation and a TV series *Sex and the City* which are mentioned in the above article, as these features play an important role in vintage consumption which will be discussed in

³⁸ *Speedy* handbags are a signature Louis Vuitton series made with monogram canvas and consist of four different models depending on the sizes. Their prices range from £ 390.00 to £ 435.00. (see www.Louisvuitton.com)

this thesis. Deputy editor of culture and sports of the JoongAng Ilbo³⁹ Sung-hee Yang (2007) claims, “They [American TV dramas] exude substantial cultural and social effects – the doenjangnye, or “bean paste woman” controversy originated from the sitcom “Sex and the City.”



Figure 12 ‘Style and the City’ in *Cosmopolitan Korea* in 2009

If *Sex and the City* is young women’s socio-cultural shorthand for their desired lifestyle, then Starbucks coffee can be seen as the symbolic representation of their identity in public. Another newspaper article ‘Bean paste battles its way to court’ (Lee 2006) defines a *bean-paste girl* as follows; “She often carries around an empty Starbucks coffee cup to help her look more like a New Yorker.” A recent article in *Cosmopolitan Korea* ‘Style and the City’ (see Figure 12) illustrates this

³⁹ JoongAng Ilbo (or JoongAng Daily in English) is one of the three biggest newspaper companies in South Korea.

close coupling between *Sex and the City* and Starbucks from its title and a photograph; a female celebrity holds a large Starbucks disposable cup in her hand in this fashion shoot of the 'funky city look'. In this context of a *bean-paste girl*, the global coffee company Starbucks functions more than as a favourite beverage by young women and has effectively become a displayed token of foreignness (or Americanness) on the street of South - Korea.

In a similar vein, the cultural phenomenon of *Jeeyoung's bag* illustrates young women's social aspiration for foreign luxury goods, but also raises the issues of conformity. In addition, the origins of *Jeeyoung's bag* (*3-minute bag* or *nation's bag*) are clearer than the random grounds which came to form the term *bean-paste girl* and therefore, are helpful for the understanding of their social background. Firstly, Louis Vuitton Speedy bags are called the *3-minute bag* because it is popularly said that you can find a Louis Vuitton Speedy bag every 3 minutes on a busy street, around a college or at a tube station in most cities in South Korea (Yang 2008).

Secondly, the name *Jeeyoung's bag* has come into being. One of the most popular young women's names in current South Korea is *Jeeyoung*. It is said that when you call the name *Jeeyoung* on a busy street, five women will look back as there are so many *Jeeyoungs* living in South Korea (Cho 2008). The origins of both names represent the excessive degrees of uniformity and conformity. People cannot easily change their names, but can choose dissimilar bags, at least.

However, a journalist like Kyong-a Cho, in her newspaper column, advocates the *Jeeyoung's bag* phenomenon by heavily stressing its practicality and insists that the uniformity of *Jeeyoung's bag* consumption does not reflect a unity of mind.

The reasons why women are crazy about the Speedy bag lie in its functionality and practicality, not in the expression of taste, ostentation or individuality. Women did not buy this bag only because it was Louis Vuitton, but a bag, which was convenient to carry around 'at random', just happened to be Louis Vuitton. (Cho 2008)

According to Cho's assertion, practicality is the foremost reason of the popularity of this Louis Vuitton bag. It is hard to deny the practicality of the *Speedy bag*.

However, considering Louis Vuitton's reputation as a purveyor of high-quality designs and exclusive tastes, it seems imprudent to assume that consumers, who pay hundreds of pounds for a bag, would not care about taste, ostentation and individuality. Cho brings the matter to a conclusion, saying:

It is unfair to deduce from carrying a *Speedy bag* that those who own are lacking in individuality and taste. Wanting to be convenient should not be dismissed as having no individuality. Every Jeeyoung in the world is different. Even if there are nearly ten girls with the name Jeeyoung in a single classroom, every Jeeyoung was distinguished. (Cho 2008)

It is obvious that each individual is not identical to another, even in the case of identical twins; yet, does this make all *Jeeyoung's bags* unique? A similar account on the issue of individuality and uniformity in fashion practice can be found in *Dress and Globalisation* (Maynard 2004). Here, Margaret Maynard (2004: 32-49) refuses global sameness and uniformity in dress by accentuating the intricacy of production, distribution and marketing segmentations in fashion industries on the one hand; and the inexhaustibility of interpretative possibilities in individuals' choices, on the other. She argues that "it is uniformity touched with countless subtle variations and differences" (Maynard 2004: 48).

Those in concurrence with Maynard seem to overlook the excessive collectivism in the *Jeeyoung's bag* craze in favour of individual differences. Remarkably collective consumer behaviour in consumption of Louis Vuitton bags is also reflected in the steep growth of the company's sales record.

Demand for luxury brands has kept going in Asia's fourth-largest economy, despite the consumption slump left behind by the global economic crisis, industry data found. According to audit reports of the local unit of international luxury brands, sales of Louis Vuitton Korea in 2008 total[1]ed 281.2 billion won (\$210 million), a 66.39 percent surge compared to the total of 169 billion recorded the previous year. (Yoo, Soh-jung 11 November 2009, The Korea Herald)

This might be a temporary condition, but it is still phenomenal to witness almost 70 percent sales growth in a year in any business. The above article explains the increase of sales profit of other luxury brands from 2007 to 2008 as follows: Gucci Group Korea (38.23 percent): Ferragamo Korea (20.98 percent): Rolex Korea (21.74 percent). Considering this extraordinary economic statistic, the consumption

of foreign luxury goods can be understood as an outcome of global homogeneity and local conformity, even if all *Jeeyoung's bags* might not look identical.

Diana Crane says, “Democratization of clothing has led to diversity, not standardization” (2000: 240). In the context of *Jeeyoung's bag*, however, democratization of fashion has brought a Louis Vuitton bag to so many women in South Korea that it is called the nation's bag, because “this [(South Korea)] is the land where every other woman in Seoul and Pusan is said to have a Louis Vuitton piece” (Chadha *et al.* 2007: 178). This has resulted in the omnipresence of counterfeit Louis Vuitton bags in the market in South Korea (see Figure 13). In this particular fashion practice, ‘democratization of clothing’ has led to a great deal of imitated uniformity, rather than diversity.



Figure 13 The image displays numerous counterfeit Louis Vuitton bags confiscated in Seoul, South Korea. (Clark, Nick in *The Independent*, pp. 39, 24 March 2010)

According to Chadha and Husband (2007), this exponential popularity of luxury fashion consumption in Asia might lead the company to “the inevitable backlash of ubiquity” (2007: 90), instead of diversity as Crane suggests. Yet, conformity and aspiration play a more crucial role than ‘backlash of ubiquity’ at present. Another newspaper article ‘Jeeyoung has a Louis Vuitton bag, too. Why?’ (Yang 2008)

offers more analytically accounts for a craze for the Louis Vuitton bag by evaluating this phenomenon as a desire of conformity with the rich and a yearning towards the aspirational items which most people do not possess. This type of social aspiration should not be confined only within the hierarchy of South Korean society as it is involved in the imported cultural commodities.

The object of conformity and yearning in this fashion practice can be the rich South Koreans, but is more likely to be Westerners or even New Yorkers. The issues of a *Jeeyoung's bag* are closely related to the debate of bean-paste girls “who imitate the glamorous lifestyle of New Yorker” (Park 2006), as they can easily be considered as the same breed of women by the public. What these examples demonstrate is South Korean consumers’ ambivalence towards the imported goods and culture; on the one hand, they are most sought-after fashion items among individual consumers, but on the other hand, offend national sensibilities for the sumptuous ostentation of their foreignness /Westernness.

In addition to these aspects of conformity, the phenomena of a *Jeeyoung's bag* and *bean-paste girl* reveal a South Koreans’ double standard towards Western culture and commodities. A journalist Hong-joo Yang (2008) contrasts these types of South Korean consumers’ conformist behaviours with the more autonomous Western consumers “who construct subconsciously their desired [fashion] styles by rummaging through and purchasing cheap items.” This kind of positive perspective towards Western lifestyle will be indispensable to the understanding of *guje* fashion and the ways in which it is not confronted with any criticism of consuming foreign clothes and being homogenised, unlike the cases of *bean-paste girl* and a *Jeeyoung's bag*.

Yang’s comment is significant as it broadly epitomises South Korean sentiment; it seems that South Korean consumers can easily be condemned for imitating luxury Western fashion, but it is advisable for them to learn thrifty and creative Western lifestyles in consumption⁴⁰. If Western consumers are as thrifty and creative as they are mentioned -or imagined to be, then from where and why have all these

⁴⁰ This is the essential marketing point often used in *guje* /vintage consumption.

luxury designer goods and expensive coffees come into being? South Korea has embraced these goods as synonymous with Western identity only due to the seeming ubiquity of these items in the West; clearly then, not all Western consumers practice thrift and creative consumption. Regardless, whether it is imitating luxury Western fashion trends or practicing Western ways of thrift lifestyles, it is certain that the idea of the West plays an important role in ushering South Koreans towards a more advanced consumer society. In addition, this conceptualisation of the West reflects ‘the material and imaginative lives of people in Seoul’ (Nelson 2000: 22) in regard to imported goods, a notion which was pointed out by Nelson earlier.

Another problem in the idea of *Jeeyoung’s bag* and a bean-paste girl is the discourse of gender. A Korean film *The Scam* (Lee 2009) displays the exactly same type of luxury consumption of the foreign imports in case of one of the male character and explains the preference of Western products and ideas as a common trait among South Korea regardless of gender. Here, a character in the film expands on Brian Choi who is driving a foreign car, holding a Starbucks coffee and carrying a Louis Viutton bag (see Figure 14);

Do you know about what South Korean people go crazy the most? It is the foreign good, the foreign good. When it comes to a luxury import, then they don’t even care whether that is a fake, or not. There is foreign information in the stock market. What Brian deals with is American investment fund. So, American-origin!

This example demonstrates the degree to which people generally have a weakness for the consumption of Western luxury goods and ideas (or fashion styles), regardless of gender and age. In this respect, the phenomenon of *Jeeyoung’s bag* and a bean-paste girl epitomises a general characteristic of national identity by deliberately victimising young Korean women as if this obsession with Western trappings is a flaw unique to them and not something ‘patriotic’ men also fall prone to.

Furthermore, foreign luxury consumption is not confined to new products, but generates wide circulation of second-hand and fake luxury goods in South Korea. ‘Consumer Activity to spread Sustaining Consumer Culture’ in *Consumer Monthly* (Kim 2001) reports that they received a complaint from a young woman in her

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twenties who purchased a used Chanel handbag for about £ 250.00. She bought this bag in a *luxury second-hand* shop in a prestigious area Apgujeong-dong in Seoul, but identified it as a counterfeit item. Her request for a refund was not accepted by the shop owner. An example like this is also relevant to *guje* consumption, which will be discussed in the section about fashionable second-hand jeans. There are a small number of limited-edition second-hand jeans which are circulated with high value and consumer interest.



Figure 14 a South Korean film *The Scam* (Lee 2009)

The final example in this chapter is the assimilation of Western-style wedding practice in South Korea. Laurel Kendall (1996), in her anthropological book *Getting Married in Korea: Of Gender, Morality, and Modernity*, defines the Korean new wedding as a “rite of modernization” (Peacock 1968: 6-8, quoted in Kendall 1996: 67). The Korean new (Christian-style) wedding does not mean a recent movement here and has been already assimilated as a widespread social practice regardless of religion, region, age and social class.

The secular new wedding thus borrowed upon both the Christian ceremony and Japanese attempts to evolve a style of public weddings. Proto-wedding halls and the white wedding dress became popular in the 1930s. The giving of gratitude gifts, the holding of wedding banquets in public restaurants, and possibly even *the fashion for Western-style wedding dresses seem to have been borrowed from an emergent wedding culture in Japan* [my emphasis]. (Pak Hyein 1991: 17, 52-54, quoted in Kendall 1996: 67)

The final remark in the above quotation is highly important in the understanding of this research, as *guje* practice demonstrates similar cultural flows in the ways in which Western material culture has been brought into South Korea via Japan. Therefore, the role of Japan is clandestine, but vital as a mediator towards modernisation and Westernisation in South Korea. I would rather call this type of consumer practice a ‘rite of Westernisation’ instead of a ‘rite of modernisation’, as it displays the Western fashion as its central reference point.

Anthropologists like Hansen (2000: 40) might claim that South Koreans have made the Western-style wedding dress their own already, as mentioned in Literature Review. However, the Western-imported luxury wedding dress boutiques have been burgeoning more and more recently, reflecting the dominance of Western fashion and the insatiable consumer desire for Western garments. In addition, besides Western-oriented wedding fashion, the upper class women’s dress code known as the *daughter in-law fashion of Cheongdam-dong* incorporates Western luxury styles in their dress practice.

To sum up, these types of reproduction of the idea of the (either luxury or thrifty) Western fashion styles can be related to the prevalent ‘consumer nationalism’ (Nelson 2000), a long-held inferiority complex (Lee 1983) and an outer complex

(Kang 2004) towards the dominant countries, and reveals the ways in which South Korea has partaken in Westernisation.

Mimicry and Compulsiveness in Assimilation of Western Fashion

By placing an emphasis on Westernisation, I do not intend to overrule those academics who consider these cultural practices of consumption to be primarily symptomatic of globalisation especially in terms of heterogeneity and diversity. Yet, I must draw attention to the degrees to which non-Western consumers persistently find their efforts to modernise their appearance largely synonymous with Western fashion hegemony. Cultural sociologist Lise Skov's comment about the ways in which the Japanese assimilates Western fashion exactly resonates in the South Koreans' contemporary dress practice.

In the last decade the Japanese have even come to dress in more exclusive and fashionable 'Western clothes' than Westerners. (Skov 1996: 146)

After "catching up to the West"⁴¹ (Creighton 1992:53, quoted in Suga 1995: 98) since WWII, the Japanese have 'finally' acquired discerning dress sense in donning Western clothes. What this indicates is the aspect of mimicry which must be involved in achieving full domestication of "the once-exotic" (Creighton 1992:53, quoted in Suga 1995: 98) Western fashion in the non-West.

In South Korea, the consumer drive for "catching up the West" often appears as "imitate[ing] the glamorous lifestyle of New Yorker" (Park 2006), as quoted earlier in this chapter. In this consumer practice, there is a strong sense of imitation or mimicry, but non-Westerners' assimilation to the Western fashion has primarily viewed within the understanding of diversified globalisation. Therefore, for comparison, it will be helpful to consider intrinsic aspects of mimicry which can be found in the Western adoption of other's clothes at this point.

⁴¹ The spirit of "catching up to the West" can also exemplify South Koreans' inferiority and outer complex.

For example, historian Michael Sturma posits the Western appropriation of South Pacific indigenous dress between mimicry and mockery (Sturma 2000: 142).

Sturma defines mimicry and mockery within this dress practice as follows:

Mimicry in this case is not a matter of assimilation, but of the pleasure of temporarily assuming another's identity. The tourists' face painting also involves an element of mockery, at least a form of self-mockery, if not mockery of indigenous culture. (Sturma 2000: 153)

In consumption of Western fashion in the non-West, for instance, Zambia, Hong Kong, South Korea and even Japan, scholars lay stress on assimilation and domestication of Western clothes and rarely mention the aspect of mimicry in favour of non-Westerners' individuality. Considering the seriousness in the assimilation of Western-style clothes by non-Westerners, I assert that this is not the autonomous fashion practice of a "temporary pleasure assuming another's identity" (Sturma 2000: 152) either.

The primary importance in Westerners' practice of the other's dress here is the immediate return to their own identity when they remove the other's clothes, as can be seen in the following text:

By temporarily assuming the identity of another, they explore the meanings of their own identity (Wald 1996: 160-3, quoted in Sturma 2000: 152)

'Mimicry' in the domestication of Western fashion in the non-West is not a temporal and sensational experience, but entails the transformation of local lifestyles with the possible adoption of Western identity. For example, self-centred young Japanese' appearances are "opposed to native Japanese", but more attached to 'foreignness' or 'Westernness' (Skov 1996: 145-146).

Therefore, there is hardly anything about 'a form of self-mockery' found in this type of fashion practices in the non-West with their persistent efforts for "catching up to the West" (Creighton 1992:53, quoted in Suga 1995: 98). In contrast to self-mockery based on the act of temporary pleasure, Asians' adoption of Western

fashion can be almost an enduring compulsion of assimilating the styles and identity of the West.⁴²

To prove the diversity within globalisation, the majority of academics note that Asian dress styles, designers and fashion models have gradually gained fame in the West. However, the reputation or styles of the Other are far from being recognised and accommodated by the general public in the Western world, yet. Such observation which considers cross-cultural dress practices to have reached a harmonious state of globalisation is overrating the popularity of Asian dress across the world. In its approach towards consuming imported goods, South Korea has displayed its awareness of “both the lure and the threat of neo-colonialism” (Wilson 2005 [1985]: 14), the condition which is most distinct “in the socialist countries of the ‘third world’” (Wilson 2005 [1985]: 14), as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Therefore, instead of applying a universal thesis of globalisation in favour of diversity, South Koreans consumption of imported goods should be understood in terms of a progress of selective Westernisation.

⁴² “By temporarily assuming the identity of another, they explore the meanings of their own identity.” (Wald 1996: 160-3, quoted in Sturma 2000: 152)

5. The Origin of *Guje* Fashion and Commodification of *Yasahng*: Western Military Uniforms and Representation of Male Identity

The aim of this chapter is to interrogate the concept of *guje* whilst exploring the introduction of foreign *yasahng* fashion as one of the oldest *guje* consumption practices within South Korean socio-political history. In the beginning, *guje* and foreign *yasahng* were closely tied together. From a historical perspective, both *guje* and foreign *yasahng* have evolved in their meaning and use over time, encompassing used and (new) second-hand style garments. This transformation also reflects the ways in which individual – especially male - fashion practice has been developed in the course of political and social changes. I will firstly, argue that the role of foreign military jackets has changed from an everyday necessity to a fashion item; and secondly, that *yasahng* consumption can only be understood in the perspective of a fashion trend such as hippie or vintage, not in terms of negotiation of social or political issues like hippie's anti-war protests.

This chapter will provide a closer understanding of how old military jackets have permeated South Korean fashion markets, notwithstanding the overall lack of mainstream fashion and media support. It begins with the introduction of contemporary *guje* concepts and their fashion origin in post-World War II under the U.S. occupation. *Yasahng* fashion will be examined by presenting interviews and research findings focusing on the embodiment of American military uniforms and popular culture with reference to socio-political issues in South Korea. In particular, the *yasahng* will be analysed a symbolic representation of male identity in relation to American culture and the Korean military system. It will conclude by briefly accounting for the Japanese role in the commodification of, and the diversity of, *yasahng* fashion in contemporary South Korea.

Understanding *Guje* within the Contemporary Fashion Concepts

Even though its [*guje* fashion] concept has become different now compared with the [Korean] war period, *guje poom* like *guje* jeans are still popular and sold in Namdaemun and Dongdaemun. (KBS 1999)

This is a concluding remark of the 1950s' *Guje poom* fashion in a television programme *Korean Fashion 100years*. At the beginning of *guje* fashion, its meaning was much clearer and simpler than it is now. This section will explore the ways in which consumers perceive the idea of *guje* fashion in contemporary South Korea. The first interview presented here was conducted with 24 year-old self-employed owner (Speaker 9) of men's *guje* shop at Dongdaemun Market district.

JH: What kind of clothing do you sell?

- Speaker 9: I exclusively sell *guje* clothing.

JH: By *guje* clothing, do you mean second-hand clothes which are imported from foreign countries?

- Speaker 9: Yes.

JH: Where do you mainly import from?

- Speaker 9: They are imported mainly from Japan, almost over 90 percent from Japan and 10 percent come from the market.

(Interview 6, pp. 282 in Appendix, 2006)

If operating strictly within the parameters of qualitative methodology, I could not have asked this kind of closed-question, but strict adherence to any single research methodology was often inappropriate because of the typical Korean traits of being highly ineloquent in speech. By Speaker 9's definition, *guje* fashion widely indicates Japanese imported second-hand clothing. While the above interview demonstrates his understanding of *guje* fashion, the next one describes its characteristics. The interview was held with a 20-something male fashion stylist (Speaker 36) in Itaewon.

JH: You were looking for a *guje* T-shirt a while ago, weren't you? What do you mean by *guje* T-shirts?

- Speaker 36: Well, just shabby and worn-out things.

JH: Were you looking for the actual second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 36: Yes, an actual second-hand piece of clothing.

(Interview 24, pp. 362 in Appendix, 2007)

Here, *guje* fashion connotes the real second-hand clothes with a shabby and worn-out look. It can be said that this view represents the most common understanding of *guje* fashion. Interestingly, the following interview with two 17 year-old girls (Speaker 13 and 14) reflects that the notion of *guje* fashion has become transformed and diversified in its usage.

JH: Have you ever bought *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 13: Yes.
 - JH: What kind of items do you buy?
 - Speaker 13: Blue jeans.
 - JH: Why did you buy?
 - Speaker 13: I wanted to buy them easily on the Internet...
 - JH: Is there any reason for you to buy *guje* rather than a new pair of jeans?
 - Speaker 13: No, I just picked what I liked, and *guje* was written in its product details.
 - JH: Do you know that *guje* normally means second-hand clothes?
 - Speaker 13: No! [laughs].
 - Speaker 14: *guje-ppil*...
 - Speaker 13: Oh, oh!
 - Speaker 14: Didn't you know? You're driving me mad!
 - JH: Did you know that?
 - Speaker 14: Yes.
 - JH: Haven't you ever bought *guje* clothes?
 - Speaker 14: Yes, but only occasionally.
 - JH: Occasionally (.) how?
 - Speaker 14: I bought several pairs, just Levi's and something like that with *guje-ppil*.
 - JH: Did you buy them on the Internet like your friend?
 - Speaker 14: Yes, I sometimes bought on the Internet, but also in the places where *guje* clothes are sold.
 - JH: Where?
 - Speaker 14: Around Hongdae area.
 - JH: Do you remember the names of shops or anything?
 - Speaker 14: No, because their names were in English.
 - JH: Is there any reason for you to buy *guje* clothes?
 - Speaker 14: They look *ganzi* and stylish.
- (Interview 9, pp. 290 in Appendix, 2006)

This interview demonstrates the more complex understanding of *guje* fashion which can currently be observed in South Korea. Moreover, in terms of methodology, it also displays the characteristics which are distinctive in South Korea and the current youth. The frequent use of a word 'just' and the newly-coined words like *ganzi* and *-ppil* are the typical traits in contemporary South Korea, as explained in Chapter 3. Secondly, regarding the concepts towards *guje* fashion, Speaker 13 and 14 have different ideas. Speaker 13 thought that *guje* clothing only denoted a type of fashion style and was not aware that it originally

designated used garments. On the contrary, Speaker 14 displayed her rather more accurate knowledge about *guje* fashion. Here, as with many other cases, *guje* fashion is almost naturally coupled with the idea of *ganzi* and the expression of – *ppil*.

On the one hand, Speaker 13 has a wrong perception of *guje* fashion; but on the other hand, considering the current fashion landscape in South Korea, it cannot be said that Speaker 13 has a misconception towards *guje*. As briefly noted in the Methodology, –*ppil*, as a suffix, signifies ‘feeling’, ‘style’ or ‘tone’ and therefore, sometimes connotes that the object is not real, but realises the similar feeling of the object concerned with a main word. Therefore, there are numerous *guje-ppil* clothes which are not ‘real’ *guje*, but strive to achieve the feeling of the original *guje*.

There were a number of other interviewees who understood *guje* fashion more freely. Whereas Speaker 13 expressed her regret at unknowingness⁴³ of *guje* clothing in the previous example, a 15 year-old girl (Speaker 18) in the following interview confidently explained her own understanding of what *guje* fashion is.

JH: Do you normally buy *guje* clothing?

- Speaker 18: Yes, frequently.

[...]

JH: Do you have any reason why you prefer *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 18: I like them, and they are convenient.

[...]

JH: What do your parents say about that?

- Speaker 18: They say it’s OK.

JH: So, aren’t they particularly against wearing second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 18: I rarely buy second-hand clothes.

JH: Aren't *guje* clothes second-hand?

- Speaker 18: With *guje* clothes, there are second-hand and new clothes. I buy ‘normal’ clothes a lot more than second-hand ones.

(Interview 11, pp. 294-295 in Appendix, 2006)

⁴³ I use the word ‘unknowingness’ which is brought from the idea of ‘knowingness’ indicated in Gregson et al.’s (2001) article ‘Bjorn Again? Rethinking 70s Revivalism through the Reappropriation of 70s Clothing’.

The Origin of *Guje* Fashion and Commodification of *Yasahng*

The above interview with Speaker 18 demonstrates that the meaning of *guje* clothing has now become conflated among some consumers by denoting both *guje*-style (or *guje-ppil*) fashion and the original *guje* clothes. This kind of affiliation of fashion concepts around *guje* can be also seen in an interview with a 23 year-old male music student (Speaker 22) at Kwangjang Market.

JH: Do you usually buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 22: *Guje*? Yes, I tend to wear them a lot these days.

JH: Do you come here often? How often do you come?

- Speaker 22: Today is my first visit as someone recommended it to me.

JH: What did you first buy?

- Speaker 22: Me (.) I've worn branded clothes, like American Apparel and stuff.

JH: Oh, have you worn the *guje* style, not a real *guje*?

- Speaker 22: Yes, Yes.

(Interview 14, pp. 299 in Appendix, 2006)

Speaker 22 showed me his purchase of three pieces of outerwear and one bag and was very satisfied with them in both styles and prices. I was perplexed by the information that it was his first visit to *guje* market on that day, although he had frequently purchased *guje* clothing. Speaker 22 could have bought *guje* clothes some other places on on-line, but this was because he considered the style of *guje* clothing as almost equivalent to that of a high street fashion like American Apparel. As shown in the company profile, "American Apparel is a leading *basic brand for people of all ages*, with both wholesale and *retail divisions globally*."⁴⁴ From its main statement, American Apparel appears to spread global homogeneity which seems to be opposite to the general motivations for consumption of second-hand clothes such as individuality and creativity. However, in a case like Speaker 22's fashion practice, *guje* clothing offers an inexpensive alternative to the styles of high street fashion.

⁴⁴ <http://americanapparel.net/contact/>

In an extreme case, a word *guje* was used as a brand name for new clothing which connoted the worn-out fashion styles. Figure 15 demonstrates an example of this kind of usage of *guje* for a fashion brand name. As can be seen in a screen-captured image of the eBay site, a tag of *Guje Club* was attached on a new –not a second-hand- cap. Considering the seller who posted this cap on eBay.com was actually based in South Korea, the word *guje* was used in place of a brand name, something to connote the second-hand fashion styles. Even though *Guje Club* traded new fashion accessories here, the idea of *guje* was still well-represented in its title; “Vintage Style Wrinkle Army Cadet Hat Cap.”⁴⁵ In addition, it is interesting to find an element of the “Army Cadet” fashion style in this example because the start of *guje* history is so deeply related to the accommodation of (second-hand) military uniforms during the post-World War II.



Figure 15 selling a cap branded “*Guje Club*” on an *eBay* site.

So far, diverse understandings of *guje* as a fashion concept have been delineated mainly through the direct voices of consumers in South Korea. Acknowledging these diverse perceptions, it necessarily follows that *guje* is currently understood, on the one hand, as imported second-hand clothes; and on the other, as new

⁴⁵ <http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=8222499050&category=2998> (captured on 13 January 2006) Although this page on the eBay website displays no bidding history, this Korean seller has successfully sold over 500 caps in this style in September 2005 on eBay but according to the feedback record.

clothing with a certain (worn-out or natural) fashion style. Therefore, from a semiotic standpoint, it is arguable that *guje* (a signifier) encompasses both used and new garments (signified) on the contemporary fashion landscape of South Korea. Speaker 6, an owner of a *guje* stall in Dongdaemun Market explained the start of *guje* fashion:

Speaker 6: It was just cheap to buy *guje* clothes. It started with the clothes which Americans gave us when we were very poor in the 1950s. Korea was identical to the current situation in Southeast Asia. We are now giving *guje* clothes to poor countries like Ethiopia. (Interview 3, pp. 278 in Appendix, 2006)

The current *guje* fashion is a case of commodification of these relief clothes, as he remarked.

The origin of *guje* clothing consumption: Etymological understanding of *guje* as relief goods

Having unfolded the current ideas surrounding *guje*, it becomes possible to investigate the origins of this fashion word from an etymological point of view. It is clear that *guje* clothing consumption has the longest history among other types of second-hand apparel business in South Korea, as briefly mentioned in Chapter 3 regarding methodology. This section will trace *guje* consumption back to its origins in the wider spectrum of socio-political and economical change in South Korea, along with the development of *yasahng* consumption, both of which started their history during the Korean War (June 1950 – July 1953).

The literal meaning of *guje* has been briefly mentioned in Chapter 3. *Guje* originates in the historical event of the Korean War. Accordingly, the birth of the word *guje* has been closely tied to the consumer practice of relief goods and clothing in the beginning of democratic and capitalist society in South Korea. After World War II, while almost anything Japanese was wiped from the Korean peninsula along with its colonial power, America was considered a major benevolent ally to South Korea. “South [Korea] was sustained by crucial US

military, economic and political support.”⁴⁶ Moreover, US Army surplus was a major resource for the necessities of life from food and clothes. At this period, ‘relief goods’, including used garments, were distributed to the devastated South Korean population – primarily by US Army surplus and charity goods from Christian missionary peace keepers. Therefore, the introduction of *guje* fashion, as a form of relief goods, can be seen as the beginning of post-colonial history in South Korea, which also differentiates from that of North Korea.

Historical accounts of *guje* and the introduction of American Military Uniforms in the wake of the U.S. Occupation in the mid-1940s

The political and historical background of the post World War II, the first mass fashion consumption from the West can be found in South Korean men’s *guje* dress practice of American military uniforms.

The victory of American aesthetic didn’t happen only on the battlefields of Europe and Asia, or only in the arena of political strategy, but also in the everyday wardrobe. In the Fifties and Sixties, Americans sold four million military objects in the world, from jeeps to khaki trousers, permanently transforming the world’s way of dressing (Tonchi 2000: 158).

As stated above, consumption of American military uniforms is by no means a recent fashion phenomenon and has a longer history than might first appear. This account is even more valid in Korea where the U.S. has started to station their army force. The first sign of circulation of American military uniforms by general public can be found in the reminiscences of the older generations who have been through the post-colonial era since 1945. In 1945, Japan’s 1910-1945 colonial rule ended, and instead, the U.S. occupation had begun in Korea. “Americans operated a full military government [in Seoul, Korea] from 1945 to 1948” (Cumings 2005 [1997]: 185). The arrival of the U.S. military government did not only disseminate the West’s socio-political ideology of democracy and capitalism, but also introduce Western modes of dress including American military uniforms. Figure 16 is an iconic image from the perspective of fashion history, as it illustrates the Americans’

⁴⁶ ‘South Korea: A political history’, BBC, 20 February 1998, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/55a/088.html>

triumphal entry to Seoul by wearing military uniforms. The U.S. occupation has resulted in the start of the consumption of American army uniforms as a part of *guje(poom)* fashion practices.



American soldiers marching away from the Government-General Building in central Seoul, September 9, 1945. *Courtesy of U.S. National Archives.*

Figure 16 An historic image of the U.S. military troops entering into Seoul (Cumings 2005 [1997])

The significance of military uniforms as “the first ready-to wear garments, with standardized sizes and proportions” (Tonchi 2000: 153) in the West is further enhanced in South Korea, because the military garments -and jackets in particular- played an important role as the very first mass-distributed “Western(-style)” clothing introduced to the public. Consequently, even the lower class Korean men started to take part in the advent of the capitalist consumer practices which they had not experienced previously. As South Korea has begun to play the game of American capitalism, the idea of “America” was deeply internalised in the national psyche as an amicable and benevolent force, helping a devastated Korean population in their fight against the ‘atrocious colonizer’, Japan. In this historical context, the US military jacket, as with any American product, could have symbolically represented to Koreans a general concept of being liberated from Japanese colonisation, paving the way towards a ‘brave new world’ that may have

more in common with Huxley's dystopia than those early adopters of American styles and goods had every imagined.

Dyed Military Garments: an Everyday Dress Practice of *Guje Poom* Fashion in the 1950s

The use of military uniforms as an alternative to everyday dress can be found elsewhere in the 1950s.

Throughout the Fifties, Italy was a poor nation getting over a lost war, a place where nothing gets thrown away, including the strong fabrics used for uniforms. [...] in short, military garments had a long life as a source of material, [...] a way of covering the body and shielding it from the elements, although commonly seen as something just short of humiliating (Pistolini 2000: 168).

South Korea had a similar fashion practice in the 1950s due to the Korean War and post-Korean War hardships. Although American military uniforms offered a good source of durable clothing materials, they also carried an attachment of the humiliation associated with war orphans like Li, which will be presented shortly after the next paragraph.

*Korean Fashion 100years*⁴⁷ (1999) discusses 'guje poom fashion' in regard to the accommodation of American military uniforms as an everyday wear in the 1950s in detail as follows:

In the wake of [Korea's] liberation [from Japanese colonisation (1910-1945) ...], there were plentiful *guje poom* among relief goods. *Guje poom* fashion was all the rage, so much so that the expression "this is KJP⁴⁸" was popular. [...] During the Korean War, the primary source for clothing was U.S. military bases. Dyeing shops came into being as it was not possible to wear stolen military uniforms; it was the most fashionable look to wear military uniforms dyed in black⁴⁹. Besides dyed military uniforms, there were myriads of ways of recycling clothes, such as army blankets altered into coats and skin-tight trousers made of tied military trouser cuffs (*Korean Fashion 100years*, 25 October 1999, KBS).

⁴⁷ It was broadcasted on 25 October 1999 by Korean Broadcasting System in South Korea, which is equivalent to BBC in the U.K.

⁴⁸ Sometime, pronunciation between K and G is intermingled in South Korea. Therefore, KJP can represent GJP, the abbreviation of *GuJe Poom*.

⁴⁹ Another example of dyeing military garments on purpose of the concealment is the English uniform in khaki colour which was originated from the pigment used by Indian soldiers 'to disguise dirt' (*Uniform: Order and Disorder*, 2000: 156).

As can be seen from the above quotation, the stolen military uniforms were traded via the black market in the 1950s needed to be modified so as not to reveal their original sources due to its nature of being an illegal trade. The same kind of *guje* fashion practice can be found in the prominent historian Yi-Hwa Li's (Hah 2004) recollection of his childhood in the 1950s:

Li voluntarily entered into an orphanage, which seemed the only possible way for him to be educated and fed for free. He recalls that there were plenty of *guje poom* in the orphanage at that time. Orphans wore military jackets⁵⁰ with blue jeans. Everywhere, orphans were easily spotted due to their appearance in these [foreign] clothes. (Hah 2004)

In the 1950s, Western garments have not yet been worn widely by the general public, and therefore, these orphans were distinguishable from other children in normal Korean households.

So far, two main distribution channels are identified, namely, orphanages and the black market. From orphans to adult, the Western fashion of *guje poom* was largely practiced by men. The popularity of this fashion practice is captured by the realist painter Sung-Hwan Kim (Cho 2005) who has primarily worked as a current-affair cartoonist over fifty years under the pen name of Gabawoo. His book *The Story of Shantytown by Gobawoo, Sung-Hwan Kim* (Kim 2005) displays an illustration of a bold man who is dyeing military uniforms in the centre of the front cover (see Figure 17): "There was a man who made a suite or working clothes out of military uniforms by bleaching and dyeing at Dongchon Market in Daegoo" (Imm 2005), recalls Kim in relation to this image.

A more detailed example can be found in the Kim's 10th exhibition *The Age of Shantytown* in June 2004. One of Kim's paintings (see Figure 17) vividly portrays "the scene of selling military uniforms which are hidden underneath the skirt by fear of being caught by chance" (Imm 2004). Figure 18 depicts a female vendor on the left centre who displays military jackets to a man, who wears different colours of military uniforms from head to foot, by taking them out from the inside of her skirt.

⁵⁰ Hah originally described it as a 'jumper' which is a Korean usage of English. However, the garment, which Li and Hah connote here, actually signifies 'jacket' in English terms.

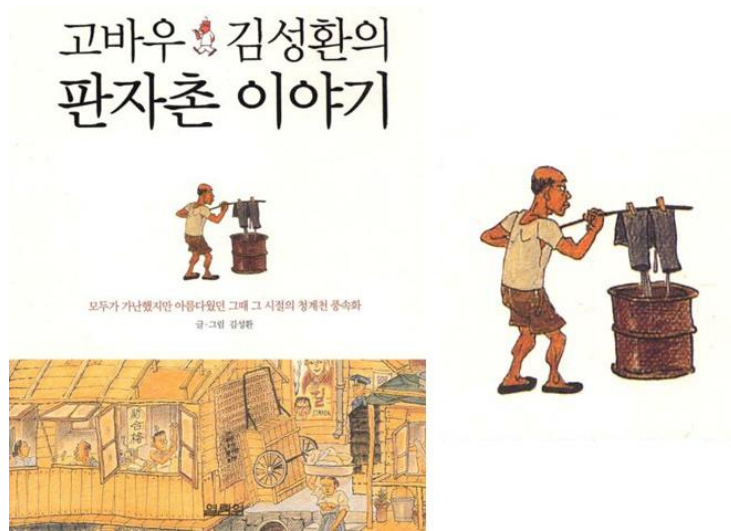


Figure 17 The front cover of Sung-Hwan Kim's (2004) book *The Age of Shantytown*



Figure 18 Sung-Hwan Kim's painting on the left and the enlargement of the detail on the right (captured on 10 June 2004 from YTN)



Figure 19 "U.S. Army *yasahng* Jacket (mil-30) [New in black colour]" [my translation] (<http://becksboy.co.kr>, captured on March 2007)

In addition to this kind of private and illegal trade of military uniforms, this picture illustrates the emergence of dyeing shops specialising in altering (American) military uniforms into Korean men's everyday wear in a 50s and 60s Korean shantytown. Four rectangular pieces of white banner placed in the centre of this painting read 'military uniform dyeing and bleaching'. The general lack of clothing at this period in Korea lent a practical air to these available garments. This example of Kim's painting, on the one hand, demonstrates the illegal nature of the circulation of military uniforms in the black market, and on the other, suggests that military jackets were a sought-after item at the beginning of *guje* fashion history in Korea.

A similar fashion practice of wearing black-coloured military jackets can still be found in the current South Korea (see Figure 19). However, black military jackets are now a fashion statement among young consumers, in contrast to the early period when people had to dye them to disguise their original source. The more detailed account of the contemporary *yasahng* fashion will be discussed later in this chapter, but one of the examples is shown as follows.

Having accounted for the introduction of both *guje poom* and foreign military uniforms in South Korea in the 1950s from the historical perspective, it is helpful to examine the fashion development of foreign military uniforms in a chronological order. Here, military uniforms have been considered as a major item of *guje poom* in general, but the socio-cultural significance of the consumption of military jackets at this period will be re-examined in the following part of the chronological account in this chapter. At this stage, it is a prerequisite to define the term *yasahng* (a military field jacket) within the Korean language, as it is almost being used in a symbolic way.

'Yasahng': A Korean definition of military field jackets

As shown in the case of *guje poom*, all items of foreign military uniform were accommodated in the 1950s. However, out of all sorts of military uniforms, only military outerwear – the military field jacket, in particular – has gained its currency among male consumers so far. In this respect, consumers' choices have become

narrower, and their fashion interest has been more focused. As the fashion practice of military field jackets has become widespread, the term *yasahng* has also become almost a fashion word.

A ‘military field jacket’ is called ‘*yasahng*’ or ‘*yajeon* jumper⁵¹’ in South Korea; the former is colloquial language, while the latter is a more formal word. In the Korean fashion world, *yasahng* is the predominantly used term and represents all sorts of military outerwear such as a military jacket or coat as well as military field jackets. Often, a repetitive manner of speech can be found, an example being a US army *yasahng* jacket; this signifies a US army ‘military field jacket’ jacket. However, it is possible to make a variety of combinations in everyday Korean language without being considered incorrect in its meaning or grammar; therefore, *yasahng*, *yasahng* jacket, *yasahng* jumper, army *yasahng* jacket are all equally interchangeable. To sum up, *yasahng* is a generic term for ‘military field jacket’ in Korea.

Popularity of military look and government control

Given the basic Korean definition and the origin of *yasahng*, this section will explore the ways in which contemporary *yasahng* fashion has been developed in South Korea. A fashion designer and professor Seung-Wan Hong commented about military look in a newspaper review of 2006 fashion trends as follows:

The military look has been internationally popular in 2006, but has not been clearly identifiable in Korea, the reason being that Korean men might have had enough of military duty.⁵²

Hong’s remark certainly reflects the interrelationship between the rigid mainstream men’s fashion styles and their social roles in this country, which effectively posits *yasahng* in a category of subcultural, niche fashion practice. The issues of military duty which applies to all Korean young men, will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁵¹ In Korea, a jumper (pronounced as ‘jahmbar’) does not signify a woolen sweater as an English term does, but means a short outerwear with zipper or buttons across the front centre.

⁵² ‘레깅스 - 스키니진 - 블랙&화이트 드레스 [Leggings – Skinny Jeans – Black & White Dress]’ in *etimes*, *DongA Ibo*, 30 December, 2006.
http://www.etimes.net/Service/etimes_2007/ShellView.asp?ArticleID=2006123007035500243&LinkID=6228

As Hong stated, military look does not seem to be widely popular and has not yet accepted as a common daily wear among the average Korean consumers.

However, Hong's view reflects a rigorous academic climate in South Korea whereby niche, youth fashion culture as well as *guje* consumption has been considered to be trivial and therefore, heavily overlooked. It is important to account for this small, but passionate group of people as understanding them can provide a more profound socio-cultural account of South Korea, standing out, as they do from the whimsical and rather monotonous high street fashion in South Korea.

The advertising industry noticed the popularity of military look in relation to vintage fashion. Auction⁵³, an eBay branch in South Korea, aired a series of TV commercials in the spring of 2007. One of this series *Urban Vintage Look*⁵⁴ illustrated that old military uniforms could be worn in a highly fashionable manner by men and more importantly, reflects a currently popular style among young men who follow the vintage trends and the city life, as its title suggests (Chapter 7 gives a more detailed analysis of this advertisement).

In recent years, consumption of foreign *yasahng* has gained unprecedented popularity among younger male generations, in their 20s and 30s, who are dedicated followers of *guje/* vintage fashion in South Korea. A large number of Internet shopping malls now trade this type of garment and cater to their interest (see Figure 30 and 32, for example of these sites). On a political level, a more distinctive change can be deciphered. The law in South Korea which prohibited the wearing of fashionable military garments (whether real or fake) by civilians on the street and which imposed a ₩ 50 fine was partially abolished in 2006, except in the case of when the wearer pretends to be a soldier. The latest revised bill on regulation of military uniforms and equipments (18 April 2006) rules, as explained

⁵³ Auction is a South Korean eBay site as eBay Inc. is the largest shareholder of this company.

⁵⁴ Auction Style CF – Yeh, Hak-Young and Cook K (Vintage Look)
<http://tvpot.daum.net/clip/ClipView.do?clipid=2849223&q=%BA%F3%C6%BC%C1%F6>
captured on 01/06/2007

in the following newspaper article ‘Civilians wearing military uniforms get fine, and yet the Marine comrade is an exception?’

Except in the cases of their cultural and artistic activities or the ceremonial events allowed by the Ministry of Defence, any civilian who is wearing military uniform or carrying military equipment would face 100,000 won⁵⁵-penalty or be held in custody. In addition, people who produce or sell similar military uniforms to civilians would face less than one year imprisonment or 3,000,000 won⁵⁶-penalty.
(Lee, Jung-Kook in *The Hankyoreh*, 25 April 2006)

This might seem like the restriction of personal freedom of dress, but the Ministry of National Defense in South Korea asserts:

[The revised bill] substantially relaxes regulations including the legalisation of wearing military look by civilians. The law has not been changed since 1973. So, its effectiveness has been questioned; for example, the popular ‘military look’ among the younger generations was included as subject to control. Therefore, the law has been revised as the National Assembly proposed.
(Lee, Jung-Kook in *The Hankyoreh*, 25 April 2006)

Thanks to the amendment of the outdated law, the military look has now been officially acknowledged as youth fashion style by the nation in South Korea, and sporting a military look has finally become a legitimate act. However, the revised bill is still controversial among the wearers of military uniforms in everyday life. Two completely opposed groups of men can be considered in this category. Some men are deeply attached to military culture and regard military uniforms as a representation of their identity even after finishing their military service; others wear military uniforms as a fashion statement regardless of the notion or significance of the military itself.

What the South Korean government has overlooked is the fact that the military look often utilises real military uniforms in an (anti-)fashionable way. In such instances, the military look can still be considered an unlawful fashion practice in South Korea. The previously mentioned example of the *Auction*’s TV advertisement of *Urban Vintage Look*⁵⁷ (2007) demonstrates the impractical

⁵⁵ 100,000 (Korean) won is equivalent to approximately GBP 50.00.

⁵⁶ 3,000,000 (Korean) won is equivalent to approximately GBP 1,500.00.

⁵⁷ Auction Style CF – Yeh, Hak-Young and Cook K (Vintage Look)

illegality of this prohibition law. In the advert, a man with military uniform answers a friend's question as to where he got this outfit; "I found this [military uniform] when I was rummaging through my dad's wardrobe" (Auction 2007).

Under the current law, this nostalgic naivety of wearing real military uniforms can still cause a penalty or custodial sentence if one gets caught. There might be a slight chance for this man to narrowly escape a penalty, primarily because he has long hair and, therefore, can be "distinguished from a real military officer."⁵⁸ The prohibition law has been a 'paper tiger' which cannot prevent the wearing of military uniforms effectively, as will be presented throughout this chapter.

The key issue here is the fact that the military look is legally recognised, but as the artist Do-Ho Suh testified earlier "it's [still] illegal to buy or have military stuff" in South Korea, a fact which generates in some men an even stronger desire to acquire military uniforms and equipment as these items become all the more cutting edge and exciting as commodities for their semi-legal status. Yet, the partial annulment of the prohibition law reflects the extent to which disparate fashion styles, such as the military look, are now seen as approved as personal expression rather than suppressed rebellion by the populace. Therefore, the subversive connotations of military garments have been considerably reduced in South Korea. Now, *yasahng* has become recognised as an expression of fashion and individual identity rather than a signifier of the social threat of the military regime or as any sort of sartorial reminder of the everyday necessities of the (post-) war period.

<http://tvpot.daum.net/clip/ClipView.do?clipid=2849223&q=%BA%F3%C6%BC%C1%F6>
captured on 01/06/2007

58 "Civilian who is wearing similar military uniforms with a short hair or carrying military equipments is a subject to punishment."

http://blog.joins.com/media/folderListSlide.asp?uid=seajay&folder=4&list_id=6201934
captured on 08/10/2007

Fashionable American *Yasahng* as contemporary men's dress practice



Figure 20 the picture was taken during the street interviews in Seoul, South Korea in 2006.

Figure 20 shows a typical *yasahng* look worn by Korean men in their twenties; These men opt to pursue a distinctive fashion style by matching military field jackets with high roll-up, torn-out jeans and sneakers. Therefore, their *yasahng* practice can be viewed as an individual fashion statement, a positioning of themselves somewhere distant from the conservative general social standards and

as a very bold act because South Korea is still a homogenous society with strong traditions'⁵⁹.

Why, then, have imported *yasahng* jackets come to dominate the niche, subcultural fashion market in South Korea? And to what do these consumers aspire in their foreign *yasahng* fashion practice? A more detailed account of men's fashion practice of *yasahng* consumption can primarily offer some answers, by exemplifying one of my in-depth interviews with a 29 year-old male postgraduate student (Speaker 32).

- Speaker 32: [...] It was probably the early 1900s when the US Army started making that colour of military *jackets*.

JH: The early 1900s?

- Speaker 32: Yes, as far as I know. And, they have continued changing their *design* every twenty years ever since, I think. The prettiest model of all is from 1951; and the next prettiest is from 1965; so they are called M51, M65. But while M65s are relatively easy to buy as they are being traded here and there, M51s are really difficult to get hold of. It may be for that reason people think that M51 is the most ideal model and the most stylish, ideal of *vintage yasahngs*.

(Interview 20, pp. 317 in Appendix, 2007)

This above interview demonstrates a young Korean man's knowledge and affection for the particular models of American *yasahng* –as both M51 and M65 are the U.S. Army field jackets. However, it will be useful to review his information to clarify the actual history of the development of colour as well as the type of colour that Speaker 32 intended to describe. The military artist Guido Rosignoli (1993 [1978]) clearly explains the transition of the colours of army uniforms. According to Rosignoli, a primary change of the colour occurred for both the British and the US armies in the mid-1900s, not in the early-1900s as Speaker 32 understood.

The December 1957 issue of *Soldier* magazine described the newly adopted olive-green combat dress of the British army. It was an improved variation of the uniform already worn in Korea and included a new type of webbing equipment (1958 pattern). [...] The old khaki battledress was on its way out [...] At about the same time the US army discarded khaki, olive-drab, by adopting a new green-grey, technically known as 'Army Green' [...] (Rosignoli 1993 [1978]: 242).

⁵⁹ 'Korean Society: Living in Korea' (26 Sep. 2007)

Rosignoli's explanation is particularly useful to account for the name of a colour in Korean language. A Korean word for the colour in this discussion is *gookbang-sak* (국방색) which signifies 'Army-colour'. As olive trees are not a part of the usual landscape, thus the word 'olive' could not be used to describe a colour; therefore, the origin of 'Army colour' might be related to an English term 'Army Green'.

Speaker 32 reiterated the importance of *gookbang-sak* in *yasahng*;

I then fancied [...] and, so called, *yasahng* which is a typical *vintage style*, if you think about it; *yasahng* with the *gookbang-sak* (Army green) colour, not with the camouflage pattern.
(Interview 20, pp. 317 in Appendix, 2007)

Regardless of his misunderstanding of the start of the current colour of military uniforms, Speaker 32's affection for the American *yasahng* did not diminish. At the interview, he continued telling me that he cannot believe his luck at being able to purchase an original M51 (American) *yasahng* for about £ 90.00 which seemed a bargain price for such a hard-to-find fashion item. Speaker 32 explained that M51 and M65 are the most sought-after *yasahng* models among young male, vintage fashion connoisseurs in South Korea. Why have these particular types of *yasahng* become so popular in comparison to other models? Is this only because of the outstanding aesthetic qualities of M51 and M65, as Speaker 32 commented? It is unlikely for individual consumers to compare a variety of military field jackets as they are not yet widely available to public. Therefore, it is also hard for them to come to general consent about which might be "the most ideal and the most stylish, ideal of vintage *yasahngs*" (Interview 20, pp. 317 in Appendix, 2007) other than the M51 jacket.

Figure 21 is an example of M51 field jackets on sale from an online shop Military Supply House which is based in the United States. The price of these M51 field jackets is \$120.00; hence, compared with the price in Military Supply House, Speaker 32's purchase seems to be indeed reasonable considering the added shipping charges and a scarcity of this particular model in the market, if his *yasahng* is an authentic one. Here, the importance lies in one of the sections in the product details of M-51 field jackets, that is, "Year/Vintage: 1951 – Korean Era." It suggests that these field jackets must have been produced and/or used during the Korean War, if their description is correct.

The Origin of Guje Fashion and Commodification of Yasahng

Military Supply House - U.S. M-51 Field Jackets

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Description: M-1951 Jacket
Country of Origin: U.S., G.I. Issue
Year/Vintage: 1951 - Korean Era
Size: Regular / Large
Condition: Very Good, everything is in good working order, zipper, has all it's buttons. There are light ghosts from missing patches on each shoulder. Back is nice and clean. Collar size tab is completely washed out and not fully attached.
Color: Olive Drab
Price: \$120.00
Shipping to The 48 states included
Shipping to United Kingdom \$38.00
Item #: M-51-321
The pictured jacket is the exact one you will receive.
Email or call us if you want it.
Include the Item #
contact@militarysupplyhouse.com
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Description: M-1951 Jacket
Country of Origin: U.S., G.I. Issue
Year/Vintage: 1951 - Korean Era
Size: Regular / Large
Condition: Very Good, everything is in good working order, zipper, has all it's buttons. Clean overall. Missing the collar size tab.
Color: Olive Drab
Price: \$120.00
Shipping to The 48 states included
Shipping to United Kingdom \$38.00
Item #: M-51-322
The pictured jacket is the exact one you will receive.
Email or call us if you want it.
Include the Item #
contact@militarysupplyhouse.com
(310) 704-9055

Figure 21 M51 field jackets cost \$120.00 in an online shop.

U.S. Military M1951 Uniform

The uniforms and equipment of World War II continued in use until the war in Korea (starting in June 1950.) Harsh cold weather conditions in the mountains of Korea and the advent of new materials led to the M-1951 changes in clothing and gear.



Lt. Gen. Hugh Harris, commander U.S. Seventh Army (left) and Maj. Gen. Edwin Burba, commander 2d Armored Division wearing M1951 field jackets, M1951 pile cap (right) and Ridgeway cap (left).

Figure 22 M1951 uniform worn by the U.S. army during the Korean War (http://www.olive-drab.com/od_soldiers_clothing_m1951_uniform.php)

Figure 22 shows an online image of the M51 uniform which was actually used in the Korean War. Is it then possible for young Korean men to have an aesthetic affinity for American *yasahng* due to the long history of the U.S. troops who have been stationed in South Korea? Or, is the popularity of M51 and M65 *yasahng* deeply related to political awareness of, or anti-war protest against, the Korean War (1950-1953) or the Vietnam War (1954-1975)? It seems to be a hasty conclusion to assume that political landscape plays an important role in American *yasahng* consumption in South Korea.

The influence of the 1960s American Hippie Fashion in *Yasahng* practice

Speaker 32 is one of the many *yasahng* consumers who have been inspired by the fashion styles of hippie culture within their vintage consumer practice, as described in the following part of my interview.

- Speaker 32: [...] So, as I have become quite satisfied with my wearing of jeans, I was thinking like, ‘What can go perfectly well with my cool jeans?’ I then fancied the Adidas jersey clothing and, so called, *yasahng* which is a typical *vintage style*, if you think about it; *yasahng* with the Army green colour, not with camouflage patterns.

JH: Why is that so? A typical *vintage style* is (.) for men’s styles?

- Speaker 32: I think that it probably originates in that (.) *hippies* from the time when the United States was involved in the Vietnam War. Based on highly influential people like John Lennon. Yeah, it appears to have started in that period. In my opinion, they were full of people dressed in *vintage, vintage style*.

(Interview 20, pp. 317 in Appendix, 2007)

Speaker 32 did not sound confident in the details of the information he gave at the interview and expressed no particular interest in either the Vietnam War or John Lennon. Yet, he had a clear idea that the currently popular vintage trend originated in hippie culture in America, and *yasahng* as a men’s outerwear most fully realised that fashion style.

A fashion aspiration to hippie styles in the wearing of *yasahng* was found in another interview⁶⁰ in Seoul. Young-Nam Cho, a singer-songwriter and visual artist has been the most iconic figure in fashioning military jackets in South Korea

⁶⁰ Cho refused my request for an interview in person, but suggested a telephone interview, instead. Therefore, I took a note as I was unable to record it.

since the 1970s; Cho has been wearing *yasahng* from the time when he was a college student.⁶¹ A pair of extremely large thick, dark, plastic spectacles and a *yasahng* have been his signature look for a long time (see Figure 23) and these were once enough for him to be considered both eccentric and unique by the public at large, particularly under the rigid military regime from the 1960s to the 1980s in South Korea.



Figure 23 The picture was taken in 1984, Young-Nam Cho on the left with his signature look, a pair of large glasses and a *yasahng*.

In addition, the distinctiveness of Cho's appearance in conservative and homogeneous South Korea at the time reflects his unconventional lifestyle. Although Cho was educated at the most prestigious classical music college at Seoul National University, he started singing western pop music⁶² at a US Army base club and painting in the early 70s. The contrast between a pair of thick plastic glasses as a sign of perceived intellectualism –from his academic background- and *yasahng* as a symbol of the military uncannily reflects Cho's exceptional career which traverses western high culture and popular culture, and can easily be considered, in Korean terms, as a subversive fashion practice.

⁶¹ 'Ddanzi Interview: Meeting Young-Nam Cho' Ddanzillbo No.160, 19 July

⁶² He is also well-known as having translated, and introduced Tom Jones to South Korea. Tom Jones is often confused as an American pop artist rather than as a British one in Korea. See 'Ddanzi Interview: Meeting Young-Nam Cho' Ddanzillbo No.160, 19 July.

During my telephone interview with Cho in November 2007, he said that he aspired to hippie's fashion styles by referring to American signers like Neil Young⁶³ and Bob Dylan. Cho regards himself as a pioneer in wearing *yasahng* [as a civilian] in South Korea in the 1970s.

Alison Lurie in her book *The Language of Clothes* states the use of military garments by hippies: "A related development in the 1960s was the American hippie custom of wearing parts of old Army uniforms-Civil War, World War I and World War II" (Lurie 1981: 21). However, the employment of military uniforms at this period in the United States was largely based on diverse political activities including the hippies' anti-Vietnam war protest, as Lurie notes;

In this century, however, it has been adopted as a form of political protest, and both men and women have appeared at rallies and marches in their Army, Navy, or police uniforms, the implied statement being "I am a soldier, but I support disarmament/open housing/gay rights," etc. [...] This military garb puzzled many observers, especially when it appeared in anti-Vietnam demonstrations. Others understood the implicit message, which was that the longhaired kid in the Confederate tunic or the Eisenhower jacket was not some kind of coward or sissy; that he was not against all wars-just *against the cruel and unnecessary one he was in danger of being drafted into* [my emphasis] (Lurie 1981: 20-21).

In Lurie's account then, one of the key reasons for the anti-war protest lay in the possibility of being drafted into the army during the war. Anti-war demonstration of this kind is difficult to be applied in South Korea's case, considering "South Korea's Military Law imposing the duty of national defense solely on [all young] men" (Park 2009) anyway. It might be more reasonable to accommodate Army uniforms for 'anti-conscription' protest, if it is the case.

Moreover, neither Speaker 32, nor Cho displayed socio-political awareness in relation to their wearing of *yasahng*. On the contrary, Cho often made comments such as, "I have found that I haven't had an inclination towards politics."⁶⁴ I asked Cho in my interview if he felt rebellious against the military government in South Korea and therefore, wore *yasahng* previously, and he asserted, "I did not have any

⁶³ "Einarson recalled Young play on TV in 1967 with his big orange Gretsch [guitar] and in a Confederate Army uniform (Chong 2005: 84)."

⁶⁴ 'Ddanzi Interview: Meeting Young-Nam Cho' Ddanzillbo No.160, 19 July.

kind of resistance against the military dictatorship of South Korean government at all. On the contrary, it was primarily for *fashion*.”

The inherently apolitical tendency in appropriating *yasahng* fashion is confined not only to Cho’s individual case, but to most young Korean men’s fashion practice. This kind of indifference towards socio-political consciousness may sound to be frivolous lacking autonomous ideas within the *yasahng* fashion practice. Then, not all countries need to follow the same political movement carried in the hippie culture. Surely, these young men can adopt this hippie fashion trend surrounding military gear to delve into or reflect their own social issues. In a case of the United Kingdom, the hippie fashion styles were still popular in the 1960s, but the imposed meanings were dissimilar to that of American hippies. Elizabeth Wilson (2005[1985]) explains the uniqueness of British hippie culture in *Adorned in Dreams* as follows:

The word hippie came from the United States, where the hippies and their rock music originated in the anti-Vietnam war 1960s. In Britain the hippie style meant something different from its transatlantic counterpart, although *both were related to student radicalism* [my emphasis]. The British variant bore a message that was *anti-capitalist in the sense that to create a unique appearance out of a bricolage of secondhand clothes, craft work and army surplus* [my emphasis] was to protest sartorially against the wastefulness of the consumer society. You rejected the mass-produced road, and simultaneously wasteful luxury, and produced your own completely original look (Wilson 2005[1985]: 193).

Student radicalism⁶⁵ as the core spirit of hippies cannot be found in the South Korean youth either in the 1960s and 1970s, or at present, especially in relation to particular fashion styles. Furthermore, political activities such as anti-war or anti-capitalism were not noticeable as a feature of *yasahng* consumption. This lack of autonomous reflection on one’s own society has led to the absence of originality in Korean fashion styles and to the continuous imitation of the West’s mode of dressing out of context.

⁶⁵ In South Korea, student radicalism had been evolved within the context of leftist political –more specifically, Marxist- ideology, especially from the 1980s to early 1990s. However, these leftists have not been attached to any particular type of fashion styles. It is possible that they were tasteless in fashion, or despised the idea of fashion as a superficial product of capitalism. If their style can still be regarded as a form of fashion statement, it was simply not fashionlessness, but was rather viewed as a pejorative appearance.

Yet, a fashion practice like “a bricolage of [...] army surplus” can be found in Cho’s appropriation of *yasahng*. It will be helpful to consider Kaiser’s (1997 [1985]) account of bricolage in fashion first.

Bricolage [(Lévi –Strauss, 1966)] is a French word referring to the idea of “do-it-yourself”-of finding solutions to problems by examining, using, and combining cultural signs in ways in which they were not initially intended. In the process, new contexts for usage are created. [...] In a sense, bricolage is individual expression at its height (Kaiser 1997 [1985]: 468).

Cho explained his fashion practice of *yasahng* at the interview as below;

I had 2 or 3 pieces of *yasahng* which I bought in Namdaemun Market and in the United States. [...] I draw a check pattern on the army-green coloured *yasahng* with a black marker pen...camouflage... It looked really great. [...] it was getting more ingenious, more thrilling (Cho 2007).

Cho’s fashion practice of a bricolage of *yasahng* demonstrates his uniqueness of “individual expression at its height” (Kaiser 1997 [1985]: 46). Although Cho has never considered political awareness seriously, as he claimed, his experiments of the various *yasahng* looks were related to the politics on a private level. He said, “The wearing of military uniforms used to be forbidden by the government” (Cho 2007) and often was pointed out when he appeared on television programmes as a singer. Nonetheless, Cho has had any antipathy towards such a restriction by the government and the broadcasting stations. On the contrary, he sounded adventurous, as if he actually enjoyed evading the authoritative rules by employing his creativity in fashion.

To the question why he liked to wear *yasahng* (Cho 2007), Cho simply answered that it was a symbolism and resistance, mentioning his musical role as Che Guevara. In his book *Holding a Thigh Band of Jesus*, Cho states that he hangs a large black-and-white photograph of Che with a military jacket and a beret opposite to his bed; because he considers that Che lived the most passionate life in the world except that of Jesus (Cho 2000: 271-272). However, Cho’s admiration for Che’s intense life does not necessarily mean that he shares Che’s revolutionary resistance to superpower.

Then what do these American *yasahng* symbolise and resist? Cho often made a comment like “I am *pro-American*. [...] I’m an *outsider*,”⁶⁶ and writes that in 1973, “I was given a privilege to go to and live in the United States. [...] at that time, it was *a young people’s dream to go to the United States to learn civilisation* [my emphasis]”⁶⁷ (Cho 2000: 5). Cho was clearly more interested in Western civilisation than in any kind of revolution for independence.

‘Outer complex’ (Kang 2004) and ‘inferiority complex’ (Lee 1983), the two main concepts which were drawn out in the Chapter 4, can effectively account for Cho’s belief. Firstly, his remark of “I’m an outsider” can be understood as a form of the ‘outer complex’; and secondly, ‘inferiority complex’ can explain Cho’s idea that civilisation can/should be learned not in South Korea, but in the United States. In this perspective, Cho’s appropriation of *yasahng* can be viewed as a symbolic representation of the Americanness which he regarded as the more advanced civilisation, not only because the garment is American, but was a popular American style.

In addition, the ‘uniqueness’ of Cho’s music career should be mentioned to examine the autonomy of his cultural practice of fashion more closely.

I have been a singer for nearly 30 years. But I do not have many hit songs, that all the world knows. The songs which have been known as mine are mainly from foreign originals or others. [..., Dilaila and ...] are all foreign songs. I am practically an international criminal of a massive infringement of copyright in misappropriating foreign songs (Cho 2000: 149).

Considering Cho’s nationwide fame and success⁶⁸ on his own, the above described characteristic of his career as a singer is peculiar. Cho has been just the first singer who deliberately copied the foreign songs without permission before anyone else did; and these interpreted-versions of foreign songs have become popular to the

⁶⁶ ‘Ddanzi Interview: Meeting Young-Nam Cho’ Ddanzillbo No.160, 19 July.

⁶⁷ ‘Ddanzi Interview: Meeting Young-Nam Cho’ Ddanzillbo No.160, 19 July.

⁶⁸ Cho is reported to own the most expensive house among South Korean celebrities in 2009. “Singer, artist and writer Cho Young-nam’s massive 618-square-meter villa has long been famous as one of the country’s unbeatable star homes. [Cho’s villa] was most recently officially listed at some 4 billion won, but realtors say the property is actually worth more than 6 billion won (Han 2009).”

general public who did not have a chance to hear them previously⁶⁹. This kind of cultural practice seems relevant to Cho's assimilation of *yasahng* fashion. As he said that "it [wearing *yasahng*] was primarily for fashion," at the interview, *yasahng* might have been simply an advanced Western cultural product which Cho could accommodate earlier than anyone else could, by bypassing an authentic or autonomous conceptual process of fashion styles.

***Yasahng* fashion and understanding Korean sensibility towards the military system and culture**

The next case also demonstrates the importance of Anglo-American cultural influences in Korean men's foreign *yasahng* fashion in the late 1980s. Figure 24 shows an army officer in his military uniforms and a college student in his foreign *yasahng* taken in 1989. This is an archetypal example which provides an opportunity to compare the fashionable *yasahng* and the proper military looks next to each other. The male college student recalls:

It is me having *unkempt hair and wearing an American Woodland yasahng* [my emphasis] which I bought in Dongdaemun market, *Levi's jeans and a pair of cowboy boots* [my emphasis] [...] After the successful 1988 Seoul Olympics, it was still rare to find the way I look, except for the reserved army or *the long haired heavy metal group members* [my emphasis] who play the guitar and sing a song... Thanks to my style, I was privileged to get along with my senior-reserved army students in the college. Female students in different departments thought that I was one of the seniors... Later, I grew my hair even longer than this unkempt hair. *When I wore the same outfit in the photo with long hair, then no one would ever come near me on the bus or in the tube* [my emphasis].⁷⁰

First of all, as described in the above quotation, men's appearance with 'unkempt hair' or 'long hair'⁷¹ in parallel with the *yasahng* style created a perception of its

⁶⁹ One of the good examples is Tom Jones' Dilaila. For many Koreans, Cho's Dilaila would be more familiar than Tom Jones' original.

⁷⁰ '어느 밀리터리 매니아의 16년전 패션... (A military mania's fashion sixteen years ago [my translation])'
<http://bbs.defence.co.kr/bbs/bbs.cgi?db=defenceclup&mode=read&num=17843&page=9&fval=&backdepth=1>

⁷¹ The prohibition law of longhaired men is one of the things from the 60s and 70s in South Korea. But in 2000, even male prisoners have obtained their freedom to have long hairstyle, whereas male students in senior high schools are still in their fight against the short hair rules. See <http://idoo.net/?menu=nocut&sub=home>

wearers as abnormal and deviant in the eyes of the public. Therefore, it is perhaps inevitable that this college student's carefully coordinated *yasahng* fashion still caused disapproval and repugnance in the public sphere in the late 1980s and early 1990s in South Korea.



Figure 24 A college student with his American *yasahng* jacket on the left and his brother who was at a military academy on the right (1989).

Agreeing upon this student's fashion practice, one of the respondents on the same website page wrote that “[I]n 1989, I also wore American *yasahng*. Are we fashion siblings? By the way, when I wore that [American *yasahng*], I used to be stopped almost by every patrolman.”⁷² This has been a kind of a perfunctory inspection by the government; and yet, appearance control is largely practiced also in a private level.

The negative perception attached to *yasahng* has been increasingly diluted in contemporary South Korea. It is worth noting briefly the fact that a significant

⁷² ‘어느 밀리터리 매니아의 16년전 패션... (A military mania's fashion sixteen years ago [my translation])’
<http://bbs.defence.co.kr/bbs/bbs.cgi?db=defenceclup&mode=read&num=17843&page=9&type=6&fval=&backdepth=1>

number of recent Korean films have dealt with military-related themes from individual perspectives. According to a Gallup survey in 2004, three of the top five most popular Korean films among Korean men are on the subject of the Korean military⁷³: *Joint Security Area Gongdong gyeongbi guyeok JSA* (2000) (see Figure 25): *Silmido* (2003): *The Brotherhood of War* (2004).

The first film drew an audience of more than one million, a first time in Korean film history, and the others beat this record by drawing an audience of over ten million each. These films focus on humanism, rather than political ideologies, by portraying soldiers as anguished individuals who struggle with their inner conflicts. The heroes in these films are not directly related to the *yasahng* fashion but, as an indirect consequence, can have changed the perception of the stereotypical soldiers which have been inscribed since the military regimes. Therefore, the general prejudice towards the military outfits which had appeared in the 1970s and 1980s might also have been diminished in a great deal.

Yet, institutionalisation of individuals' fashion practice has not been completely removed. The type of question "why do you wear army uniform?" is still asked mainly by elderly – at least middle aged – people to the wearers of *yasahng*. The college student in this discussion experienced that people in a confined public space such as buses or tubes kept distance from him when he wore American *yasahng* around the 1990s, as stated previously. Cho also said that people often gave him a suspicious glance, reasoning, he thought, that his wearing of *yasahng* might be because he was doing art in the past (Cho 2007). A more recent case of a 28 year-old male philosophy student who studies in Scotland (Speaker 33) proves that peculiar perception towards military-style outfits has still remained; he said "they [especially Korean people] asked if people in the field of philosophy normally wear this type of clothes [army-style jackets]" (Speaker 33, Interview 21, pp. 324 in Appendix, 2007). Therefore, when Speaker 33 had an occasion to meet

⁷³ 'Gallup Report 2004: 40 things that Koreans love – hobby and culture'

many Koreans he tries not to wear a military-style jacket to avoid inquisitive remarks.



Figure 25 A poster of a Korean film *Gongdong gyeongbi guyeok JSA*, or Joint Security Area (2000)



Figure 26 Suh, Do-Ho (2006) *Uni-Form/s: Self-Portrait/s: My 39 Years* at Art Basel. (<http://www.lehmannmaupin.com/artists/dohosuh/>)

All the men described above had often been faced with a strong prejudice by the general public against their occupation –being a musician, an artist or a philosopher- in relation to their *yasahng* outfit. This can be understood as people trying to tolerate this type of distinctive appearance by reasoning its wearer’s personal background. Having assumed the reason why these men wear *yasahng* – sometimes, even military-style outfits- as a daily wear, they automatically prescribe these men as a special, different individual because of their outfit.

This kind of intolerance to the representation of army(-style) clothes among adults can be found in the hegemonic system of mandatory military service which can be seen as a miniature of the social structure of South Korea. This social background is well-portrayed in A Korean artist Do-Ho Suh’s (2006) work *Uni-Form/s: Self-Portrait/s: My 39 Years* (see Figure 26). Ten pieces of uniforms from schools and armies are juxtaposed in line as a representation of conformity and collectivity. The presentation of hollow uniforms contrasts the emptied subjectivity to the perpetuating materiality/authority. The uniforms in Suh’s artwork are therefore a portrayal of the authoritative totalitarian power which oppresses individual identity over collectivity and has a control over individual freedom. This kind of suffocating ideology is prevalent in South Korean society.

Uniforms are equalizers, alternatively creating and obliterating identities. There are no distinctions between rich and poor. Military uniforms, for example, neutralize individuality to create a sense of order within a group. [...] Conversely, uniforms can offer the means to invent an alternative identity (Buckley 2000: 206).

Having considered the above remark about the role of uniforms, Suh’s work of a collection of uniforms illustrates the “neutralised” individuality, not only in the army, but also throughout the whole process of socialisation. In this socio-cultural context, military uniforms can be seen as a classic example of the visual representation of collective male identity which is inscribed to individuals by the society. There are a number of other countries where the conscription law applies to their citizens, but Korea’s national division between North and South increases the importance of (and resistance to) the military and also draws public attention towards narratives and material objects generated by this unique political context.

The national conscription system applies to all Korean men, except “lower class men who cannot support their families, disabled men, gays, or transsexuals” (Moon 2002: 79-80). Seungsook Moon accounts for the long-established system of mandatory military service as the primary aspect of constructing hegemonic masculinity which “essentializes and neutralizes gender differences reinforcing the dichotomy of the masculine provider and the feminine housewife” (Moon 2002: 101).

Military service confers on men certain economic advantage including a structure of employment that accommodates and sometimes privileges military service, and *the widespread perception that military service is a valuable exercise in discipline and responsibility that prepares men for employment outside the home* [my emphasis]. In other words, there is a convergence between the different elements of hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, *in the eyes of the state, men who have been incorporated into its military mechanisms are true citizens who can fight for the nation to their deaths* [my emphasis] (Moon 2002: 102).

Evidently, military service plays an important role in the development of male identity whether Korean men want to or not. Having undergone the two-year military service, these “disciplined and responsible” men can successfully become incorporated into Korean society as proper and eligible social members. National consensus on this process of institutionalisation is almost unanimous even though most men consider the conscription system only as an unavoidable duty and an obstacle in their life.

[M]ilitary service is not something that all men willingly and wholeheartedly embrace. It is strenuous, unpleasant, dangerous, and, more importantly, requires withdrawal from remunerative activities in a capitalist society. During the period of the Cold War and military rule, the south Korean state managed to militarize masculinity and maintain it through a combination of coercion and ideological persuasion. The end of the Cold War and contemporary south Korea’s overwhelming economic superiority to north Korea have allowed a younger generation of men to begin to challenge the imperative of military service (Moon 2002: 101-102).

There have been a few cases which challenge the conscription law. For example, a newspaper article ‘Why are only men conscripted?’ (Park 2007) reported that an anonymous man petitioned the Constitutional Court to correct the current Conscription Act to apply to both men and women. The most famous national

debate on the application of mandatory military system is a case of a pop idol Seung-jun Yoo who won the ‘Most Popular Artist’ at the 16th Golden Disc Awards in 2001 in South Korea (KBS World: Yoo Seung-jun).

When it comes to military service, public reaction in South Korea cannot be underestimated. In 2002, Yoo Seung-jun, a dual citizenship holder and popular pop singer at the time, was banned from entering the country after the singer quietly dropped South Korean citizenship and left the country to obtain U.S. citizenship, despite public pledges that he would render mandatory military service (Lee 2008).

Yoo obtained American citizenship to avoid joining the army. Regardless of his apology, the public response –from both men and women- towards Yoo’s act pushed the decision by the Korean government which defined this case as unlawful “military desertion” (Garcia 2007). In 2009, it is still unlikely that Yoo can enter South Korea in the near future. Having considered Yoo’s case, even contemporary South Korea cannot tolerate a challenge to the current mandatory military system for men.

Moon also points out the characteristic of hierarchy within the military, “Historically, and cross-culturally, the military has been almost exclusively a hierarchical organization of men, although soldiers may experience camaraderie among themselves” (Moon 2002: 89). The army is an extremely hierarchical structure where all of its members abide in regulations and orders. Furthermore, hierarchy is one of the most prevalent social mechanisms in South Korea from child to adult. Do-Ho Suh’s own experience from the military service provides a vivid account of the construction of men’s identity at the start of their adulthood.

From the moment that you’re born you know that you’re going to be in the military. Everybody has to go. And so that’s a great deal of the Korean man’s identity. And usually everyone goes to the military right after they graduate from high school. It’s a good initiation to the real world because the whole Korean society, the whole system is actually based on this militaristic, very hierarchical structure (Suh in *Art:21*).

The wearing of military uniforms is generally confined only to small groups of people. However, under the system of mandatory military service in South Korea, military garments have also earned a greater significance as a symbol of representing masculine male identity. As explained so far, military uniforms do not

sustain individuality, instead they symbolise uniformity and conformity according to the hierarchical order within a group, which contradicts the use of fashionable *yasahng*.

Therefore, the properly “disciplined” men in the army may view *yasahng* differently from the fashion-conscious men who accommodate *yasahng* as vintage styles, as presented in this chapter. The following interview of a 33 year-old architecture student (Speaker 34) demonstrates the accommodation of *yasahng* after completing his military service, not because of the fashion trend, but because of his affection towards the army.

- Speaker 34: =I’ve got lots of memories of military uniforms, distant memories.

JH: Memories?

- Speaker 34: Well, well, it is not exactly that I did something special wearing military uniforms, but it is sort of nostalgia for the time when I wore them and worked together with other people in the army, you know.

(Interview 22, pp. 354 in Appendix, 2007)

For Speaker 34, *yasahng* is a memorabilia from his military service which he has completed over a decade ago. He still passionately wears *yasahng* which is American Gore-Tex due to its quality, but the fact that it is not the same one that he used to wear does not affect his feeling of nostalgia, “It doesn’t matter at all, such thing (.) Such pattern, just such feeling, such *texture!*” (Interview 22, pp. 354 in Appendix, 2007)

Lurie states, “The wearing of a uniform by people who are obviously not carrying out the duties it involves has often suggested personal laxity [...]” (Lurie 1981: 20). Speaker 34’s *yasahng* practice after the completion of his military service can be understood, in a broad perspective, as a form of so-called ‘personal laxity’, as Lury describes above, instead of simple accommodation of the *guje*/ vintage trend. Having considered Speaker 34’s affection for the military culture, it is not highly strange for him to consider fashionable *yasahng* (for example, matching with *guje* jeans) with disregard.

JH: People, who wear this [*yasahng*], also wear that [a pair of *guje* jeans] as well; it has become a kind of *style* among *guje* jean lovers.

- Speaker 34: Yes, I know what you mean, but I still think that is the stereotype. They are guys who do not know the real profundities of the *military*.

JH: Profundities?

- Speaker 34: Profundities.

JH: The profundities of the *military*?

- Speaker 34: That's right. How would they possibly know the profundities of the *military* after only two years of military service! (Interview 22, pp. 353 in Appendix 2007)

As shown, Speaker 34 thinks that fashionable *yasahng* wearers who follow vintage trends would not know the profundities of the military culture and clothing. Yet, for the general public, there is hardly a difference between the two different groups of *yasahng* wearers, either the fashion-conscious, or the loyal military, as both of them received almost identical remarks.

Commodification of unwearying American popular culture and diversification of *yasahng*

Another aspect worth consideration in the case of the previously presented college student's *yasahng* practice is its uncanny resonance to the appearance of American youth. Whereas the college student's outfit -*yasahng*, Levi's jeans and a pair of cowboy boots- was perceived as an idiosyncratic look in South Korea, this look was already the 1960s American fashion of the "politically correct tribal uniforms of proletarian blue jeans, subverted military surplus gear."⁷⁴ By comparing the appearance, the military and the social context surrounding the assimilation of military garb, Kaiser also notes, "The appearance context was different from a military look, because long hair and jeans were worn with the fatigue jackets" (Kaiser 1997 [1985]: 465-466). This photograph apparently displays the contrast between the appearance context of the student's relaxed look and the military context of the army officer's organised outfit. It can be argued that the coupling of American *yasahng* and blue jeans which was identified two decades earlier has remained and become a classic vintage look in South Korea.

⁷⁴ 'The Fashion Front, Cold War Experience: Culture'
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/experience/culture/fashion.essay/2.html>

More importantly, how could these ‘*yasahng* fashion siblings’ dress in an identical manner with long hair, blue jeans and an army jacket really equate to their transpacific counterparts, especially as there was no hippie culture found in South Korea? In all three examples in this chapter, Speaker 32, Cho and the college student indicated American musicians. It cannot be said that they actually like the music itself, but the fashion styles of these musicians have clearly had a great influence on *yasahng* consumers as their reference point. It might be possible that pop musicians were the most easily and widely accessible figures among celebrities.

In addition, his American Woodland *yasahng* is a type of the M65 field jacket with a camouflage pattern (see Figure 27); Woodland indicates a camouflage-patterned model, and there are other colours of M65 field jackets. M65 is one of the most popular –or ‘ideal’ in Speaker 32’s term- model which Speaker 32 mentioned previously with the M51 field jacket in this chapter. “In 1965 the Army began upgrading the M-1951 Field Jacket to the latest in the design series, the M-1965 Field Jacket (also known as the M65, M1965, or M-65).”⁷⁵

Is the popularity of M65 field jacket, worn outside of the army, related to hippie fashion styles? Kiaser states that the hippie’s adoption of military wear for their anti-war protests was out of the context by saying that “the cultural and historical context was distinct [...], because many of fatigues came from army surplus from previous wars (for example, World War II and the Korean War)” (Kaiser 1997 [1985]: 465-466). According to Kaiser, army uniforms which were used in the Korean War⁷⁶ were adopted by hippies’ anti-Vietnam War protest. The historic significance of the Korean War seems to be irrelevant to Korean *yasahng* consumers.

The acclaimed film *Taxi Driver* (1976) can explain the current vogue of M65 field jacket which was worn by Robert De Niro (see Figure 28), as featured in a special

⁷⁵ http://www.olive-drab.com/od_soldiers_clothing_m65_jacket.php

⁷⁶ These are M43, M50 and M51 models.

collection of Japanese magazine *The Real McCoy's Funbook 2007*⁷⁷. The official reproduction of this M65 is on sale for £465.00 (see Figure 29), where as the plain one costs £375.00, in a British Internet shopping site Superdenim; “Exact replica⁷⁸ of the classic M-65 [...] made in Japan under licence from Colombia Pictures.”⁷⁹

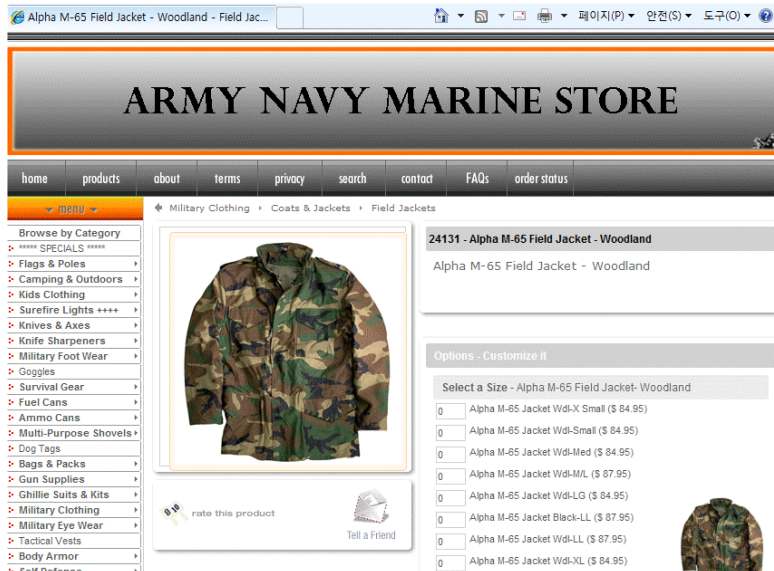


Figure 27 an example of online shp selling M65 American Woodland *yasahng* http://www.armynavymarinestore.com/Field_Jackets-Alpha_M_65_Field_Jacket_Woodland.html



Figure 28 *The Real McCoy's Funbook 2007* featuring M-65 field jacket with a reference to the film *Taxi Driver*

⁷⁷ I purchased this edition in Seoul during my research trip. It cannot be found in ordinary bookshops, but is sold in a small number of bookshops specialised in foreign magazines.

⁷⁸ Replica is a popular way of commodifying original vintage clothes as new.

⁷⁹ <http://www.superdenim.co.uk/prodpage.asp?productid=289>

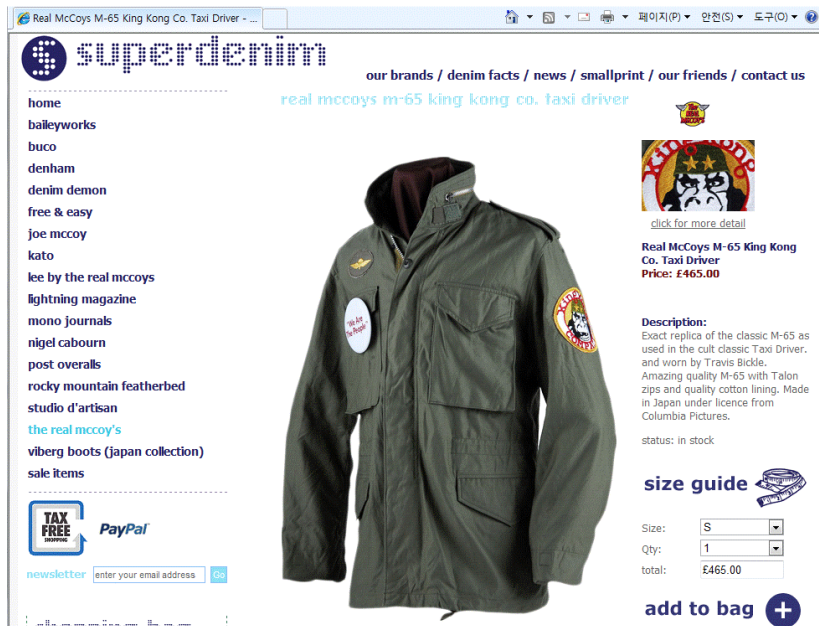


Figure 29 The original replica of Robert DeNiro’s outfit in *Taxi Driver* costs £465.00.



Figure 30 style references in a Korean online *guje* shop *Darkcat.co.kr*

A promotional page in *Dark Cat* (see Figure 30) exemplifies the influence of Japanese *yasahng* fashion by using various images of the typical Japanese look to illustrate how these old military jackets can be worn. There are plenty of Internet shopping malls like this in South Korea, all of which employ Japanese trends, language and culture. Even though Japanese fashion styles are influential and

passionately imitated by Korean consumers, there is no original Japanese *yasahng* on sale in South Korea.

In June 2009, one of the most popular Korean girl bands Girls' Generation was accused of using "insensitive use of imagery that conjures up Nazi and Kamikaze insignia" (Popseoul! 2009) when they introduced the marine girl look for their new album. Soon, the controversy was over when SM Entertainment, the company Girls Generation belongs to, issued a public apology.

SM Entertainment released a statement regarding the WWII imagery, citing it was the ignorance of the photo shoot designer and that the girls are not to blame. [...] SM went on to further say that this was by no means intentional, and that they were simply going for a marine concept more than anything (Popseoul! 2009).

A small number of insignias attached as fashion accessories started this dispute about Girls' Generations' misuse and misunderstanding of the history of World War II. Yet, old German army *yasahng* are largely available in South Korea, as will be illustrated shortly with an example from the online shop Becks Boy. However, it is still possible that the wearing of Japanese army uniforms can immediately lead its wearer to public blame, and even the hostility reserved for national traitors due to the bitter memory of the colonial and post-colonial history between the two.

Inarguably, Japan is fast in the adoption and commodification of American pop culture, and in fact, the majority of the Western *yasahng* jackets circulated in Korean markets have been imported from Japan, not directly from the Western countries. This role of Japan as a cultural mediator between Western, especially American, trends and Korean consumers will be explored in more detail with examples of *guje* jeans consumption in Chapter 6.

More profound motivation for accommodating American military uniforms can be found in another Suh's (2006) artwork *Some/One*, an installation of a traditional Korean costume of General Lee's from the 15th century which is made out of thousands of American military dog tags and represented South Korea at 49th Venice Biennale (see Figure 31). Suh's explanation of his personal motivation

behind this installation is most helpful in the understanding of Koreans' affinity with American military objects:

Basically we [Korean armies] used almost the same equipments as Americans. The whole thing is based on the U.S. military system. I think also that probably most Korean men also have this interest... I don't know if it's the right word... but some kind of fetishism about this [American military] stuff. In Korea it's illegal to buy or have military stuff. So when I saw these things [American military dog tags] I wanted to get it. (Suh, Do-Ho "Some/One" & the Korean Military')

While Korean men –with few exceptions, as stated earlier- are obliged to do military service, the disapproval of obtaining military objects for individual citizens might lead to the clandestine pleasure of achieving fetishistic desire towards the image of American *yasahng*, as well as other military objects. This in turn imposes a powerful impact upon the representation of masculinity by giving the impression that the wearer would be untamed by, or even challenge social standards and rules. It is possible that this kind of fetishism is further strengthened when combined with the American pop culture of both music and fashion.



Do-Ho Suh's Some/One Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art



Military dog tags were used to create Some/One Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art

Figure 31 Another work by a Korean artist Do-Ho Suh made of military dog tags which represent the identity of individuals as a soldier.

Finally, the current *yasahng* markets have diversified their sources to take in a variety of Western models from countries such as Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, France and Canada, as well as America. For example, another on-line shop called *Becks Boy* demonstrates the various models of *yasahng* on sale for the price of £20.00 to £50.00; the following list is a part of their website page which can be seen in Figure 32.

- M-65 Motive Jacket
- Original German Army *yasahng* jacket
- Original German Navy *yasahng*
- French *yasahng*
- German Autumn/Winter Hood[ed] *yasahng* short jacket
- Custom reform[ed] Deutsch jacket
- U.S. Army *yasahng* jacket
- U.S. *yasahng* reform[ed] with stitch details
- German hood *yasahng* replica
- U.S. Army Desert Camouflage Parka for Night
- Belgium Army hood jacket
- Canada *yasahng* jacket⁸⁰

The above list of diverse clothing articles consists of *yasahng* with replica models as well as used and new ones. It is also possible that there are counterfeit *yasahng* being circulated in the current market. Moreover, the diversity of *yasahng* is not only demonstrated by the number of exporting nations, but also by different models according to their production years, seasons or divisions. On-line shops like *Dark Cat* and *Becks Boy* are just two examples of the innumerable commercial Internet shopping sites which reflect men's fashion practice of highly stylised *yasahng* by assimilating Western and Japanese material culture.

⁸⁰ www.becksboy.co.kr/front/php/category.php?cate_no=7

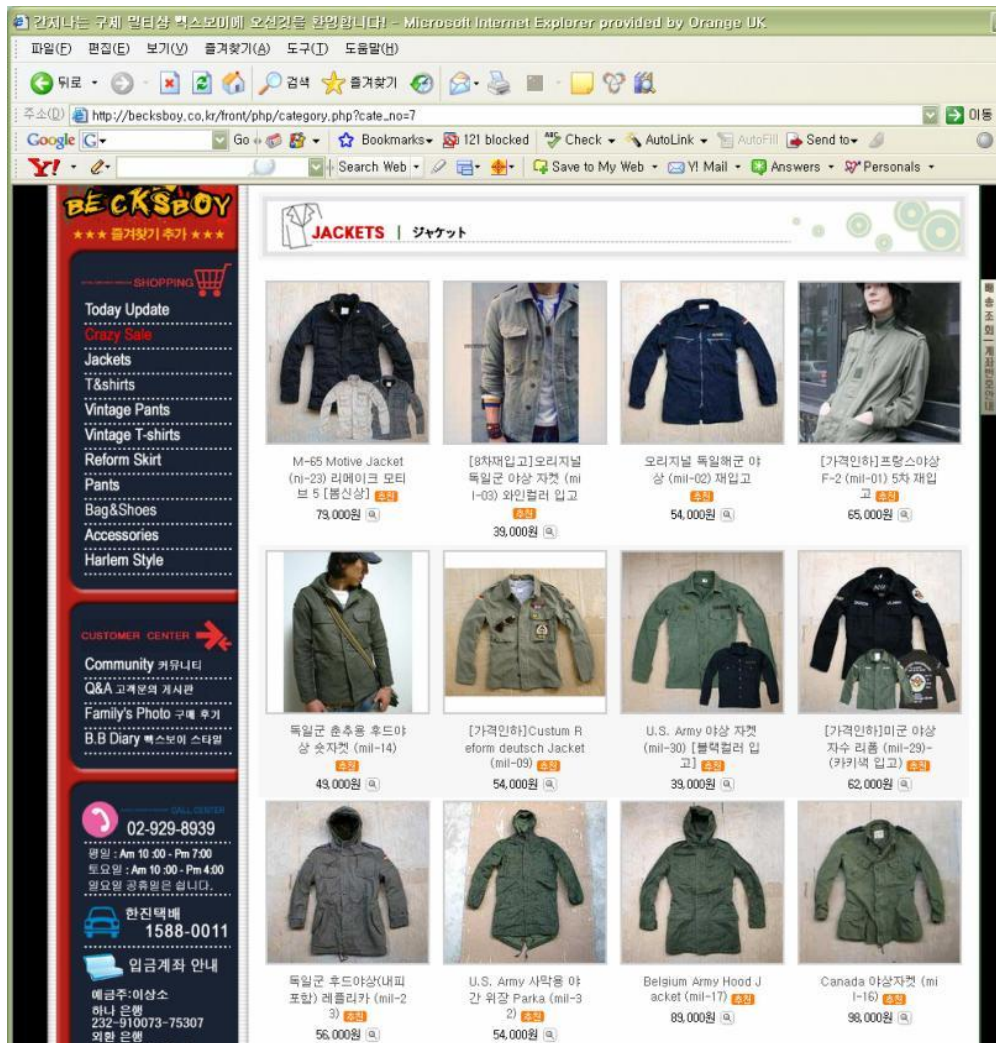


Figure 32 a Korean Internet shopping mall selling *yasahng* from various countries (becksboy.co.kr); the title of this section is written in both English in red and Japanese in black on the top (next to a jacket illustration), not the Korean language.

Having considered various types of *yasahng* consumption throughout this chapter, a primary question can be asked; why have Korean army uniforms been employed neither by the fashionable consumers nor by the loyal military men, whereas numerous types of foreign *yasahng* are available? A recent newspaper article and endless responses by its readers can provide an answer for this question. The article ‘Why don’t Korean military look good?’ (Chang 2007) references the origin of a widespread rumour that Korea ended up at the bottom place in the Universal Competition of Military Uniforms. Although this story turns out to be totally fabricated, it expresses continuous discontent with, and discredit of, Korean military uniforms by its wearers.

The reason why this rumour has so much resonance with the general public in South Korea is hardly surprising given the fact that nearly all Korean men have served in the army due to mandatory military service. The outdated design of uniforms, in conjunction with the prohibition law, deters Korean consumers from seeking Korean military uniforms as fashion items or as memorabilia; and, consequently, has led to the preference for foreign *yasahng* over Korean ones. Foreign (or western) military jackets seem to be considered more advanced and fashionable by Korean male consumers.

This chapter has drawn upon the idea and employment of *guje* and *yasahng* from the era of post-World War II in South Korea by providing the transition and diversification of their meanings applied to the current consumers. Here, military uniforms can be identified as one of the oldest forms of *guje* fashion and have gained a currency as *yasahng* in case of army field jackets. In recent years, *yasahng* has swayed subcultural men's fashion practice in South Korea. This current popularity of *yasahng* fashion phenomenon can be seen as a recurrence of its wide use which goes back to the (post-)Korean War period. However, the major differences lie, firstly, in its demography and, secondly, in the use of knowledge and technologies by its consumers and retailers. Whereas most men in all ages from orphan children to adults had consumed military garments due to the lack of everyday necessities during the (post-)Korean War, the main consumers of *yasahng* now comprise young Korean men, in their 20s and 30s.

In comparison, under the military regime of the 1970s to early 1990s, *yasahng* was consumed sparsely among a minority number of young male intellectuals who gained access to American popular culture and their fashion styles. These young intellectuals however had to bear the inquisitive gaze of the eyes of beholders. Ironically enough, even though it mainly occupies niche fashion sites, this particular piece of military garment has become increasingly in vogue during the post-military stage⁸¹ gaining more popularity than it ever had before, as

⁸¹ Korea had the first civilian president Young Sam Kim in 1993. (See *South Korea: A political history*, BBC, Friday 20 February 1998: 15:36 GMT20, in <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/55a/088.html>)

acknowledged earlier in this chapter. Yet, Korean sensibility which is largely based on mandatory military service system, still remains in the way in which general public view the wearing of *yasahng* as a distinctive fashion statement.

Secondly, one of the main differences of *yasahng* consumption in the 21st century lies in its material shift towards more diverse sources which extend across the world. Therefore, American-oriented *yasahng* consumption, from post-World War II to the military regimes, has become more diversified in contemporary South Korea. The cultural underpinning of this transforming fashion practice is due to the widespread global trades and the development of communication technology. This new generation shows mastery of communication technologies such as the Internet, digital photography and foreign languages such as English and Japanese, and cultures which have increased their intercultural competency in the global world. As a result, young men have become experts in fashion by utilising their knowledge in (*yasahng*) consumption which has laid the cornerstone of the transformation and representation of male identity in contemporary South Korea.

In this transitional social context, the concept of *yasahng* in its affiliation with universally dominant vintage trends has been strategically re-constructed as one of the most stylish fashion items among subcultural groups of younger male consumers. Evidently, the transformation of *yasahng* consumption demonstrates the degrees to which Korean consumers have engaged in American popular culture throughout their postcolonial history. The implication of this fashion consequently appears in the differentiation of individuals and in representations of the self within a society of conformity and hierarchy. It also highlights the shift of material and cultural practices from being Anglo-American orientated to being the result of globalisation or even de-colonisation in South Korea. In this historical and material development, the concept of the various 'other' such as America and Japan has been continuously negotiated, reconstructed and embodied by Korean consumers.

After all, the genuine answer to the popularity of imported *yasahng* can be just a matter of personal taste. Speaker 32 (2007) said that the reason why he purchased a *yasahng* jacket in the first place is because he believes that it perfectly fits his old-

The Origin of *Guje* Fashion and Commodification of *Yasahng*

model jeans, completing the archetypal vintage style he wanted to achieve. This exemplifies the ways in which old Western military jackets have been commodified and stylised with the purpose of simply expressing individuality as opposed to monotonous Korean mainstream fashion. *Yasahng* then has never been a symbol of rebellion or a political statement in South Korea, but an embodiment of popular culture which originates primarily in the United States.

6. Formation of Taste in Second-Hand(-style) Jeans and the Influence of *Nippon-ppil* in *Guje* Market: Recommodification of the Authentic Japanese and the Counterfeit Thai “Levi’s Coke” Jeans

This chapter investigates the ways in which foreign vintage blue jeans as the representation of authenticity have permeated into, and has exercised great influence on, *guje* clothes consumption in South Korea. The object of this chapter, *guje* blue jeans originally indicate used denim, but as *guje* consumption has increased now, new jeans deliberately constituted to appear vintage, whether replica or second-hand style, are also imported from abroad and traded in *guje* markets.

Blue jeans are one of the most sought-after global commodities. Miller and Woodward (2007) in their ‘Manifesto for a study of denim’ confirm “the ubiquity of blue denim as a global clothing” (Miller *et al.* 2007: 337) as follows:

Denim is clearly a global presence, it not only exists in every country in the world, but in many of these it has become the single most common form of everyday attire. (Miller *et al.* 2007: 336)

With their association with ‘Americanisation’ and ‘capitalism’ (Miller *et al.* 2007: 336), denim jeans have represented youth culture and identity across the world over half a century.

As the 1990s came to an end, the reconsideration of values and the attention paid to environment protection meant that jeans were worn pure and plain. Red line selvage, no stonewash and second-hand jeans became great hits, and young men and women searched high and low for vintage jeans that were no longer in production (Lv *et al.* 2007: 90).

As noted from the above quotation, younger generations have paid close attention to particular types of jeans, especially to second-hand or vintage jeans, since the late 1990s. However, the ways in which young consumers embody this fashion object can differ from one culture to another due to their disparate social norms and aesthetic taste; but at the same time, a certain level of imitation can be found in *guje* jeans consumption. Furthermore, the nature of *guje* consumption strongly requires consumers’ knowledge, discernment and taste in fashion styles. In this fashion practice, consumers are as active as retailers in evaluating second-hand

clothes and using their creativity and knowledge in the embodiment of these objects as their own.

Even though denim has now been perceived as an archetypal global object, it is still important to recognise its origin as one of the forerunners of Americanisation.

Similarly, Americanisation is central to understanding the original global spread of denim, but there are many reasons for thinking that denim has now transcended its earlier history and has to be understood in relation to concepts of the global and the local, neither of which is particularly American. (Miller *et al.* 2007: 343)

In this respect, Levi's Coke jeans – a collaboration project between Levi's and Coca-Cola in Japan – are the most suitable case study to prove that the consumption of a global commodity can be transformed according to the local culture and consumers' aspiration. This chapter will also reveal the latent ideology of Nipponophilia and the lingering effects of Americanisation within *guje* consumption, and by taking issues of both authentic and counterfeit jeans, it will explore how authenticity has naturally been imprinted among *guje* consumers.

Styles of fashionable *Guje* /vintage jeans in South Korea

Jeans are the most popular *guje* fashion item in South Korea due to the worldwide vintage trend. In September 2009, the Google search engine provided 823,000 findings for the word '구제 청바지 (*guje* jeans)' which proves the wide currency of this term (see Figure 33). There are a number of primary characteristics in the styles of *guje* jeans such as ripped details, loose fit and finally a brand name like Levi's. Another important feature of jeans washing will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter, along with the case of Levi's and Japanese imports.

Formation of Taste in Second-hand Jeans and the Influence of *Nippon-ppil*

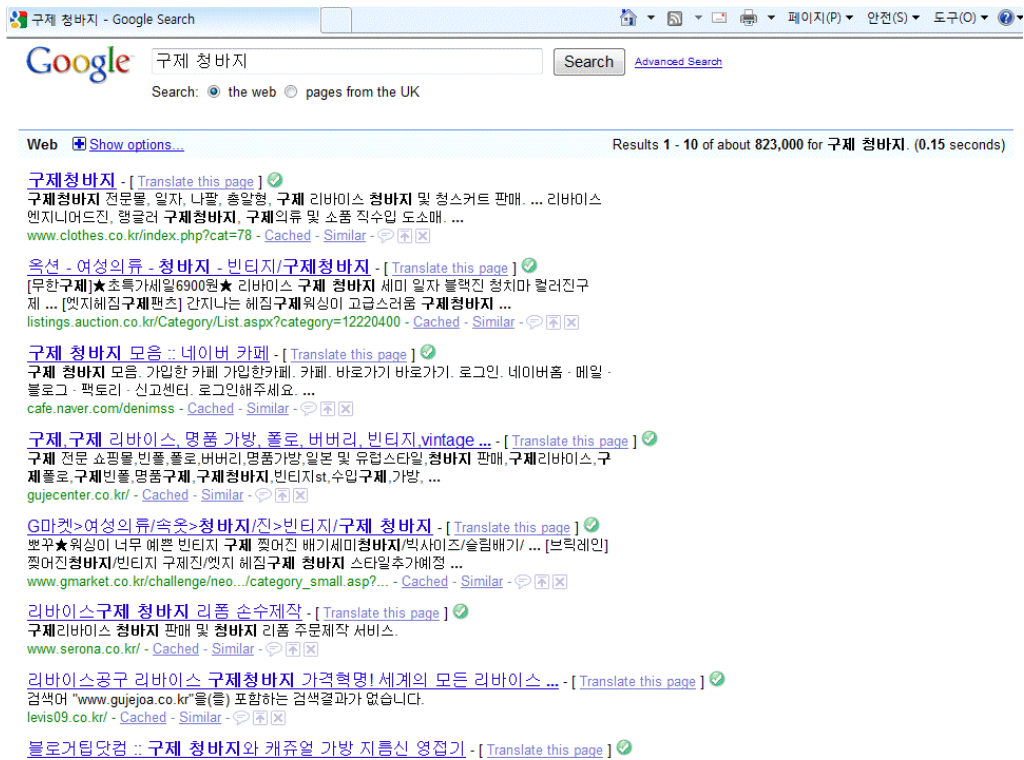


Figure 33 823,000 results with the word 구제 청바지 (*guje jeans*) in Google.

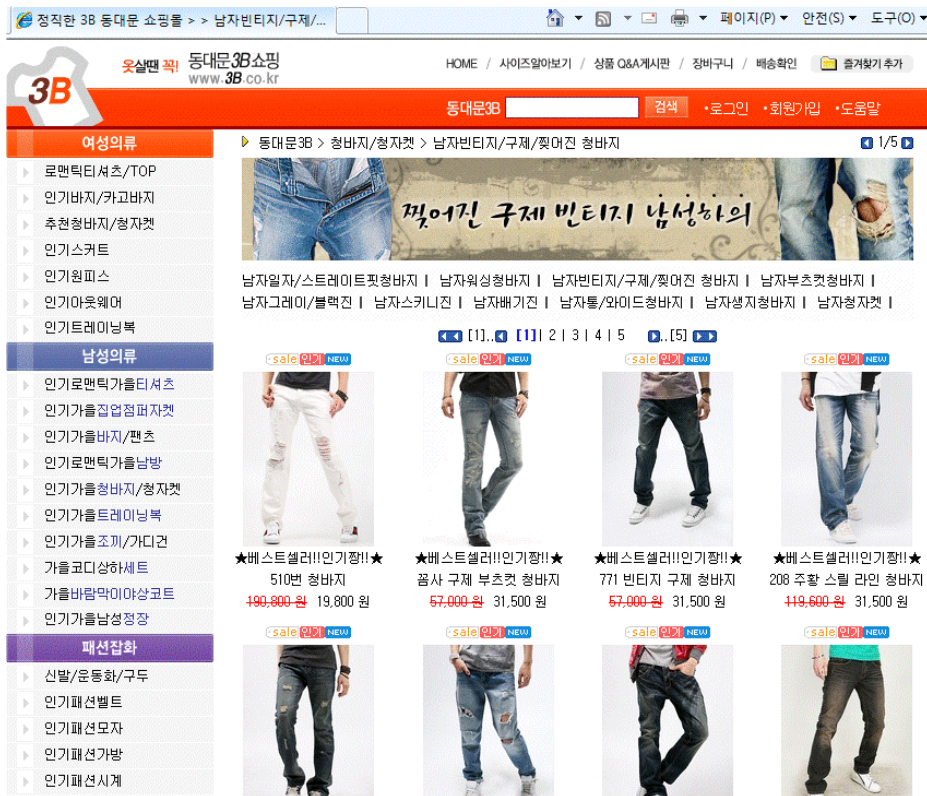


Figure 34 The main title of this section is written as “Ripped *guje* vintage men’s trousers”, shown on the top right side.

The first example can be found in Dongdaemun B Shopping Mall, one of the results found in the above Google search; this shop displays 29 different styles of jeans under a section “Ripped *guje* vintage men’s trousers” (see Figure 34). Even though this section presents new clothes, its title recapitulates the most sought-after fashion style of ripping in consumption of jeans in the current *guje* market. “This [ripping or fraying] is unique to denim clothes as its fabric is solid and thick and does not disintegrate when torn” (Lv *et al.* 2007: 323). During a street interview in Dongdaemun area, a 27 year-old male consumer (Speaker 29) answered a question about his preferred *guje* styles, “Ripped jeans like his [pointing to his friend]” (Interview 18, pp. 308 in Appendix, 2007).

When it came to the 1990s, retro fever was in vogue with flared trousers and blue denim making a comeback. Whether, it was in the streets of New York or Tokyo, people dressed themselves in the way that jeans were originally worn when they first appeared in the US – large, loose and hanging at the hips (Lv *et al.* 2007: 90).

As explained, the global retro trends since the 1990s brought this type of loose-fitting back to fashion. Similar fashion practice can be seen in South Korea. Loose fitting which is the second primary feature of *guje* jeans can be seen in the following interview with two 18 year-old school girls (Speaker 15 and 16).

JH: Have you ever bought *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 15: Yes.

JH: Where and how did you buy them?

- Speaker 15: I went shopping with my friends at Dongdaemun and found *guje* clothes pretty. So, I bought them.

JH: Did you go to Dongdaemun especially for *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 15: Yes.

JH: How did you come across *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 15: They are popular among my friends; that’s why I bought them.

JH: What kind of items did you buy?

- Speaker 15: Blue jeans.

[...]

JH: Did you have any special reason to buy *guje* clothes, apart from your friends’ recommendations?

- Speaker 15: Umm, I thought they looked pretty and my friends told me so.

JH: Even if you compare with new blue jeans?

- Speaker 15: Yes.
- Speaker 16: They are not too fitted or tight.
- Speaker 15: Right! They are baggy, so they are not a tight-fit.

(Interview 10, pp. 292 in Appendix, 2006)

While this interview demonstrates firstly, the teens' *guje* fashion practice among their peer group and secondly, Dongdaemun as a popular fashion district of *guje*. It demonstrates that *guje* jeans are famous for their loose-fit. What Speaker 15 and 16 meant in the above interview is not looseness to the degree of the baggy style in hip-hop fashion, but roomy enough to be in contrast to a close-fit. A book *Delirious Denim* (Lv *et al.* 2007) notes this special characteristic in the style of jeans which is prevalent in South Korea.

Loose straight jeans are a variation of straight jeans. They are only slightly "collapsed", unlike baggy "hip-hop" jeans. In recent years, loose straight jeans have become very fashionable in South Korea (Lv *et al.* 2007: 312).

In addition, loose-fit is also a key feature of Levi's 501 jeans which will be mentioned later in this chapter.

The final, rather conceptual aspect of *guje* jeans is the appropriation of Levi's; regardless of its authenticity, this brand name is widely used as if it is almost a synonym for *guje* jeans in South Korea. An interview with Speaker 14, a 17 year-old girl, which was exemplified in the beginning of Chapter 5 in relation to *guje* consumption, is also useful for this case. Speaker 14 bought second-hand *guje* jeans and stated, "I've just bought several pairs, just Levi's and something like with *guje-ppil*. [...] They look *ganzi and stylish*."⁸² This array of fashion concepts such as *guje(-ppil)*, *ganzi*, Levi's are succinctly presented in an on-line commercial site for the wholesaler Naggama.co.kr (see Figure 35): the three promotional lines on the top of the main image of jeans read "*guje luxury: ganzi jjang* [very stylish or cool]: *guje* Levi's." The presented photograph of three pairs of jeans here looks neither as luxurious as premium jeans, nor like the authentic Levi's at all. However,

⁸² Interview 9, pp.52 in Appendix, 2006.

what this example demonstrates is the classic example of the popularity of Levi's as a typical style of *guje* jeans.



Figure 35 Three lines of texts here read as *Guje* luxury: *Ganzi jjang*: *Guje* Levi's. (<http://naggama.co.kr/main/item/itemView.php?no=719650&back=L21haW4vaXRlbS9pdGVtGldzC5waHA%2Fc2VjPUJJWjZjYXQ9MDNfMDBfMDBfMDAmc2Y9JnN3PQ%3D%3D>)

Brief historical accounts of jeans and youth hippie culture since WWII

Having delineated some of the current fashion concepts about *guje* jeans, this part will briefly examine the earlier consumption of fashioning jeans as a symbol of youth hippie culture in the United States and its influence in South Korean fashion in the assimilation of jeans. Bonnie English (2007) in her book *A Cultural History of Fashion in the Twentieth Century* accounts for the development of Levi's jeans as an American fashion icon since the World War II. According to English (2007: 66), Levi's jeans were almost exclusively sold to defense workers which resulted in the increase of its demand and price in the market. Another book *Delirious Denim* explains the circulation of Levi's during this period in more depth, as follows:

Levi's 501 jeans were also given to soldiers as necessities during the war [World War II]. When the war ended, the soldiers went back home,

disposing of large quantities of their Levi's jeans in Europe, where they had landed to help the Allied forces. The jeans were sold to the locals and this was the start of the jeans fever in Europe. [...] Due to the overwhelming demand around the world, jeans used to be a major product in the black market between America, the former USSR and the Third World (Lv *et al.* 2007: 61).

A circulation of jeans in this kind can be seen in 1950s South Korea when the country was the Third World where jeans were sold as *guje poom* (*Korean Fashion 100 years* 1999). In contrast to the trade of jeans as necessities among *guje* items which fulfilled the consumers' need in South Korea, 1950s America has already developed jeans as a desirable cultural object as "jeans were immortalized as a symbol of youthful revolt in movies" (English 2007: 67). Yet, in comparison with the 1950s' styles of jeans which were "symbolized in Marlon Brando's *The Wild One* and James Dean's *Rebel Without a Cause*" (Gordon 2009: 333), the 1960s look can be more closely relevant to the consumption of jeans in past South Korea and the current styles of *guje* jeans.

Television and press coverage of protesters against the Vietnam War, from 1964 onward, made the world aware of the hippies and their resistance to "the establishment," including its dress. Hippies embraced denim jeans, which symbolized solidarity with the working class (Blanco 2007: 60).

Hee-eun Yang, one of the most famous female singers from the 1970s in South Korea, recalls her memories of jeans at the time;

Jeans were luxury. They were rare [to find]... My friend bought me a shirt with her/his savings of part-time job, and my mother gave me two pairs of jeans; these were my only garments for the stage [for singing]. I thought that they perfectly suited me. Jeans which were a symbol of American hippie culture had become a symbol of the youth (*Korean Fashion 100 years* 1999).

Although jeans could be rarely bought even for a singer like Yang mainly for the stage performance in the 1970s, fashion commentators often misread this consumer practice of jeans by interpreting them within the context of widespread youth culture.

Youth culture was born among young people in the harsh political oppression in the 1970s. This youth culture was represented by an acoustic guitar, draft beer and jeans. [...] Folk song and men's long hair attracted young people; together with these, jeans have become everyday culture (*Korean Fashion 100 years* 1999).

By refusing this kind of overestimation of cultural-political implications on youth culture, Yang explained the reason why she wore jeans in the past.

Someone started to use the term ‘youth culture’ when looking back upon early 70s. Newspapers and media splashed as if jeans, an acoustic guitar and draft beer represented the youth culture. We never thought that these were fashionable at that time. [They were] just, working clothes, comfortable everyday wear and tasteful fashion (*Korean Fashion 100 years* 1999).

For fashion analysts or academics, it might be nearly natural to connect the political oppression in 1970s South Korea and jeans as a symbol of freedom and rebellion from the United States. However, as Yang explained, jeans were only a comfortable –though expensive- fashion item. It is well-known that Yang and Cho (see Chapter 5) have been in the same circle of singers since the 1970s. Moreover, Cho’s assimilation of *yasahng*, which was only for fashion purposes, as shown in Chapter 5, has a clear resonance with this case of accommodation of jeans by the youth in the 1970s.

It is largely people’s expectation or even imagination which tries to find socio-political consciousness from these intellectual singers⁸³. Although these singers were influenced by American hippie culture, it purely remained as a reference to fashion styles, not as an involvement of social issues⁸⁴. In addition, the more widespread use of Levi’s among young people in the 1980s can be identified for example, from a photograph of a college student who wore Levi’s jeans with *yasahng* (see Figure 24) in Chapter 5.

Contemporary *guje*/ vintage jeans: Levis’s 501 and “Big-E”

Shopping for vintage jeans first became popular when Levi’s were only available as “shrink to fit.” (Remember sitting in a bath of cold water to get them to shrink?). It was always a tough call to figure out how they would fit and look once they had shrunk. With a used pair, the work had already been done, the fabric had already faded, and there were few surprises when you took them out of the dryer. Today, there’s another

⁸³ College students or college graduates were considered highly educated at the time in South Korea and especially distinctive in entertainment industry.

⁸⁴ If there were, it was a coincidence for them from being free to express their personal emotions in lyrics without considering the implications of the government control. The audience has often accepted these events as political resistance.

reason why people are shopping for old denims, on top of the comfort and practicality factor. They're also shopping for a treasured, classic, authentic American icon (Bardey 2002: 100).

There are many reasons for consumers to purchase *guje* jeans and various ways to make these jeans their own. As shown earlier in this chapter, the idea of (both authentic and fake) Levi's jeans represents the archetypal *guje* styles. The two most sought-after models among vintage Levi's jeans are the 501 series and "Big E." As Lv and Huiguang notes, "The 501 series is the most representative of all Levi's jeans (Lv *et al.* 2007: 120)." While Levi's 501 series have been produced in 13 different styles from 1873 to 2003 (Lv *et al.* 2007: 120) and are still continued, Levi's "Big E's" ceased production in the late 1960s (Bardey 2002: 106). The details of each style will be explained in two separate parts with relevant examples.



Figure 36 "Denim Junkies UK online vintage clothing shop - jeans Levi, big E, 501XX, 505, 502, 501, red lines, selvage etc."

Source: The image captured on 24/06/2007 <http://denimjunkies.com/jeans.htm>

It is sufficient here to indicate that there are “Big E,” the 501 and “Big E” in 501 styles, depending on the year of the production. Therefore, “Big E” and 501 jeans are sometimes separate models, but the 501 jeans which date back from pre-1970s are “Big E.” A company called Denim Junkies is a good example for this as they are “[t]he first online shop in Europe to specialise in vintage American clothing [...] from the 1940s to 1980s.”⁸⁵ The sales pages on Denim Junkies website (see Figure 36) present six pairs of vintage Levi’s 501 Big-E jeans; these vintage jeans originate from the 1940s to the 1960s and are priced from £ 320.00 to £ 650.00.

Firstly, *guje* consumption of 501 jeans will be explored based on an interview from the fieldwork, but prior to taking an example, it will be helpful to consider the main feature of 501 jeans.

...the original features of jeans as work-wear – the anti-fit straight cut, square, loose and comfortable design, and fitting mid-waist cubic cut – were retained. [...] Since jeans would shrink in the wash, the shrink-to-fit method was used so that the high quality clingy fabric would become softer, more comfortable and more fitting with each wash. The colour of the jeans would also fade a little each time. Another indispensable characteristic of 501 jeans is their button fly, which replaced zips (Lv *et al.* 2007: 120).

The above mentioned details can be seen in a vintage fashion connoisseur like a 29 year-old male student Speaker 32’s case. He displays his knowledge of, and affection for, *guje* 501 jeans since his early twenties, as follows;

JH: Was it in the mid or late 1990s?

- Speaker 32: No, it was around the 2000s, just before and after 2000.

JH: Were you a college student at the time?

- Speaker 32: Yes. I was just back to college after my military service. When I went to a *guje shop* at Myungdong at the time, there were *guje* clothes, just worn-out clothes. Among those worn-out clothes, many pairs of 501 which I used to like, 501 *guje* trousers were lined up. And I bought a pair which just caught my eye. It reminded me the past like, ‘ah, I used to love these jeans so much.’ Since then, I have regained my interest in 501 jeans. What I am interested in at the moment is, um (.) so, that was the start of my interest. So, the level of my interest now is to know that 501 jeans used to be produced in San Francisco, but they are no longer

⁸⁵ The Information in the *Guardian*, Saturday, 6 November 2004.

made in the United States. 501s were made at the Levi's factory in San Francisco only until the end of the 1990s; and then, Japanese people liked jeans so much so that they bought all the licences. So, they bought the licences from Levi's and Lee and have reproduced as so called *bokgakpan* which is a *replica*. It is a reproduction; making them new, but with the same *design*, the same *style* and the same form. It's like; Levi's 501 models are not all identical in their shapes and normally have little differences in some *details* since their beginning. But, Japanese people have succeeded in perfectly reproducing the original model. When closing the factory in San Francisco around five years ago, all the original models were reproduced as some kind of commemoration to an event by embodying the similar fabric, rivets and stitches as were used earlier. So, they reproduced the closest equivalent to the original models. It seems that in Japan, these *bokgakpan* have been produced as 'made in Japan' until now. And yet, even now, the American version of *bokgakpan* 501 jeans, which is no longer in production, has a greater *merit* and *premium* among jeans fanatics. Moreover, the original versions sell at a much higher price than we could ever imagine.

(Interview 20, pp. 313-314 in Appendix, 2007)

This interview shows that there are a considerable number of Levi's 501 in *guje* markets. In Speaker 32's case, is his passion for Levi's 501 jeans only due to its design? Speaker 32 explained a more profound reason why he likes 501 jeans in terms of its originality.

JH: What was the charm of 501 when you first wore them?

- Speaker 32: I, uh=

JH: =Is it just a feeling, or being looked *cool*, or something else?

- Speaker 32: Firstly, it is my personal opinion to consider Levi's representative of jeans. And for example, with watches, it is Omega or Rolex; I think that Chanel or Gucci does not have any *merit* in that respect even if they make expensive watches or surpass Omega or Rolex in their *designs*, because they are not genuine watch *brands*. So, does Diesel for jeans. In my personal opinion, Lee and Levi's jeans are genuine. Therefore, when I first wore Levi's, what I liked the most was their button *fly*; not a zip *fly*, but a button *fly*. Moreover, 501 jeans are the only type that uses button *fly* among all Levi's *models*.

(Interview 20, pp. 314 in Appendix, 2007)

As shown, authenticity is the most important aspect for Speaker 32 to consume Levi's 501 jeans (and Lee) which he prefers against even premium jeans like Diesel or True Religion, regardless of its design or price.

JH: By the way, one of the reasons why people buy second-hand clothes is because the clothes are cheap. Does this apply to you as well?

- Speaker 32: Such (.) the people saying ‘the clothes are cheap,’ are probably the people who like *guje*. Ah, I (.) this is not my case. That was surprising to me. On the contrary, I think they are rather expensive because of their rareness; well, it is because my interest lies only in the products added with a *premium*.

(Interview 20, pp. 315 in Appendix, 2007)

Speaker 32 highly regards the added values of the classic models from the past whereby he identifies authenticity, and therefore, is willing to pay high price for this ‘premium’ (his own expression).

In fact, shopping for vintage denim has become an extremely expensive, competitive, and lucrative business, especially on the Japanese market where fascination with American culture is almost a way of life (Bardey 2002: 104).

In fact, Speaker 32’s admiration of genuine American jeans is deeply influenced by Japanese style trends. This will be explored in detail, but it will be useful to take an account of “Big E” first. To start with, a “Big E” indicates Levi’s jeans which had been produced prior to 1971 because ‘LEVI’S’ is written with all capital letters on a small red tag of a back-right pocket (see top-right corner of Figure 40). Therefore, a “Big E” is used as a guarantee to distinguish vintage jeans, in contrast to a lower case ‘small-e’ which has been used after 1971 and has less value in the clothes markets.⁸⁶ For this reason, a “Big E” has become one of the most sought-after items among vintage denim connoisseurs across the globe.

The recent popularity of Levi’s “Big E” jeans among younger generations in South Korea can be identified in the opening page of an Internet clothes shop called Style Jenny (see Figure 37).

It is *guje/vintage style* which is the most preferred by fashionista celebrities and fashion models. Style Jenny directly chooses and sells *Levi’s Big e*, an essential item which is best-known by people in their twenties as well as students from junior-high. Some people might still think of *guje* jeans as ‘cast-off clothes by others’. But gorgeous washing and fit will make sure the wearer never dresses in normal trousers again^^. [original emphasis in *italic*]

⁸⁶ <http://www.levistrauss.com/heritage/ForTheConsumer.aspx>

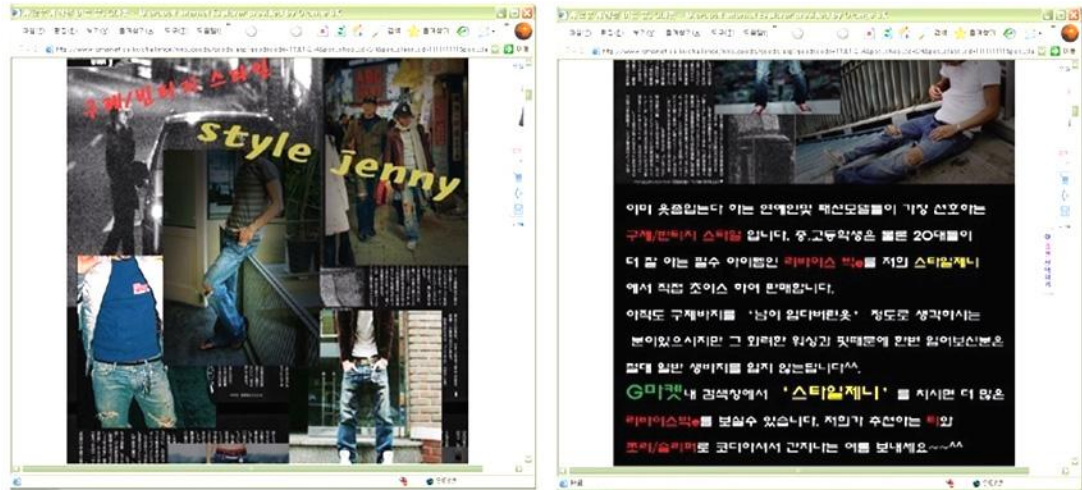


Figure 37 The opening page of an Internet shopping mall Style Jenny

Source: The image captured on 16/08/2007

http://www.gmarket.co.kr/challenge/neo_goods/goods.asp?goodscode=119017274&pos_shop_cd=SH&pos_class_cd=111111111&pos_class_kind=T&search_keyword

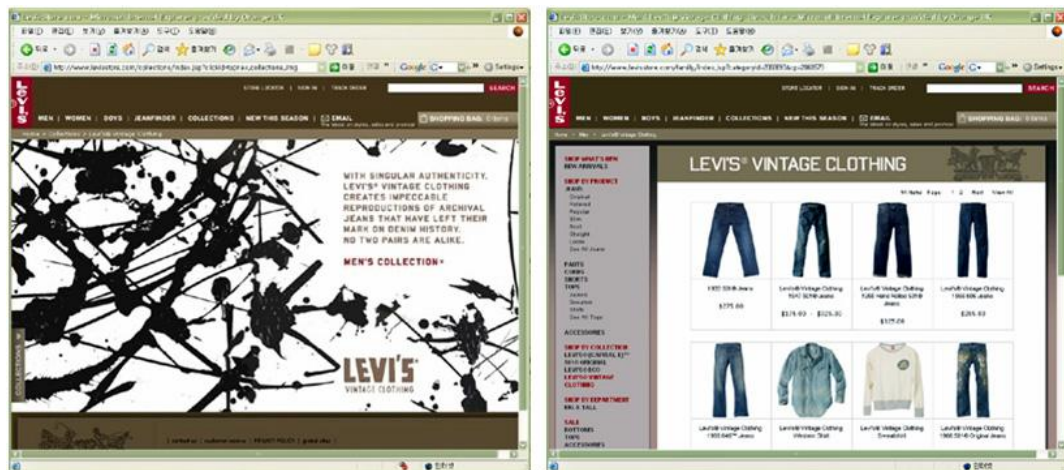


Figure 38 Levi's Vintage Clothing line at LevisStore.com

Source: The image captured on 24/06/2007

http://www.levisstore.com/collections/index.jsp?clickid=topnav_collections_img

The popularity and scarcity of genuine vintage Levi's "Big E" have resulted not only in the burgeoning consumption of fake jeans in South Korea as presented in Style Jenny's case, but also, in new business opportunities for Levi Strauss & Co. In spring 2006, Levi's has launched a new luxury collection called the "Capital E" with the price range of \$140.00-\$501.00⁸⁷. Considering Levi's jeans normally cost lower than \$100.00, this can be an attractive niche market opportunity for the company not to miss out. Therefore, Levi's adoption of the styles from the past can

⁸⁷ Amy Jasmer, spokesperson for Levi's, quoted in Goupil, Helen, 'Levi's New Luxury Collection: Elegant With a Capital E' in *SFSTATION (San Francisco's City Guide)*, 20 January, 2006, <http://www.sfstation.com/levis-new-luxury-collection-a1688>

be understood as a business response to ‘a worldwide phenomenon of collecting vintage denim’⁸⁸ since the 1990s. ‘Vintage Collection’ is another clothing line which is similar to the ‘Capital E Collection’. It promotes:

With *singular authenticity*, Levi’s Vintage Clothing creates *impeccable reproductions of archival jeans* that have left their mark on denim history. *No two pairs are alike*. (see Figure 38)

This type of reproduction of the past styles from the historical archives is known as ‘replica’ in South Korea, which is another way of negotiating authenticity without having to commodify scarcity – there can be any quantity of “authentic” replicas, and the consumer still pays the premium price. Moreover, the wearers do not need to be concerned about unwanted or unpleasant conditions as they might have to in the case of genuine second-hand jeans.

Circulation of Levi’s 501 “Big E” imported from Japan into *Guje* Market

“Big E” and the idea of replica jeans can be identified in *guje* market, too. Figure 39 exemplifies the trade of a pair of Levi’s 501 “Big E” in South Korea. Even though ‘USA’ is emphasised twice in its product title as “USA authentic Levi’s Big E Redline 501XX W 38 (PL-34); Sold Out!; Vintage; USA;” in the product details, its origin is stated as Japan “Levi’s Japan version directly bought from Japan.” It is interesting to find that a majority of replica Levi’s (“Big E”) jeans in current *guje* markets are being sourced from Japan.

This is the reason why there is a general belief that a Levi’s factory [for vintage production] in San Francisco was closed a few years ago, and all design licenses of Levi’s replica models were sold to Japan where there are great demands for vintage denim, as Speaker 32 comments.⁸⁹ The circulation of this kind of information demonstrates the extent to which Japanese fashion of jeans has a strong affect on *guje*/vintage consumers and markets. Bardey notices, “In Japan, a pair of “Big E’s” from the 1950s can go for about \$3,000” (see Figure 40) (Bardey 2002: 106).

⁸⁸ “Jeans Return Home to Levi Strauss & Co.” 24 May 2001.
<http://investor.ebay.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=42737>

⁸⁹ Interview 20, pp.85 in Appendix, 2007.

This type of affluent fashion practice of authentic American jeans in Japan makes Japanese appear to be discerning connoisseurs; and moreover, jeans from Japan, for example Levi's Japan are considered to be more valuable and more authentic even in comparison with the original Levi's jeans. In addition to the matter of taste in jeans, Levi's in Japan has a distinctive business structure, as suggested by Bonnie English, "it [Levi's] was one of the few privately held family companies where shares of company stock, *with the exception of Japan* [my emphasis], were not publicly traded [in 2005]" (English 2007: 67-68). In this respect, jeans like Levi's are not only a representation of American popular culture, but also a sophisticated and even more defined interpretation of Japanese fashion styles among Korean *guje* /vintage consumers.

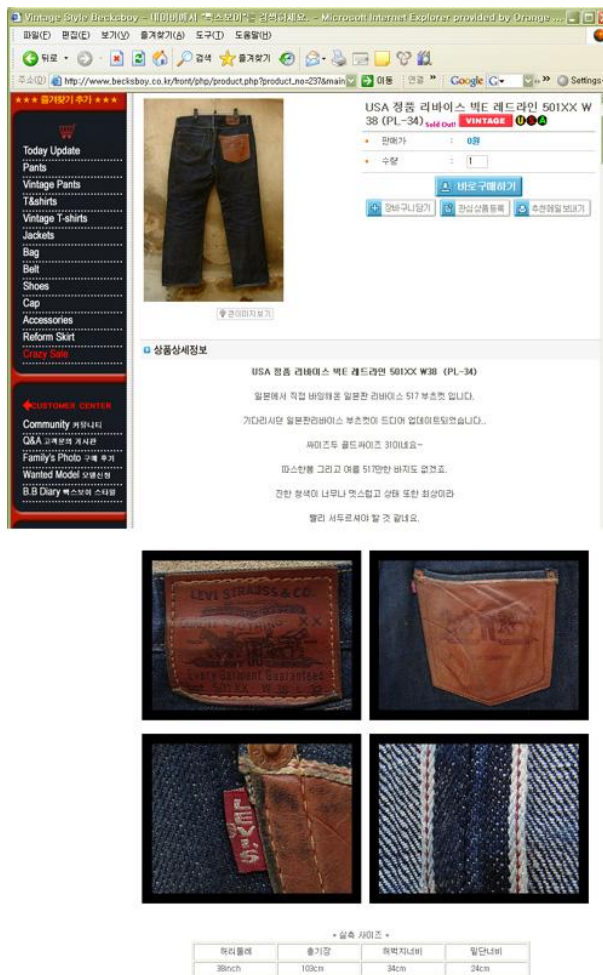


Figure 39 American Levi's Big-E imported from Japan into Korean markets.

Source: The image captured on 25/06/2007

http://www.becksboy.co.kr/front/php/product.php?product_no=237&main_cate_no=&display_group=



Figure 40 'jeans' genes: what to look for in vintage levi's' (Bardey 2002: 106).

A Dispute about the Authenticity of Levi's Coke Jeans

Having analysed the general understanding of popular vintage jeans by focusing on Levi's and the influence of Japanese jeans fashion in *guje* market, this section will explore the issues of authenticity and imitation around replica versions of Levi's Japan by taking a particular example.

In the summer of 2007, an online message board was heated with a dialogue of fashion specifically in reference to the authenticity of *guje* denim. The object of this discussion was a famous young Korean model and actor Ji-Hoon Joo and a pair of jeans he wore at the airport on the day when this photograph has taken. Joo's outfit in the image appears to be very simple: a black shirt, a pair of blue jeans and a pair of brown leather shoes (see Figure 41, left⁹⁰). However, numbers of people have made a thing of this mediocre fashion presentation in everyday life, particularly of his jeans. From nearly 80 comments tagged along with Joo's images on the message board, the following are the ones regarding the issue of the originality of these jeans (see Figure 41, right):

⁹⁰ Due to the high volumes of Figures in this chapter, they are all placed at the end of this chapter.

'Joo-In-Jahng (owner)': what the... is it only me to notice that he (Ji-Hoon Joo) wears a Thai-imported imitation⁹¹ Coca Cola Big E (jeans)...lol⁹²

'Meechigetdah (Going crazy)': lol, Joo-In-Jahng neem⁹³, I saw that, too, lol.

'startac1115': do you know what brand are these blue jeans?

'flower': lol, Joo-In-Jahng neem, I have exactly noticed those blue jeans Thai-imported imi(tation) Coca Cola Big 'e' lol.

'Anne': Jeans are from Levi's and ... guje and ... now, hard to get and ... real pricey, I heard. Lol.

'sense level 100': It looks like Levi's Coca Cola jeans and they are not very expensive, nor guje ... you can get them now.

'crazy boy': seeing the red line on the back pocket, they seem Coke jeans ... bloody hell! not guje... Coke jeans are low price... what 'sense level 100' said is right. no way, they are guje -_-

'young Suck': Joo-In-Jahng <-- I happened to see Thai-imported Coke jeans... Ji-Hoon Joo, I am disappointed....

While someone like 'startac1115' shows their genuine interest in, and consequently their lack of knowledge of, this type of jeans, the majority of responses display their fashion literacy on "guje Levi's Coca Cola Big E jeans." Here, 'Anne' is the only one who thinks that Joo's jeans are the authentic guje Levi's which are rare and expensive, but mostly, others believe that these jeans are a Thai-imported (counterfeit) Coca Cola Big E model and therefore, disregard them as a fashion statement. Ji-Hoon Joo has been known as a fashionista among young Koreans. Thus, wearing this particular type of jeans can bring the kind of discredit to his reputation, displayed in 'young Suck's comments of disdain, "*Ji-Hoon Joo, I am disappointed.*"

The issues of counterfeit and taste arise bigger from this example. Let alone the authenticity of Joo's jeans for the time being, because it is more important to note consumers' connoisseurship here. What makes consumers pinpoint the exact type of jeans only by looking at a couple of photo shots? 'Joo-In-Jahng (owner)'s comment, 'it is *only me* [my emphasis]' certainly contains the nuances of

⁹¹ In Korea, an English word *imitation* -or *imi*, in short- is commonly used, instead of *counterfeit* or *fake*. In addition to this, a Korean word *gaatzza* -meaning fake- and *zzagaah* -just in reverse order of the original word- are generally being used.

⁹² Lol (laugh out loud) is being used here to substitute a Korean usage of giggling on-line 'ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ'.

⁹³ Neem signifies sir/madam in Korean and works as a suffix at the end of person's name or profession, just a way to show respect; but in on-line conversation, it also contains a humorous connotation.

narcissistic pride of his/her aesthetic discernment in fashion as being the first one who notices the inauthenticity of these jeans. The rest of the comments which agree upon 'Joo-In-Jahng (owner)'s statement on the one hand, support his/her opinion and on the other, make themselves having fashion insights as acute as 'Joo-In-Jahng (owner)'. But prior to the theoretical analysis, some practical questions should be answered first to clear up the object of this study.

What are Thai-imported Coca-Cola (or Coke) Big E and Levi's Coca-Cola jeans? While some people like 'Anne' consider those jeans as *guje*, others argue that they are not a *guje* piece. What makes some jeans *guje* and others not? Are all Thai-imported Coca-Cola jeans counterfeit as most people noticed in this message board? If they are, why are people consuming these counterfeit jeans? And what are the economic and cultural implications of this global trade in Korean fashion?



Figure 41 Ji-hoon Joo wearing a Levi's Coke jean at the airport in 2007, on the left, and the discussion of Joo's style and look in this message board, on the right.

Source: The image captured on 12/08/2007 from Daum 미디어다음-텔레비전

http://tvzonebbs4.media.daum.net/griffin/do/star_photo/read?bbsId=A000010&articleId=152503

The Origin of Coca-Cola jeans in Japan and introduction of Japanese Levi's Coke jeans in *guje* market in South Korea

According to The Cola Encyclopedia (TCE), a non-commercial website run by two Japanese people, Coca-Cola Japan had run a special summer promotion called “Collabo (or Colabo)⁹⁴ Models” in 2001 in collaboration with three global companies, Levi's, Sony and Peugeot (see Figure 42). TCE column reports that the popularity of this limited edition of 20,000 pairs of Levi's new 3D jeans among younger generations had been already anticipated.⁹⁵ Considering the general impression that “jeans are the Coca Cola of clothing”⁹⁶ from an economic and social perspectives, this “double-named”⁹⁷ project of Levi's and Coca Cola epitomises the powerful impact of global culture incorporated in a material object⁹⁸.

In short, what is known to be Coca-Cola (or Coke, in short) jeans in South Korea were made by Levi's Japan and distributed by Coca-Cola Japan as a form of freebie in the summer of 2001. However, it is not the case that the original Levi's Coke jeans from Japan are a “Big E” model, because “Big E” has been discontinued since 1971 as shown earlier in this chapter. Later in this chapter, the ways in which the Big E style has been incorporated with the original Levi's Coke jeans will be explained.

⁹⁴ In my opinion, Japanese are less sensitive about the pronunciation of the English alphabet L. This might be the reason why TCE states both Collabo and Colabo confusingly.

⁹⁵ Nakamoto, Shin, ‘Coke offers summer promos with LEVI'S, Sony and Peugeot’ in Topics!, *The Cola Encyclopedia*, 8 July 2001.

http://www.colawp.com/topics/2001/0700_collabo-en.html

⁹⁶ ‘Jeans-the facts: jeans are the Coca Cola of clothing – consumed almost everywhere’ in *New Internationalist*, June 1988, posted in FindArticles.com on 15 August 2007.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JQP/is_302/ai_30324427

⁹⁷ Nakamoto, Shin, ‘Coke offers summer promos with LEVI'S, Sony and Peugeot’ in Topics!, *The Cola Encyclopedia*, 8 July 2001.

http://www.colawp.com/topics/2001/0700_collabo-en.html

⁹⁸ Jean Baudrillard claims that jeans and Coca-cola are the degree zero of clothing and drinks respectively. See ‘Jean Baudrillard. The Global and the Universal’ in <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/ baudrillard/ baudrillard-the-global-and-the-universal.html>

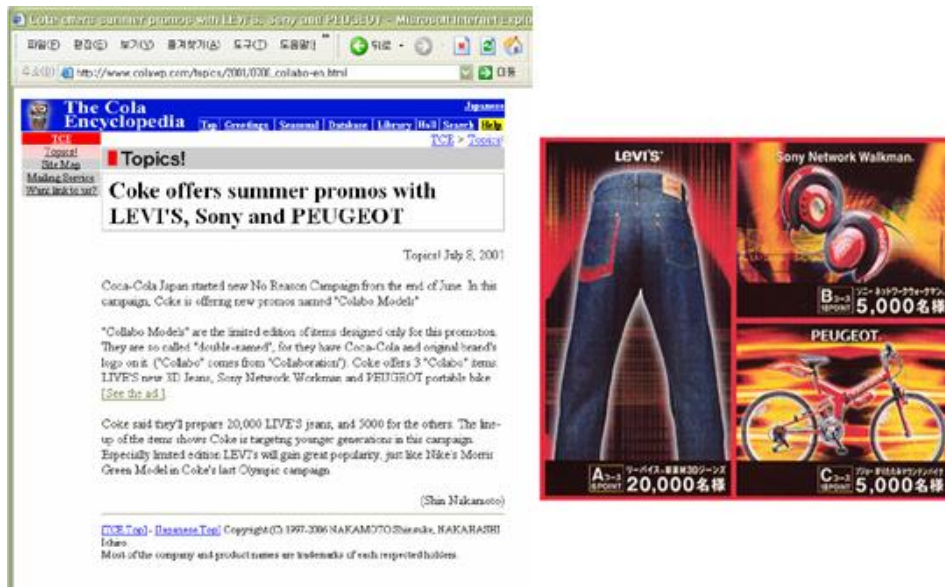


Figure 42 An archive from The Cola Encyclopedia and an advertisement of Collabo Campaign in 2001. (Source: The image captured on 14/08/2007 http://www.colawp.com/topics/2001/0700_collabo-en.html)



Figure 43 'fusion vintage store' Takadanobaba's shop-front and interior. (Source: The image captured on 17/08/2007 http://www.takadanobaba.co.kr/front/php/com_intro.php)

Having seen the brief origin of the (Levi's) Coke jeans, this section investigates the ways in which Coke jeans are imported from Japan into Korean *guje*/vintage clothes market. Japanese cultural influences in Korean fashion grow bigger and bigger, particularly in consuming *guje* (-style) jeans among younger generations. Before proceeding further, one aspect of trading Coke jeans should be pointed out. Coke jeans are relatively a new garment and latest fashion, but are transacted mostly around Korean *guje*, which is second-hand clothes, markets. Although these Japanese jeans are sometimes neither aged, nor used, they are still categorised into the *guje* /vintage fashion in South Korea.

This is significant because it proves the extension of the scope of *guje* market which now comprises not only second hand clothes, but also used styles and rare models to be found in high street shops. Levi's Coke jeans are a limited edition and not for sale publically; therefore, they cannot be circulated in formal commercial channels. More importantly, *guje* fashion retailers have been a reservoir of Japanese clothes for a long time, despite the cultural barrier to Japanese products that existed in South Korea until recently.

Evidence that the authentic Levi's Coke jeans are being traded in Korean fashion markets can be found in a clothes shop like Takadanobaba. In the top-left corner in their website, Takadanobaba states that they are a 'fusion *guje* shopping mall' in Korean, and their off-line shop has its signboard written 'fusion vintage store' in English (see Figure 43). A sales record of Takadanobaba's online shop shows a pair of Levi's Coke jeans being sold out with a retail price of 475,000 (Korean) Won⁹⁹; this is considered to be an extremely high price range in the market. The title of this sales record reads "[Super-rare] Coke x Levis 3D-Jeans (W33/L32): Sold-Out, Recommended, New, Limited Edition" (see Figure 44). Takadanobaba's product information about Coke jeans is as accurate as the archive of TCE website which is shown previously. More detailed introduction of Coke jeans is as follows:

They are an article not for sale in Japan and therefore, are in short supply [...] the limited design by Coca-Cola [...] a valuable original model which Levi's designed for this (2001 summer) campaign only [...] You

⁹⁹ KRW 475,000 is equivalent to approximately GBP 253.00 in 2007.

might want to keep it in a decorative picture frame or to make it as your own special fashion item with having pleasure of building washing effects from the off [my emphasis]! If you are a Levi's mania[c], you should not ever miss it for you collection item...¹⁰⁰

The emphases on 'the original model', 'limited design' and 'a highly collective item' are reflected in the high price. Moreover, the above description shows the ways in which some fashion consumers treat a piece of clothing as almost an art work. An example of consumer's fashion practice of this kind can be found in Takadanobaba's on-line message board.

A customer of this shop, Bumnam Noh has posted a series of photographs of his accumulation of Levi's Coke jeans from August to September 2007 (see Figure 45). He possesses three pairs of Levi's Coke jeans -one pair is purchased from Takadanobaba. Being afraid of ruining the original tag attached to these jeans, he only wears one pair among the three and keeps the other two as new for his own collection.

As shown in the previously illustrated case of the numerable responses to Joo's outfit as well as Takadanobaba's fashion advice and Noh's collection, it is highly likely that there are a number of consumers who have a similar interest in Levi's Coke jeans in South Korea, or at least did in 2007. The significance of Levi's Coke jeans lies in the commodification of new jeans, raising their status to the degree of the vintage premium jeans of several decades past; and furthermore, Japan has proved that they can produce jeans as authentic as American originals. The idea of authenticity in Japanese jeans has been effectively inscribed among (*guje*) fashion connoisseurs in South Korea.

¹⁰⁰ A record captured on 16/08/2007
http://www.takadanobaba.co.kr/front/php/product.php?product_no=1280&main_cate_no=19&display_group=2



Figure 44 A sales record of Levi's Coke jeans in Takadanobaba

Source: The image captured on 16/08/2007

http://www.takadanobaba.co.kr/front/php/image_zoom.php?product_no=1280&main_cate_no=19&display_group=2



Figure 45 A Korean denim *mania* shows his collection of authentic Levi's Coke jeans.

Source: The image captured on 10/09/2007

http://www.takadanobaba.co.kr/front/php/b/board_read.php?board_no=5&no=2854&number=2&ofset=0&page=1&search_key=콜라&search=subject

Recommodification of “Big E” as a symbol of Thai-imitation of Levi’s Coke jeans

To recapitulate, the counterfeit fashion phenomenon was one of the main examples of this chapter, in the argument over a pair of Coke jeans which a Korean male celebrity wore at the airport; the issue was whether his Levi’s Coke jeans were the Thai-imported Big E or the Japanese authentic one. This section will explore the re-appropriation of the “Big E” label, which is originally a symbol of the authentic vintage Levi’s jeans, for the counterfeit Levi’s Coke jeans which are fabricated and imported from Thailand. Moreover, this Thai-imitation “Big E” version of the original Japanese Levi’s Coke jeans has been traded extensively in *guje* markets in South Korea.

As suggested in the previous section of the cases of Takadanobaba and Noh, it is not difficult to presume the scarcity and unaffordability of the original Japanese Levi’s Coke jeans, especially because these jeans were produced only as a limited edition and were initially not for the sales purpose. The popularity of the Levi’s Coke jeans has generated an enormous counterfeit clothes range in the Korean *guje* market. Paradoxically, the inaccessibility of the authentic Japanese Levi’s Coke jeans has made it difficult for general consumers to distinguish between the original and the counterfeit jeans; and therefore, counterfeit jeans are largely circulated as a genuine Levi’s Coke in *guje* clothes markets.

Figure 46 is a typical example of the trading in counterfeit Coke jeans. The product description is as follows:

There might be unnoticeable small defects due to its characteristics of *guje* (vintage). [...] price – 89,000 Won. A “Big E” Coca-Cola [my emphasis] is traded around 150,000 Won in Dongdaemun Clothes Market and other websites. [...] Selling it in a cheap price for the promotion of this [blog] site.

This example firstly, demonstrates the wide circulation of fake Levi’s Coca-Cola jeans in popular *guje* sites like Dongdaemun area, apart from online shops. Most importantly, the attached label of “Big E” to Levi’s Coca-Cola jeans was clearly stated in its description along with the photographs –although the “Big E” label does not appear in the images, rather they focus on the presentation of the labels of

Coca-Cola and Levi's. It is also interesting to find that this pair of jeans is the 501 series from the image. It can be perceived as an irony to see these fake jeans as a complete embodiment of the most popular and exclusive elements of Levi's jeans like "Big E," 501 and Coca-Cola.



맥피어즈프기[W32 L32] [CM]허리단면 41 총길에 103 허벅지단면 28 앞단단면 20

구재(번타지)의 특성상 눈에잘띄지 않는 작은 하자가 있을수 있습니다 .
교한 X 환불 X 신중한 구매부탁드립니다.

가격 - ₩8,5000 [8만9천원]

동태문 의류상가 와 타짜메트 가보시면
맥E 코카콜라 15만원 정도에 거래됩니다.
동태문과 다른타짜메트 가보시면 배로 착연되죠??^^
짜메트 홍보글 짜게 드립니다. 초이스 하세요^^

Figure 46 An example of informal trading of Levi's Coca-Cola Big-E

Source: The image captured on 16/08/2007 <http://blog.daum.net/10mmm/4328345>



Figure 47 An example of fake Levi's Coke Jeans imported from Thailand

민티지(구제) 니쁜 패션 - 코크 리바이스!

Source: The image captured on 16/08/2007 <http://blog.daum.net/beams/215584>

While the above case is used to account for the combination of “Big E” and Coca-Cola found in fake Levi’s jeans, the next example will demonstrate the origin of these fake jeans. Earlier in this chapter, Takadanobaba was shown as an exemplary retailer of the genuine Coke jeans imported from Japan, and yet they also trade fake ones, too. As shown in the previous case, most retailers who deal with fake jeans either market these as if they were selling genuine items, or at best remain silent about the authenticity of the garment.

However, unlike those sellers, the owner of Takadanobaba clearly explains that the jeans on sale in the picture are a fake version of Levi’s Coca-Cola. Therefore, it will be useful to reexamine the Takadanobaba’s blog site to understand the origins of Big-E Coke jeans (see Figure 47).

A meeting between Coca-Cola and LEVI’S BIG E [my emphasis] [...] a Coca-Cola stamp and leather patch!! Even a leather point to its back pocket...

*But, being a Thai-imitation [my emphasis] might be the biggest flaw.. –
ㅁ -*

Of course, if you don’t give a damn about the authenticity; it might be all the same..

As stated here, counterfeit Coke jeans are believed to be imported from Thailand, and a Big E label has been added to these jeans. One person left a message showing interest in this pair of Levi’s “Big E” Coca-Cola jeans with his/her phone number. The popularity of fake Thai Coke jeans can also be identified in the following text.

Coca-Cola X Levi’s Collabo 3D jeans were planned as a 2001 summer campaign by Coca-Cola in collaboration with Levi’s and meant to be an article not for sale, but are now disproportionately famous due to Thai-imitations [my emphasis].¹⁰¹

Although some connoisseurs might feel uneasy about the notion of fake Thai Coca-Cola jeans, it is undeniable that by and large the prevalent circulation of these counterfeit Thai Coke jeans seems to be appreciated by consumers; they have proven popular with so many that the brand identity of the original has been somewhat overpowered by the sheer popularity of this second wave of replicas. As

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http://www.takadanobaba.co.kr/front/php/product.php?product_no=1280&main_cate_no=19&display_group=2

explored so far, in the Korean *guje* market, Thailand has achieved fame for producing counterfeit Levi's jeans, while Japan has enjoyed a reputation for its individual and authentic fashion styles. Some *guje* consumers appreciate diverse designs of fake Levi's jeans from Thailand, and others see counterfeit jeans as an illegal act and express their distaste for them.

However, to take a certain stance in relation to counterfeit clothes, consumers have to have extensive knowledge to distinguish between the authentic and the fake, especially in the case of a limited edition like Levi's Coca-Cola jeans. Therefore, I claim that in the markets of counterfeit Levi's Coke jean, it seems more than natural to try to create higher vintage effects by adding a Levi's "Big E" label which is one of the most well-known vintage styles among *guje* consumers.

Diversity in fake Levi's jeans: from Coca-Cola to Pepsi Jeans

There are myriads of questions and answers about Thai-version Levi's ("Big E") jeans in the Internet Q&A sections in South Korea. The questions like "A Curiosity about a Thai-version Levi's..." is rather long, but effectively summarises the current landscape of fake Levi's jeans from Thailand circulated in South Korea:

I'm interested in [buying] blue jeans these days. Especially for Levi's, there are so many things that I didn't know: A red tab, an orange tab, a silver tab, etc... A Big E, a small e...

But, it looks like a Thai-version of Big E *guje* jeans counts as an imitation, isn't it? Aren't Levi's products made in Thailand and supplied in South Korea? I am curious about the reason *why Japanese products are considered as the authentic and why Thai-versions are treated as the imitation* [my emphasis] ^^

Some groups of maniac say that it is also difficult to get some rare Thai-versions with cool washing [effect], and Thai-version Big Es are famous in Dongdaemun market; while others say that Thai-versions are all fakes, and Cowboy, Coca-Cola, Buffalo, etc. are randomly fabricated in Thailand and therefore a waste...

I was about to buy a Thai-version *guje* jeans, but I am little confused as I am listening to so many different opinions^^; [...] Please give me some good advice.

As can be seen here, the existence of the fake Levi's jeans imported from Thailand results in throwing consumers in confusion between fake "Big E" Thai-version and

genuine Japanese Levi's jeans. Moreover, the circulation of a variety of fake-jeans styles like Cowboy and Buffalo are suggested, apart from Coca-Cola jeans.

Figure 48 displays diverse models and sizes of jeans from a 'guje/' vintage style' shop called Style Jenny in Gmarket¹⁰². It is quite impressive to find names like 'Levi's Buffalo', 'Levi's Pepsi' as well as 'Levi's Coca-Cola' with a price of 68,000 (Korean) Won¹⁰³. This price is nearly seven times cheaper than the original Levi's Coke jeans from the first example of this chapter which cost 457,000 Won (see Figure 44).



Figure 48 Variety of Levi's jeans are displayed in Gmarket.

Source: The image captured on 16/08/2007

http://www.gmarket.co.kr/challenge/neo_goods/goods.asp?goodscode=119017274&pos_shop_cd=SH&pos_class_cd=111111111&pos_class_kind=T&search_keyword

¹⁰² Gmarket is one of the two largest e-marketplaces in Korea; another one is Auction which is a Korean branch of eBay.

¹⁰³ This is equivalent to app. GBP 33.00.

The final reply concisely states the style of the authentic Levi's Coke jeans. A similar answer can be found in one of the biggest Korean web portal site Naver.com.

Cowboy, Buffalo are not existing models in Big-E styles. [...] Neither has the Coca-cola [jeans] been made in Big-E styles. [...] And *the genuine Coca-Cola trousers are an Engineered Jean line and do not look like a 501* [model] [my emphasis].¹⁰⁵

This might be the reason why people are highly confident about the inauthenticity of Ji-Hoon Joo's Levi's Coca-Cola jeans which was discussed previously in this chapter, by identifying that those jeans are not the Engineered Jean style.

According to the above information, Levi's Pepsi, Cowboy or Buffalo are all fake copies which imitate the concept of the original Japanese Levi's Coke jeans. The discourse around various models of Thai jeans among consumers can explain that fake Levi's Coke/Pepsi/Buffalo jeans are even more famous than the original Japanese Coca-Cola jeans in *guje* market. This demonstrates that there is no commercial exception to the prevailing counterfeit goods which are produced in numerous styles and then circulated in every marketplace regardless of the general assumption that *guje* and vintage fashion is a means of presenting authenticity. Moreover, to a certain extent, fake Levi's jeans have been developed into a variety of models and therefore, provide diversity to denim consumers.

Recommodification of Authenticity: original American jeans into the authentic Japanese and the fake Thai

Figure 50 shows another consumer who is uncertain about the originality of Levi's jeans and asks, "By the way~ I wanna buy a Levi's Big e Redline Jeans [...] *isn't this* [posted image] *a Thai-version???* [my emphasis]" In this question, a word, Thai-version has already established the idea of being counterfeit and therefore, is being used as equivalent to fake Levi's Big E jeans, unlike the previous example where a consumer has a confusion about where the fake and original come from.

http://cafe339.daum.net/_c21_/bbs_search_read?gpid=9Guq&fldid=6HFY&contentval=00Fulzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz&nenc=UFEocoievykY-xdKWjc8Bw00&dataid=61179&fenc=hMQbx6SxSlk0&docid=CDc5mePI
16/08/2007 02:34 에 한 화면 캡처

¹⁰⁵ "Curiosity about Thai-version Levi's" Naver.com 지식 iN

The only question remaining here is that a consumer does not have extensive knowledge to differentiate the authentic from the counterfeit.

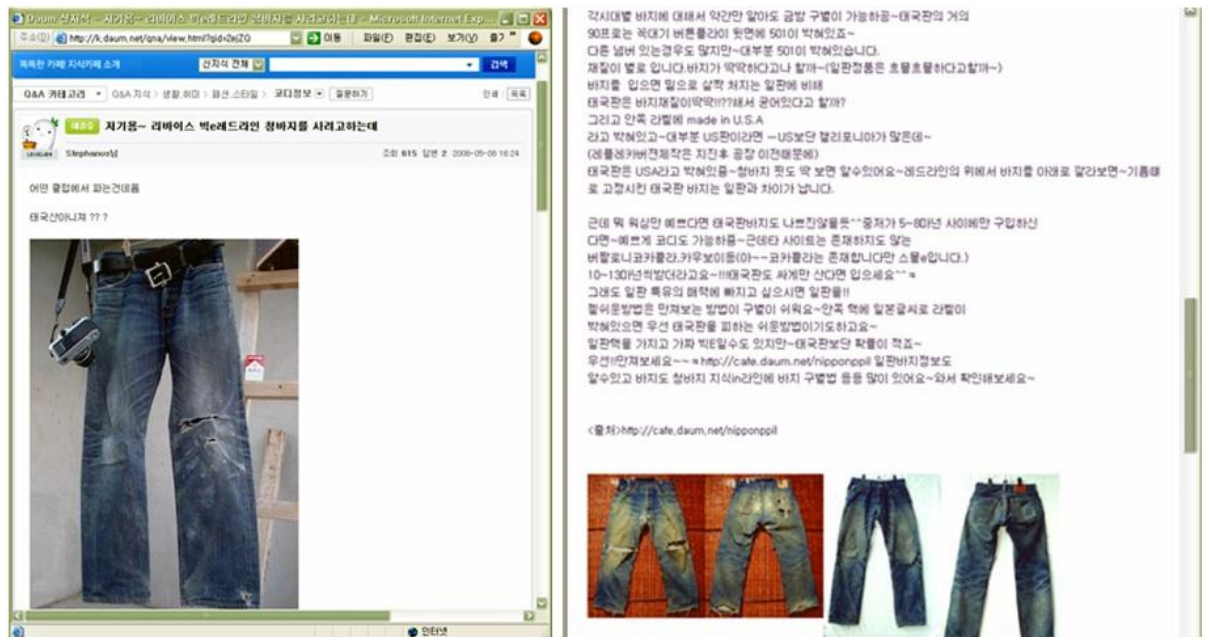


Figure 50 A question about purchasing a Levi's Big-E Redline in a Q&A section at Daum.net

Daum 신지식 - 저기욤~ 리바이스 빅 e 레드라인 청바지를 사려고하는데
 Source: The image captured on 16/08/2007 <http://k.daum.net/qna/view.html?qid=2ejZQ>

Answering a question from the Figure 50 (left), an Internet café called Nipponppil¹⁰⁶ left the following response (see Figure 50, right):

If the washing [effect of jeans] is beautiful, Thai-version trousers are not bad after all^^ if purchasing with the lower-middle price ranges of 50,000-80,000 Won [...] but counterfeit Buffalo, Coca-Cola, Cowboy, etc. amount even up to 100,000-130,000 Won~!!! Buy a Thai-version only if it is cheap^^

As presented in this answer, the aesthetic qualities of the counterfeit Thai Levi's jeans are appreciated in a lower price range at least. In contrast, the owner of Hurugi, a *guje* /vintage shop informs that Thai customs prohibit the importation of fake Levi's Big E and is strictly against the circulation of counterfeit goods by advocating the copyright act. In addition, there is also testimony that some retailers were caught and got charged fines by the customs department in South Korea when

¹⁰⁶ This word typifies the wide use word 'Nippon (a)ppel' as explained in 4.3.2.

they were selling fake Thai-Big E Levi's. The following two answers contrast the different stances towards the counterfeit material culture.

Thai-version Big E is so called Thai-version replica. Whether Japanese-version replica or Thai-version replica... I would say that they are both replica. But people call Japanese one the authentic and Thai one the fake... it's a bit ... The thing is, Levi's no longer produces the Big E¹⁰⁷, and therefore, strictly speaking, nothing is authentic. [...] In my personal opinion, the reason why Japanese one is known as the authentic and Thai one as the counterfeit seems to be due to the fact that Japan is a developed country, and Thailand is a developing country.
(www.yellowaffle.com, A Levi's *guje* specialist)

This person even worries that the great demand for Thai Levi's "Big E" jeans causes the price increase. Consumers or retailers who agree upon this opinion might be sceptical about the brand-oriented culture. It might be true that in the whole concept of replica Levi's "Big E" jeans in Japan or in America does not offer any creativity. It can be viewed as a global company rummaging through their archives, remaking the exact models and charging five times more for these "authentic" reproductions than for those jeans in their general collections. In the end, the concept of blue jeans itself becomes a goldmine nearly a century after it was invented. Against the above perspective, one of the replies has been left saying that "the person who answers seems not to know Big E... (s)he better study the differences among Thai-, Japanese-, and American-versions^^."

Obviously, Japanese have developed their expert taste in consumption of American jeans. In a section 'jeans' genes: what to look for in vintage Levi's' of her book *Wearing Vintage*, Bardey (2002) explains a Japanese term "hige" (whiskers in English, according to Bardey) as a sign of "age and authenticity" which indicates "the cat-whisker-like pattern of creases from years of wear that form on an old jeans where the leg meet the torso" (see Figure 40) (Bardey 2002: 106).

However, regardless of this discernment in Japanese consumption and production of Levi's jeans, the question of authenticity can be still asked.

Cone has always been an important supplier [for denim]. We've been making denim for a hundred years, so we have archives, and we can

¹⁰⁷ It has previously been explained that Levi's currently has the Capital E line which is similar to the concept of Big E.

recreate our vintage look. Any shrink-to-fit vintage Levi's 501 jeans, manufactured from the 1920s to 2003, would be made of Cone denim." [...] There's a great deal of prestige surrounding Japanese denim, says Nicholas [of Cone Mills], but Levi's Japan works with Cone. On their hang tags, their Japanese jeans proudly boast that they are made in perhaps the most authentic denim plant of all-Cone Mills. "There's a mystique in the United States for Japanese denim," she notes wryly, "but there's a mystique in Japan for American denim" (Azoulay 2007: 379-380).

There is certainly a great deal of ways in which global material culture permeates into, and has a great affect on, Korean *guje* consumption; but at the same time, the acceptance of cultural and material recommodification of American products mediated through Japanese interpretation should be considered in context of authenticity.

The influence of Japanese culture products in Korean *guje* market

Having examined the examples of consumption of Japanese Levi's Coca-Cola jeans so far, it seems to be evident that Japanese fashion has a great influence as an inspiration for the denim maniacs' fashion practices in South Korea. Should this influx of Japanese Levi's Coke jeans into Korean *guje* fashion be considered as just one-off fashion sway? This section will unfold the ways in which Japanese material culture has permeated into the everyday fashion practices in South Korea, focusing on the influence of Japanese popular culture found in the on-line sites of *guje* consumption.

The shop Takadanobaba, as it has already proved itself as an expert Japanese importer throughout the earlier cases, can be a good example to start with. It seems more than coincidence to see that the name of the shop Takadanobaba is a Japanese word, often shortened to Baba, it literally means a 'horse market in a high field', but the significance lies in its geo-historic background of a popular Japanese comic book *Astro Boy* (see Figure 51). The owner of the shop explains this cultural history of Takadanobaba area in his website and made a brief nostalgic reference to the comic series. Therefore, the characteristics of the shop Takadanobaba are inherently Japanese popular culture-oriented, as it is the case of the majority of *guje* shops in South Korea. Even the look of Takadanobaba's on-street shop front

日本販, written vertically from the top-left corner of each icon of jeans, signify that they are a 'Japanese version' (see Figure 52). Product details below the icons start with the word Japan 日本 which reiterate the origins of each pair.



Figure 52 A series of Japanese jeans sold in an on-line *guje* /vintage shop called Becksboy (Source: The image captured on 25/06/2007)

http://www.becksboy.co.kr/front/php/category.php?page=13&offset=360&&cate_no=30&sort_method=#normal_list

Whereas Becksboy has a mixed range of jeans from Japan and other countries under a category of ‘*guje* jeans/ vintage pants’, others like Blue Kiki and Cherryne furnish their on-line shops with more exclusive ranges of Japanese jeans. An on-line shop Blue Kiki offers a fully detailed classification of Japanese (as shown, the word “Nippon” is alternated with the word ‘Japanese’) imports mixed with *guje* clothes, as can be seen in the following list of product categories (see Figure 53 and 54):

All Levi’s 501: *guje* Levi’s: Japanese Edwin jeans: Nippon *guje* jeans: pretty washing jeans: Red-line jeans: maniac shop: Japanese boots-cut jeans: All *guje* tops: *guje* hoody: *guje* denim jackets: Japanese jersey jackets: *guje* bags: accessories



Figure 53 An Internet shopping mall Blue Kiki is specialised in Nippon *guje* jeans
Source: The image captured on 24/06/2007 <http://www.bluekiki.co.kr/index.html>

日本 LEVIS 청바지
27인치 이하 | 28~30인치 | 31~33인치 | 34~35인치 | 36인치 이상

총 310개의 상품이 있습니다

인기도순 | 신상상품순 | 상품량순 | 높은가격순 | 낮은가격순

日本 Levi's ENGINEERED JEAN (허리31) (7851) 28,000원 정품	日本 Levi's 501xx (허리30) (7850) 30,000원 중아스!	日本 Levi's 505 (허리30) (7848) 20,000원	日本 Levi's 501 (허리34) (7846) 25,000원
日本 Levi's 501 플렉스캡 (허리30) (7845) 15,000원	日本 Levi's 652 (허리30) (7842) 20,000원	日本 Levi's 501 (허리31) (7838) 20,000원	日本 Levi's 505 (허리29) (7834) 40,000원
日本 Levi's 512 (허리30) (7823) 23,000원	日本 Levi's 501 (허리30) (7820) 43,000원 왕	日本 Levi's 501xx (허리31) (7809) 25,000원 ♡♡♡♡♡	日本 Levi's 503 (허리31) (7806) 40,000원 중아스!
日本 Levi's 503 (허리31) (7801) 45,000원 왕	日本 Levi's 501 (허리30) (7793) 20,000원	日本 Levi's 511 (허리29) (7790) 20,000원	Levi's 501 (7787) 30,000원
日本 Levi's 559 RELAXED STRAIGHT (허리33) (7624) 20,000원	日本 Levi's 502 (허리36) (7073) 20,000원	日本 Levi's 503 (허리34) (6703) 15,000원 정품	日本 Levi's 569 (허리33) (5265) 20,000원

1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10 ▶ 16

Figure 54 An Internet shopping mall Blue Kiki

As illustrated in these examples of Becksboy and Blue Kiki with a variety of merchandise, the influence and popularity of Japanese clothing has become larger in *guje* markets in South Korea. A “shopping mall specialising in Japanese and imported *guje* clothing” Cherryne shop employs a more integrated way of business by trading various Japanese cultural products. This shop has a category named as “*Guje* jeans directly imported from Japan” aiming to present the latest fashion styles “with original vintage Japanese premium jeans” (see Figure 55). This demonstrates the newly emerged consumer taste which identifies and prefers Japanese jeans as a genuine and authentic against American ones.

Cherryne does not only sells *guje* clothes from Japan, but also introduces Japanese Hip-Hop music and sells Japanese snacks which are rare to find in Korean markets (see Figure 55). Even though it does not sell Japanese songs, there were numerous requests from its clients who want to receive the songs personally by email on their message board. Therefore, this shop can be considered as permeating Japanese popular culture along with Japanese jeans to *guje* consumers in South Korea.

Another shop called 9zegage - pronounced as *guje* gage, and thus signifying a *guje* shop in Korean- also posts a series of photographs of their cultural findings from Japan onto their website, so that consumers can feel more and more familiar with the Japanese lifestyle and consequently with *guje* fashion (see Figure 56). These photographs function as an introduction of Japanese youth culture and lifestyle and therefore, help to conceptualise the image of the exotic Japan.

In case of an on-line shop Hurugi: *Guje* Vintage Mania[c], they report the schedule of their business trips to customers by regularly updating the plan and records of their travels to Japan via e-mails; during nine months, they made six buying trips in May, July, September, October, December 2007 and January 2008, approximately 10 days for each trip¹¹⁰. Revealing buying trips does not seem to cause any inconvenience for customers who purchase their products; instead, it increases consumers’ interest and expectation by displaying the fact that their business is more ‘genuine’ with freshly purchased goods from Japan.

¹¹⁰ This record is based on the lists of e-mails which I have received upon my registration to their Internet café. See <http://cafe.daum.net/HURUGI>



Figure 55 An example of jeans imported from Japan in Cherryne Guje Shop
 Source: The image captured on 25/06/2007 <http://www.cherryne.com>
 Cherryne Guje Shop introduces Japanese material culture to Korean consumers.



Figure 56 Other shops like 9zegage also illustrate Japanese lifestyle consumption in South Korea. Source: The image captured on 26/02/2007 <http://www.9zegage.com/>

As can be seen in the above cases of the import of Japanese cultural goods, Japan is one of the most sought-after destinations for vintage shopping the Korean *guje* retailers. This might be due to firstly, the geographic proximity and physical resemblance between Japan and South Korea, and secondly, Japanese distinctive and original fashion styles. Therefore, private *guje* shop owners as well as wholesalers make regular trips to Japan for heavy buying.

Dissemination of Fashion Styles in Japanese Magazines

It is also a common cultural practice to share information about and interests in *guje* fashion via the Internet community in South Korea. Therefore, this final section considers the ways in which consumers and retailers embody the styles of Japanese *guje* jeans in their everyday fashion practices. Here, Japanese glossy magazines play an important role by providing ample references of fashion styles for *guje* consumers in South Korea. An on-line *guje* fashion retailer, Blue Kiki delivers a good example of this kind of style practices. A section in their web page called 'Blue Kiki Codee¹¹¹ Shop' provides various cut-outs from Japanese magazines in parallel with the imported jeans from Japan which are sold in their shop (see Figure 57). Many *guje* shops on the Internet constantly provide up-to-date Japanese fashion information in a similar manner to Blue Kiki.

Internet shopping malls are not only places to access the style guidance of Japanese fashion in South Korea. More and more consumers and retailers have become actively involved in the Internet community, using its cafés or blogs to share their interest in fashion. Moreover, the Internet café or blog is also being used as a marketplace for trading individual members' used garments. Speaker 32 is a frequent user of various Internet fashion cafés to get information and inspiration for his vintage styles.

JH: Do you learn about the *styles* from websites (.) the sites for *vintage* or *guje* clothing or from men's magazines or films (.) what's your ideal?

- Speaker 32: I (.) in some ways, I just don't know *fashion*. I only have lots of interests, so I've joined *Internet cafés* filled with people who are keen on *fashion*. Whenever I can spare some time, I constantly log on and check upon what is going on currently to find

¹¹¹ Codee is a Korean pronunciation for 'cordi(nation)' in short.

out; such designers make such kinds of clothes; stylish men prefer what clothes and what *brands* and so on. [...] Anyway, my favourite magazine is *Esquire* where I get some tips while I obtain most of information from *Internet cafés*.

(Interview 20, pp. 316 in Appendix, 2007)

‘*Guje Clothes Lovers: Japanese Jeans Vintage*’ is one of the Internet cafés which Speaker 32 often visits¹¹². Figure 58 demonstrates an example whereby a member of this café ‘Vintage Zo’ proudly displays his/her possession of *Denim Style Book 2* which was published in 2005 in Japan. The bottom of the page displays the replies regarding this posting from other members of this café. These responses prove that most of the others envied ‘Vintage Zo’s possession of the Japanese fashion book. The sizes of the images are were enough for people to view the detailed contents on their computer screens.

This type of cultural practice has become an indispensable reservoir for *guje* fans to get inspiration for fashions in Japanese jeans. The image of Japan, at least in the context of subcultural fashion practices, has been reestablished as the highly stylized and authentic self who inspires younger Korean consumers. In addition to posting Japanese fashion magazines, other kinds of cultural practices such as a Japanese language study section or travel tips for Japan can be found in other *gjue* shops or Internet cafés.

¹¹² Speaker 32 kindly allowed me to use his username and password so that I can access the research materials. Some Internet cafés require some conditions -not membership fees, but certain level of activities to prove their genuine interest- to join in.



Figure 57 A promotion page from Blue Kiki

Source: The image captured on 24/06/2007 <http://www.bluekiki.co.kr/index.html>



Figure 58 Display of a Japanese magazine *Denim Style Book 2* from an Internet café called *Guje Clothes Lovers* in Naver.com (Source: The image captured on 26/06/2007 <http://cafe.naver.com/yohji.cafe>)

Individuality, Advancement and Exoticism in Nippon (Fashion) Appeal

As shown previously, (direct or indirect) consumption of Japanese magazines is an important aesthetic practice because the images of young people on Japanese streets might instantly be registered by Korean viewers as an exotic and desirable image of the self. Therefore, the images in Japanese glossy magazines deliver a certain degree of style aspiration to Korean *guje* fashion consumers. But, what is Japanese fashion? And why has it gained so much aesthetic appeal to Korean *guje* consumers? The extent to which the image of Japanese fashion has been perceived by Korean consumers is well described in the following email message under the title “What is Japanese Fashion?????” This is sent by an owner of another Internet café called ‘*Guje Vintage Mania*[c], Hurugi’ to its members in the early 2007.

Nippon Style.. Japanese Fashion¹¹³.. has become a key description frequently used by Internet retailers.. What is Japanese Fashion style? [...] you might think Nippon Fashion is different with its peculiar styles.. It looks like the Japanese fashion world has given the impression of having a strong individuality. But [...] from now on.. fashion style which expresses your individuality is *not* Nippon style, but your style...!!!¹¹⁴

This person actually regards the concept of ‘Japanese/Nippon fashion’ as a false image created in the Korean market; and therefore, he urges consumers not to rely upon Nippon styles, but to express their personality by developing their own fashion sense. Even if his opinion might be ideal, it is also undeniable that there is a general perception of Japanese Fashion as being individual and peculiar.

...everyone, from famous designer to tourist, is stimulated by the fashions on Tokyo’s streets... Tokyo is currently the only Asian city that can really be included in the list of the world’s fashion capitals (Philomena 2007: 8).

When considering individuality and authenticity, Dutch business consultant and retired professor Geert Hofstede’s (2002) analysis of cultural dimensions¹¹⁵, a study which covers over fifty countries, offers an acute account. Individualism is one of the five features in Hofstede’s analysis. In the index of individualism, Japan

¹¹³ In addition, as explained in Chapter 3, Nippon-ppil is another word also being used widely in *guje* market.

¹¹⁴ The email has sent to its members, including me, on 24 April 2007 by “*Guje Vintage Mania*[c] + Hurugi Owner” <mcuzi@hanmail.net>.

¹¹⁵ The indexes of individualism are; Japan 46: Korea 18: World average 43. <http://www.geert-hofstede.com/>

scores 46 out of 100, double the level of the average Asian country and slightly higher than the world average of 43. In contrast to Japan, South Korea marks as low as 18 about which Hofstede remarks that “the [Korean] society is Collectivist as compared to Individualist.”¹¹⁶ I suggest that this level of individualism and collectivism are, to a certain extent, reflected in individuals’ dress practice in Japan and South Korea, too. While there are similarities between Japan and Korea in their geographic proximity, their physical resemblances and common (hierarchical) social structures, Japan has achieved a greater level of individualism¹¹⁷.

Having considered Hofstede’s analysis, the wide conception of Japanese fashion styles as being highly individual might not be an entirely fabricated idea. In this context, second-hand clothes like *guje/* vintage, including the limited edition of Levi’s Coke jeans, can be even more enticing to Korean consumers because of their uniqueness and originality, and therefore help its consumers to differentiate their appearance from the homogeneous masses of South Korea.

In a similar vein, another perspective must be considered. Speaker 32 commented about the advancement of Japan as follows:

JH: Are brand-new American products also imported through Japan?

- Speaker 32: That’s right. Japanese people’s affection for *vintage* has a longer history than ours. They seem to be ten years ahead of us, in my opinion. So, they must have secured a steady supply [of *vintage* clothes], good enough that surpluses can slip through to Korean markets. These surplus stocks would have been traded at expensive prices in Japanese markets; but in Korea, they are sold for relatively cheaper prices due to the lack of recognition [of *vintage*). People respond like, ‘Why is this kind of thing so expensive?’ or ‘I don’t understand the price because they are old and worn-out.’ Then sellers can do nothing but lower the price of the things they need to sell off.

(Interview 20, pp. 318 in Appendix, 2007)

His remark typifies the extent to which Korean consumers acknowledge the Japanese connoisseurship in jeans. Scott Sonner (2001) from the Associated Press’ also asserts that “[t]he denim craze has its roots in Japan’s voracious appetite for

¹¹⁶ http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_south_korea.shtml

¹¹⁷ (http://www.international-business-center.com/international_newsletter/april_2003/april_03_web.htm#article).

anything classic American” (Sonner 2001). His comment proves that Japanese consumers had started to develop a discerning eye for vintage denim fashion prior to Koreans and therefore supports Speaker 32’s opinion to a certain extent.

However, it is more important to note Speaker 32’s expression of “ten years ahead of us” here; because this type of comparison with Japanese advancement is one of the most common of those statements widely used by Koreans to assess their overall social development by comparing anything Korean with Japanese goods, fashion, sport or social and economic status, as they have done ever since the colonial history. The levels vary depending on case; Japan has generally been believed to be ten, thirty or fifty years ahead of South Korea. These comments are not meant to be accurate measurements, rather an idiomatic expression of a core Korean belief regarding advancement and modernisation.

In this socio-cultural context, Japan has been portrayed as the advanced self in Korean people’s minds and therefore, becomes an emblematic benchmark for their material aspirations. This can be explained by “inferiority complex” (Lee 1983) and “outer complex” (Kang 2004) from Chapter 4. In terms of outer complex, Japan becomes a centre (or the self) while South Korea is the outsider (or the Other). This ideology works in Korean fashion practices on a practical level, by propagating the idea that Japanese consumers have better taste or advanced styles; a quirky, yet sophisticated sense of fashion than that available to Korean sensitivity. Moreover, due to the bitter history of colonisation by Japan, it was only in 2004 when Korean government fully opened its commercial market to Japanese cultural products which had not been widespread on the streets in South Korea yet. Nelson acknowledges that the influence of Japanese cultural products has not been welcomed by the South Korean government, but nonetheless, a vogue for the consumption of Japanese goods has penetrated among Korean youth.

Children were considered particularly vulnerable to the seductions of smuggled-in Japanese comic books and electronic games and to the Japanese television shows for the reception of which well-off families bought satellite dishes. *The legal prohibition on the import of Japanese popular culture was widely ignored* [my emphasis], particularly in Kangnam [or Gangnam], so *the government initiated a targeted crackdown on the sale of foreign magazines near schoolyards to shield*

South Korean youth from the seduction of alien fashions and ideas [my emphasis]. While the specter of Japanization of South Korean children loomed, the American cultural influence was equally troubling (Nelson 2000: 152).

The above account of can also be understood in the broad context of *guje* consumption and the consumption of Japanese cultural goods such as magazines, food, music and fashion. Gill Soon Park (2006) states, “On the other hand, [the vintage look in South Korea] has been highly influenced by the charming Japanese street fashion which is full of the kitsch modes of dressing with intended vulgarity” (Park 2006: 102). In a way, this earlier prohibition has made Japanese cultural goods even more precious and attractive to young *guje* consumers in South Korea.

Having deconstructed the cultural aspects of Japanese clothes consumption in Korean *guje* market, it seems undeniable that Japanese styles have a considerable impact on fashioning *guje* /vintage clothes in South Korea. I would therefore argue that Japanese fashion have become increasingly popular in this niche marketplace due to Korean consumers’ aspirations for individuality, advancement and exoticism finding means of expression in Japanese material culture. In this regard, the influx of the Levi’s Coke jean can also be understood as the result of this kind of cultural and economic flows which gradually permeated from Japan into South Korea.

Given the evidence discussed in this chapter, it can be seen that *guje* Levi’s market has expanded into broader levels by comprising not only second-hand clothes, but also replica and counterfeit such as American, Japanese and Thai Levi’s which cannot be circulated in formal clothes retail channels like high street shops. Here, one of the most famous vintage denims, Levi’s “Big E” jeans have been reproduced as the authentic and also recommodified as the counterfeit by being created into diverse designs. One of these, the counterfeit Coca-Cola “Big E” jeans from Thailand, have become increasingly popular in South Korea and has gained more fame than the authentic Levi’s Coca-Cola jeans from Japan. Most importantly, I conclude that authenticity has been created in case of the Japanese recommodification of American Levi’s under their legally obtained copyright.

The original commodity (be it a television program or a pair of jeans) is, in the cultural economy, a text, a discursive structure of potential meanings and pleasures that constitutes a major resource of popular culture (Fiske 2000: 283).

Therefore, Japanese *guje* jeans (and other garments) should be considered not only as a circulation of singular commodity, but also a diffusion of lifestyle and culture by constructing an image of Japanese exoticism in South Korea. Nonetheless, the question remains whether this fashion practice can be read as an aspect of cultural imperialism; whether it is based on latent Nipponophilia, a great influence on subcultural fashion among younger Korean generations; or whether it is the outcome of globalisation.

What is certain is that until recently, economy- and technology-driven Korean society has lacked the cultural diversity to satisfy the disparate demands of modern consumers, particularly the desire to express individuality seen among new generations. This lack has eventually dictated the younger consumers' interests in global vintage trends and Japanese street styles instead of the dominant American-centred cultural influences of South Korea. The reasons for this can be found in the politically growing anti-American sentiment and culturally favoured Nipponophilia which are prevalent among young Korean generations, but most primarily as a result of Japanese street style trends.

In the course of assimilating material culture from outside, in such ways as fashioning vintage(-style) jeans, *guje* consumers mirror their identity fitting into the established image of the advanced self as individual and exotic with the help of mass media and communication technology. In this respect, consumption of imported *guje* jeans is not simply due to an influx of foreign commodities, but should be understood, in a broad sense, as the embodiment of American and Japanese material culture.

The development of blue jeans is as firmly attached to brands as the rivets of the pockets that make Levi-Strauss the sire of blue denim. Subsequent firms established their own resonance with feelings of authenticity and American-ness. (Miller *et al.* 2007: 338)

Jeans and their brand names are inseparable; whether they are genuine or counterfeit, they always carry their labels, as shown in the cases of Levi's Buffalo

and Levi's Pepsi. As can be seen in these examples, labels attached have become more important than the material object itself. Therefore, counterfeit jeans are not only about the reproduction of commodities, but also about the recreation of symbols. Moreover, in this consumer practice surrounding jeans, 'Japanese' labels have been constructed and presented as another authentic self, overwhelming the original American ones with their aesthetic, technical and material superiority, at least in South Korea.

7. Vintage Fashion Fever and the Embodiment of “Granny Look”: Historical and Geographical Imagination of Nostalgia from a “Fabricated Era”

In the contemporary world of fashion, the consumption of vintage clothes in Western countries has been widely explored as a representation of authenticity and individuality¹¹⁸ and also analysed by their characteristics of nostalgia, pastiche and irony in the context of postmodernism. The consumer practice of vintage fashion in South Korea, by contrast, has been relatively unknown and hardly been discussed, perhaps overlooked, as a subject matter, in academic research (Ko 2001: 492), as indicated in the Introduction. For example, Ko’s (2001) article ‘A Study on the Aesthetic Values of Vintage Fashion (2001)’ published in *Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles* aims “to identify the general concept of vintage fashion which has been highly discussed since 1990” (Ko 2001: 482).

However, its focus lies exclusively on Western fashion history and trends, not on the development of South Korean fashion culture and history. Yet, when it is mentioned either in books or in fashion magazines, vintage fashion has often been understood as offering diversity in choices of clothing, in particular, for younger consumers to express their individuality against the rather monotonous and rigid social climate in South Korea. In this regard, the influx of vintage trends is even more significant in South Korea where consumption of second-hand clothes has been fairly underdeveloped and unpopular until recently.

This chapter will also criticise this type of ‘active consumer’¹¹⁹ model in terms of its “unhelpful romanticization of ‘consumer freedoms’ which forgets the very question of [Western/dominant] cultural power (Morley 1997: 122).” Korean consumers have started to develop their own perspectives on vintage fashion by assimilating the Western mode of dressing and their culture and furthermore, have begun to differentiate vintage styles from *guje* fashion. In this respect, vintage fashion in South Korea can be seen as a symbolic consumption as well as a

¹¹⁸ See Tolkien (2000), Jenß (2004), DeLong et al. (2005) and also <http://www.vintage Trends.com/customerservice/vintageclothing.asp>

¹¹⁹ The term is borrowed from the ‘active audience’ theory in media studies. See Morley’s (1997) argument in Chapter 3 Methodology.

material one, because it produces illusory dress styles which are largely based on visual images and historical references from the West (and Japan, as shown in the previous chapter).

Vintage consumption in South Korea may seem a mere act of mimicry, a replication of the fashion cultures in countries which are considered more advanced than themselves¹²⁰. This imperialistic understanding can account for the prevalent distinction between vintage and *guje* fashion, as the ways in which the concept of vintage is sometimes in contrast to, and other times, in conjunction with, *guje* styles. I will argue that vintage fashion in South Korea cannot be understood as a purely nostalgic consumer practice, but as newly adopted, imported second-hand dress styles from abroad.

As mentioned, the main concern of this chapter is the construction of a nostalgic image in the fashion press in South Korea. Diana Crane states, “Today, fashion, as presented in fashion magazines, has several diverse and inconsistent social agendas” (Crane 2000: 203). Yet, in the case of the vintage trend, fashion-related articles published in South Korean magazines and newspapers appear unintentionally to convey the dominant and persistent social agendas of Western hegemonic ideologies. There are two main aspects to consider; one is the production of an illusive image of “*halmonee* (grandmother-style) *fashion*” in the context of false nostalgia; and the other is the deployment of the image of global cities as aspirational reservoirs of vintage garments and creative styles. The construction of these two narratives is effectively employed to recover the spatiotemporal gap between the South Korean re-interpretation of the Western retro styles and their own cultural reality. Therefore, it provides yet more specific ideas for South Korean consumers to embody vintage fashion practice.

Based on the evidence found in fashion magazines, newspaper articles, TV adverts and programmes, and On-line community, it is clear that the vintage fashion culture first arrived in South Korea via the Internet and fashion magazines

¹²⁰ The notions of the ‘outer complex (Kang 2004)’ or ‘inferiority complex (Lee 1983)’, which have indicated in Chapter 3, can play an important role here in selecting the aspiring countries for Koreans.

(technological); secondly, it represents the reproduction of Western ideology and taste in clothing consumption (cultural) by employing the fabricated images of “*halmonee fashion*” in the past. As a result, “In the last decade the [Koreans] ¹²¹have even come to dress in more exclusive and fashionable ‘Western clothes’ than most Westerners (Skove 1996: 146).” Therefore, the main body of this chapter will critique the various strands of fabrication, mythologization and emulation operating within the highly Westernised fashion practices of South Korea.

Popularisation of ‘vintage’ fashion styles in South Korea

Given that the definitions of “vintage” and “retro” have been imported just as surely as the second-hand clothes from the West, this section examines the ways in which the idea of ‘vintage’ has been understood in fashion discourse in South Korea. The English word ‘vintage’ (빈티지 in Korean) started to gain currency in South Korea from the 1990s and has become more distinctive in the 2000s, especially in conjunction with a rising interest in quality lifestyles among younger generations and their consumer practices of imported goods such as wine, stereo systems, cameras, cars and most importantly clothing. It appears that the word ‘vintage’ is more frequently used in fashion practice than in any other commodity such as wine or cameras. Therefore, even though the foreign word ‘vintage’ has now become a part of the everyday language in South Korea, its usage is still confined to fashion-conscious younger consumers. In this respect, ‘vintage’ has become the most popular and at the same time, a contentious concept in fashion practices because before the 1990s, most people in South Korea had never heard of the word. Consequently, this unfamiliarity with the concept of vintage fashion resulted in diverse interpretation among consumers.

Urban Vintage Look (Auction 2007, see Figure 59), an Auction’s TV commercial of their company in 2007, which was mentioned in Chapter 5 in relation to the military look, demonstrates the burgeoning vintage fashion trend in South Korea. Moreover, this advertisement is highly important as it introduces the general concept of vintage fashion to a wide audience who may be unfamiliar to this

¹²¹ In Skove’s original text, it was Japanese instead of Koreans.

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foreign word ‘vintage’. Two Korean male celebrities Hak-Young Yeh and Cool K who are both well-known as fashionista among fashion-conscious young adults in South Korea appear in this advert. The contents of this commercial film are as follows:

<Text> Auction, talking about the style

<Text> Urban vintage look, Actor Yeh, Hak-Young + MV director Cool K

Cool K¹²²: Oh, Yeh, Hak-Young, your style is killing¹²³ today!

Yeh, Hak-Young: Is it alright?

Cool K: The 70s style?!

Yeh, Hak-Young: I found this [military uniform] when I was rummaging through my dad's wardrobe.

Cool K: Ahh~~!

Yeh, Hak-Young: Call this an ‘analogue fashion’!

Cool K: Truly vintage!

Yeh, Hak-Young: The important thing is not what to wear.

Cool K: But how to wear it.

<Text> Urban *Vintage Look* [my emphasis]; Style which requires a good eye for appreciating worn-out clothes.

Cool K surprisingly admires Yeh’s wearing of the military gear; then, Yeh responds that he has found this old military uniform in his father’s wardrobe. The overall narrative and visual setting of this advert promotes a nostalgic mood, but it should be understood in the light of McRobbie’s (1994) or Gregson *et al.*’s (2001) analysis of ‘knowingness’; because Yeh and Cool K do not display the yearning for that strong masculinity of their parents’ heyday which could be represented through army uniforms; on the contrary, their fashion interest is “rather more about revisiting the 70s through the discourse and disposition of knowingness and the carnivalesque” (Gregson *et al.* 2001: 21). The two celebrities supposedly know when and how to reappropriate old clothes from the past to have fun or to be stylish in the context of contemporary vintage fashion trends.

Here, it is more important to note the conceptual development of vintage styles (symbolic meanings) rather than the actual fashion trends based on real clothes

¹²² Dohkyong Kim is Cool K’s real name. But Kim (unofficially) changed his name to Cool K when he was first learnt the meaning of an English word ‘cool’ by his relatives in the U.S. during his junior high and has used it instead of his real name since then. See Wonkyom Kim, ‘Cool K, “voice complex which does not fit his appearance”’, *Star News*, July 2007.

¹²³ This is a literal translation to convey the accurate description. The equivalent translation can be ‘style is wicked’.

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(material objects). For example, the last scene displays nothing but texts which provide a dictionary-like definition of its title to the viewers: it summarises *Urban Vintage Look* as a fashionable style which re-accommodates old clothes with connoisseurship. The instructive style of this advert reflects the need for giving an explanation of vintage fashion because it might still be new to most viewers.



Figure 59 Auction’s commercial film ‘Urban Vintage Look’ in 2007.



Figure 60 “Seungheon Song wearing vintage style in contrast to Sangwoo Kwon with an impeccable classic suit.”

Aside from this dictionary-style definition of the vintage look at the end, this short commercial film offers copious referents to fashion concepts, such as ‘70s style’, ‘urban vintage’, ‘true vintage’ and ‘analogue¹²⁴ fashion’. It is evident that this kind of conceptualisation of vintage styles cannot be viewed as a nostalgic fashion practice because these terms are vague and elusive and moreover, do not offer any precise historical reference¹²⁵ to the style of Yeh’s actual garment. The overproduction of the meaning of ‘vintage look’ can be found elsewhere. Now, many of the following terms prevail in fashion magazines in South Korea:

Urban vintage: True vintage: Romantic vintage: British vintage: Girlish vintage: Street style vintage: Ethnic vintage: Chic style vintage: New York vintage: Bohemian vintage

The above-mentioned terms will be illustrated in detail later in this chapter, but suffice it to say here that various, but abstract concepts of vintage fashion have come into being in South Korea.

The various concepts of vintage styles, as stated previously, suggest highly fashionable consumer practices, and yet the idea of vintage also has another connotation; at times being perceived as a shabby looking dress style in South Korea. A television interview of the gangster film *Destiny* demonstrates this opposing connotation of ‘vintage’ fashion as shabby. The interview with the two main actors (see Figure 60)¹²⁶ took place while they were on the set of the film. The actor Sangwoo Kwon who plays as a gang boss in the film dresses in a dark-colour pinstripe suit and an unbuttoned white shirt, whereas Seungheon Song, whose role is the ex-prisoner and gangster, wears an unbuttoned loose black T-shirt and a pair of dark blue jeans. These men’s appearances illustrate the relationship between men’s identity and their fashion in gangster films.

¹²⁴ An English word ‘아날로그 (analogue)’ is often used in South Korea to emphasis the naturalness, pureness against the digitisation. In a news article of a female singer, the expressions such as ‘the power of analogue generations’, ‘analogue sensitivity’ or ‘analogue records’ to refer to the pre-1990’s technology and culture. See ‘Reasonable Yangpah Syndrome’, ‘the power’ of analogue generations’ in *Osen Media*, 4 June 2007. http://osen.co.kr/news/Enter_View.asp?gisano=G0706040048&code=220140

¹²⁵ It is not even certain whether Cool K meant, the uniform is from, or looks like, ‘70s style!’ Even if it is from the 1970s, there is no aesthetic description of the actual garment based on historical background.

¹²⁶ The interview was broadcasted via a cable TV channel Mnet on November 5, 2007. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOmmHG1VqiY>

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Throughout the gangster genre clothes are equated with status, money and style. [...] Clothes are also over-valued objects of fetishism, which symbolise the gangster’s identity. (Bruzzi 1997: 67)

In Figure 60 a caption on the screen reads as “Seungheon Song’s **vintage style** [original emphasis in a larger font] in contrast to Sangwoo Kwon’s smart outfit,” showing just how easily clothes can enforce social stereotypes. This kind of style differentiation between the two is a classic example of “the myth of the gangster” (Bruzzi 1997: 71) in Kwon’s immaculate suit and “gangster anti-fashion” (Bruzzi 1997: 91) in Song’s scruffy T-shirt and jeans. “” (Bruzzi 1997: 67), according to Stella Bruzzi. More importantly, this interview also demonstrates wide discrepancies in the understanding of vintage fashion between the different groups of consumers.

A reporter comments to Song; “You must feel little annoyed because Sangwoo Kwon wears really nice clothes and shoes and looks very fashionable.” Instead of Song, Kwon indicates, “These are really good brands. Ah! You don’t know,” by pointing Song’s clothes to the interviewer.

For unknowing consumers such as the producers and reporter of this interview, the vintage style connotes casual wear which looks haphazard when seen against a smart suit. Here, the reception of the idea of vintage is that it is unfashionable, inexpensive and scruffy; and therefore, Song’s look is perceived as a suitable choice for his role as an outcast ex-prisoner in the film. However, for a knowing person like Kwon, vintage styles are also attainable with the expensive clothing and require a discerning eye for fashion. Therefore, the idea of the vintage style is perceived differently by knowing and unknowing fashion consumers and is normally shared by a certain groups of fashion connoisseurs like vintage consumers.

Yet, even so-called vintage consumers can have diverse concepts of vintage fashion. There are two main spheres of vintage fashion, that is, luxury vintage collections which furnish the collector with expensive designer labels and more affordable casual vintage clothes which can be found in traditional markets or on

the high street.¹²⁷ While both fields of the vintage fashion market largely deal with imported second-hand clothes, only the latter has any kind of the ideological or literal crossover with *guje* styles, as briefly indicated in the discussion of these fashion boundaries in Chapter 3.

Therefore, *guje*/vintage fashion style as a subcultural everyday practice is the most relevant to this chapter. *Guje* market, which appeared during the Korean War period, has established a relatively longer history than the more recent vintage fashion trend. However, even though both *guje* and vintage often indicate identical types of garments and can be found in the same market site like Dongdaemun, there is conceptual (or symbolic) discrimination between the ideas of *guje* and vintage. Some consider vintage as identical as *guje*; but others argue that these two concepts are alien to each other. An online men’s clothing shop called Makabi provides the former account in their introduction as follows;

We are selling vintage *guje* clothes. [...] *Guje* (style) indicates old clothes, clothes that are worn by others; vintage (style) means faded or crumpled second-hand clothes. Therefore, *guje* and vintage are the [different] words with the same meaning. [...] In addition, vintage fashion was popular in the 1990s when faded or crumpled clothes were the craze among American college students; in our country [South Korea], it has become popular around the 2000s.¹²⁸

Three aspects can be pointed out from this text; firstly, the American influence on vintage fashion: secondly, the distinctive vintage styles presented with details like faded colours or ruffled texture: and finally, the definition of the word ‘vintage’ as equivalent to *guje*. The American influence has been explored in Chapter 5 with the account of fashionable U.S. military jackets popular in South Korea. The visual representation of casual and scruffy vintage fashion styles was demonstrated in an interview of Song and Kwon as mentioned earlier. Finally, it considers that vintage and *guje* imply the same clothing and fashion style.

While Makabi accounts for the meaning of vintage as a synonym for *guje*, both of which indicate the faded- or ruffled-looking second-hand clothes, other consumers and fashion professionals view these two fashion concepts as dissimilar

¹²⁷ See ‘Research scope’ and ‘Geographical sites of the research’ in Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of the division of vintage markets in South Korea.

¹²⁸ http://sea-born.co.kr/front/php/com_intro.php (www.makabi.co.kr)

to one another. A newspaper article ‘Verifying your vintage’ (Lee 2008) provides a typical example of this type of distinction which can be often seen in the conception of vintage and *guje* fashion. Here, Kim Tae-kyoung, author of “The Style Dictionary by Editor T,” expresses a different view.

“Originally the term vintage referred to an expensive wine,” he says. “Now it doesn’t simply mean used goods, but fashion that represents a specific time in the past. The real meaning has somewhat faded because *people tend to incorrectly use the terms ‘vintage’ with ‘secondhand’ interchangeably. The latter really means used fashion.*” *The term guje, or used goods in Korean, was widely used in the past to refer to clothes that came from foreign countries as relief goods [my emphasis].* But nowadays, vintage doesn’t simply mean used goods, but has a connotation similar to antique. Antique style, or old, luxury fashion, refers to personal goods that are about 100 years old or older. Kim explains, “If one wants to buy a real antique style product, he or she must pay hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars.” Vintage buffs from all over the world are eager to uncover finds such as a 1950s Givenchy black miniskirt, the Chanel 2.55 bag or a 1970s Yves Saint Laurent suit on eBay or in flea markets (Lee 2008).

According to Kim, the idea of ‘vintage’ should not be reduced to ‘second-hand’, ‘used fashion’ and therefore, *guje*, but considered as a concept more akin to that of ‘antique’, with its connotations of ‘age’ and ‘luxury’ (Lee 2008). Moreover, the Korean fashion professor Gill-Soon Park remarks that “vintage fashion [...] is a synonym for antique fashion” (Park 2006: 99). The definition of the word ‘vintage’ in the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* supports Kim’s or Park’s attempt to place ‘vintage’ and ‘antique’ in the same category; as it defines vintage as “denoting something from the past of high quality” (2006: 1613).

However, vintage and antique are clearly distinguishable, as shown in the next quotation;

When used to refer to clothing, vintage is differentiated from historical, antique, second-hand, consignment, reused or resale clothing. In clothing, vintage usually involves the recognition of a special type or model, and knowing and appreciating such specifics as year or period when produced or worn (DeLong *et al.* 2005: 23).

DeLong *et al.* affirm the differentiation between vintage and antique fashion. The detailed elucidation of the diverse terms which denote fashion from the past can be

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seen in a book *Shopping for Vintage* by Funmi Odulate, fashion expert and journalist in Britain;

Antique clothing refers to any garments that pre-date 1920 (the nineteenth century, the Belle Époque era).

Vintage is anything that dates after 1920 and up to the very early 1980s.

Retro mainly refers to Sixties’ and Seventies’ casual wear.

Secondhand is anything post early eighties – not strictly ‘vintage’ clothing in the generic sense of the word.

If you can’t remember all of the above, remember only this: Anything less than a quarter of a century is NOT ‘vintage’.

(Odulate 2007: 112)

Having considered the above explanation, *guje* fashion can generally be understood as ‘retro’ or ‘secondhand’ clothing rather than as vintage. Perhaps, Kim’s (Lee 2008) distinction between vintage and *guje* -and second-hand- clothing, for many seems a reasonable account, but for others, the boundary between vintage and antique is demarcated with absolute clarity, and the differences between vintage and second-hand (or *guje*) are definite and non-negotiable. In this respect, the main problem in Kim’s (Lee 2008) and Park’s (2006) accounts for *guje* practitioners, at least, lies in their propensity to view ‘vintage fashion’ as being coupled with ‘antique’ styles, but being disjunct from second-hand or *guje* clothing.

Fashion experts like Kim’s (Lee 2008) and Park’s (2006) view of ‘vintage’ fashion only in the light of luxury antique styles (high culture) reflect the general disposition to devalue *guje* clothing consumption (popular culture) which is prevalent in the world of fashion. This has been especially true within academia, as indicated in the Introduction. This type of critical –almost derogatory- inclination towards *guje* fashion causes not only the negation of South Korea’s own past, but also the reckless adoration of Western (vintage and antique) fashion culture and history; these aspects will be demonstrated within the context of ‘granny fashion’ and the imagination of Western cities in this chapter.

Despite reservations of inaccuracy created by the social tendency to interchange ‘vintage’ and *guje*, the term ‘vintage’ is used throughout this thesis, primarily as the word ‘vintage’, compared with either ‘retro’ or ‘second-hand’, has become far more familiar to consumers in South Korea. Clear definitions of these other fashion terms have not widely been recognised or agreed yet, as pointed out by Jenß;

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But even though it [retro] has mainly been used for old second hand clothing (Silverman 1994; McRobbie 1989), it is apparent that neither in German nor in English does a common understanding of the term *retro* seem to exist (Jenß 2005: 179).

If the meaning of ‘retro’ is unclear and vague in the Western dress practice, as Jenß states; naturally, it is even more confusing in South Korea where the fashion concepts and styles are normally imported from the West. This has led general consumers to readily interchange the usage of ‘vintage’, ‘retro’ and even, ‘guje’.

Secondly, the analytical focus of this thesis lies not in the evaluation of inaccurate use of Western fashion words, but in the exploration of the degrees of cultural assimilation of the imported fashion concept of vintage as well as the clothing sold under its banner. Thirdly, there is a strong tie between *guje* and vintage because the influence of the vintage trend has been enormous in the revival of *guje* fashion. *Guje* fashion is genuinely based on the history of modern South Korea, and therefore, I would argue that it deserves better attention to be re-valued as an autonomous cultural development of clothes consumption in the same depth with which vintage fashion culture has been appreciated.

Commercialisation of imagined nostalgia in 90s retro fashion practice in South Korea

Guje fashion can be more closely understood as what is called ‘retro’ in English fashion terms, as stated in the previous section. In fashion discourse, Gregson *et al.* contrast the “situated reworkings” of retro fashion from the 1970s against the collectable vintage fashion (from the 1950s, for example) with the historical significance (Gregson *et al.* 2001: 24). By drawing upon the issues of the imagined nostalgia, this section investigates the ‘situated reworkings’ of ‘granny look’ which has been distinctive in vintage/ *guje* fashion practice in South Korea since the 2000s.

While the conceptualisation of ‘granny styles’ has been noticeable since the early 2000s, a similar vintage(-style) dress practice of retro fashion started to emerge from the culture of nostalgic consumption in the late 1990s. In *Fashion 1900-2000*, fashion professor Yoonhee Kim briefly mentioned that the vintage trend influenced

a fad for one of the ‘retro’ styles called ‘*chontea* (uncouth or unfashionable-country style) fashion’ among younger generations in South Korea in the 1990s¹²⁹; for example, handmade knitwear was all the rage in the autumn of 1998 (Keum *et al.* 2002: 311-12).

The popularity of retro fashion at the time is also observed by fashion columnist Hyung-Am Kim (1997) in his article ‘Mom’s clothes from the wardrobe swing along the street: age-old ‘*chontea* fashion’ [original emphasis] has come back into vogue’. The following text gives a rough idea of the retro fashion styles in question.

Appearances of once the famous stars, like Audrey Hepburn, Jackie, Evita and so on, are being reproduced on the streets of Seoul. Large, horn-rimmed dragonfly [- aviator-style, in English -] sunglasses frequently worn by 50’s glamorous stars are one of the most fashionable items in this summer. *Gujepoom* shops are thriving in Apgujeong-dong, Seoul; and they collect and sell the only clothes which were picked out from the age-old closets. In fashion, there has been nothing but the concept of ‘*Bokgo* (Retro)’ [original emphasis] during the past few years (Kim 1997).

While the title suggests the employment of mom’s old clothes, the style references of the text primarily rely on the Western fashion trends from the 1950s to the 1980s. Therefore, I claim that its title ‘mom’s clothes from the wardrobe’ plays a purely symbolic role here and should not be interpreted as a reflection of the consumers’ actual fashion practice at the time in South Korea. Nonetheless, the retro ‘*chontea*’ fashion has given rise to the popularisation of vintage and *guje* style clothes, as explained in this article;

The outdated and uncouth [(*chontea*)] mode of dressing has come into being in contrast to the neat and luxurious attires. So-called ‘Vintage fashion’ [originally written in English in brackets] is the style almost inappropriately to mix and match knitwear or trousers which look like they have been taken out of an old-fashioned wardrobe. *Gujepoom* [...] shops and American imported second-hand clothing shops [...] have been located on the back streets of Apgujeong-dong. It is obvious that worn-out clothes look better and most distinctive amongst sleek new clothes (Kim 1997).

I argue that this nostalgic fashion culture of retro, vintage and *guje* can be understood in conjunction with a sense of exoticism towards the previous eras of

¹²⁹ See also Park 2006: 102.

the Western trend, and not in the light of any sentimental attachment for South Korea’s own past. One powerful opponent of the commercialisation of unrealistic nostalgia in fashion practice in South Korea is the anthropologist Laura C. Nelson’s (2000); the following vignette, which reflects both her personal and academic interests, typifies the critique of such styles.

Months of living among the images of groomed allure dished up in Seoul [in 1993] have left me feeling dowdy. As I pass by a series of windows, I notice that one advertising theme is shared by several shops. Mannequins, dressed in miniskirts, bell-bottomed jeans, and go-go boots, adorned in beehive hairdos, thrust one hip forward behind the legend, in English, “Nostalgia 1960s.”

What kind of nostalgia is this, I wonder [my emphasis]. I recognize these images and these styles from my own family photos, from my own New England memories of my 1960s childhood dreams of becoming a hip teen. But *South Korea entered the decade of the 1960s as one of the world’s poorest countries* [my emphasis], with a per capita income estimated at less than \$150. Half the population still lived in the countryside, and most of the city residents worked long hours for poor pay in factory jobs or worse. I have spent more than a year hearing stories from women about the privations [sic] of their youth, *their* [the original emphasis] 1960s, and about how it is not possible to understand today’s consumer choices without understanding South Korea’s past. Perhaps even more to the point, the consumers targeted by these boutiques were as yet unborn in that hardscrabble decade – they have no memories of the sixties, they *cannot* experience this nostalgia.

“Nostalgia 1960s” is a slogan that evokes in them a nonmemory of a fabricated era [my emphasis] (Nelson 2000: 138).

This quotation is long-winded, and yet, this kind of acute observation based on social and historical realities is rare to find among native Korean researchers as it is normally overlooked as part of trivial round of daily life. Moreover, Nelson’s view precisely fits my argument of this chapter and more broadly, of the entire thesis.

The most striking feature of her argument is that the nostalgic practice currently gaining popularity is grounded on the fabrication of fashion history in South Korea. The process of fabrication – or ‘mythologization’ in Barthes’ term (1990) - in fashion consumption has been continuously reintroduced, at least since Nelson’s (2000) observation. The fabricated concept “Nostalgia 1960s,” first seen in the early 1990s, has continued to be reproduced as vintage consumption in the 2000s; and will form a key aspect of the discussion of ‘granny fashion’. The only

difference lies in the fact that the fabrication /mythologization of this cultural narrative has become ever more detailed, and has diversified in the 2000s.

It is also valuable to note that in Nelson’s personal view, those who were once the poorest Korean consumers have become highly fashionable individuals by emulating American (or more broadly, Western) fashion history. In the meantime, though, Westerners like Nelson, who possess first-hand 1960s nostalgic fashion memories, can be left “feeling dowdy” amongst extremely Western-oriented, fashion-conscious women in South Korea. This can be understood as manifestation of style competence. Koreans’ aspiration of being fashionable by Western standards has left a Western woman feeling plain and outdone. What mitigates this success though, I would argue, is that the reproduction of Western history in this South Korean nostalgic fashion practice seems to confirm the ‘outer complex (Kang 2004)’ and ‘inferiority complex (Lee 1983)’, becoming further proof of the compulsion towards “catching up to the West” (Creighton 1992:53, quoted in Suga 1995: 98), as explained in Chapter 4.

“Granny Look”: un-nostalgic, Western-oriented vintage fashion practice in South Korea in the 2000s

Since the early 2000s, nostalgic fashion practice has become more elaborate in South Korea. For example, ‘*Halmonee* [grandmother in Korean] Fashion (2004)’, a column in a daily newspaper *Hankook Ilbo* written by the Korean fashion designer Kuho Chung, typifies the popularity of vintage fashion and the reconstruction of imagined dress styles in a “fabricated era” (Nelson 2000: 138).

The GRANNY LOOK [original emphasis written in English] denotes *the styles of now fashionable grandmothers* [my emphasis] who have been living throughout the 50s and 60s and therefore, understand the styles of that period. [...] Current fashion is continuously travelling back to the past. [...] You can find the current trends from grandmothers’ smart outfits when they are going to church on Sunday morning or to monthly social gatherings. [...] If you match grandmother’s clothes with contemporary ones, you will be satisfied with the vintage-like, stylish GRANNY LOOK (Chung 2004).

In this column, Chung takes a detailed example of garments and accessories, such as ‘a coat with a fur collar’, ‘a thick tweed coat’, ‘pearl necklaces’ and ‘limestone

brooches’ (Chung 2004). Having considered Nelson’s (2000) reflection on the 1960’s economic condition of severe poverty in South Korea, the grandmothers who are actually in possession of the above-stated luxurious fashion items from the post-Korean War period must be exceptional cases of a few high class families at best. Therefore, the above comment ‘[c]urrent fashion is continuously travelling back to the past’ raises a contentious issues of social class and fashion historiography; because “the vintage-like, stylish GRANNY LOOK” (Chung 2004) from “a fabricated era” (Nelson 2000) displaces the realities of fashion history in South Korea’s own past.

In regard to the popular ‘granny look’ in vintage fashion, the lack of grandmothers’ luxurious belongings to be found in the average South Korean household is well depicted by Kyoung Kim, a feature director of *Bazaar Korea*. In her anecdote, one of Kim’s female colleagues appeared in the office by wearing an expensive fur coat with a ‘reform(ed)’¹³⁰ crocodile bag and said, “I have ‘reform’ed my granny’s bag because I was inspired by this season’s Prada collection” (Kim 2003). Kim reflects the vintage trends and grandmother’s heritage as follows:

Since the ‘I love vintage’ boom has swept the New York fashion world a few years ago, style-aware [Korean] people have all started to talk about their ‘special affection for worn-out luxury brand handbags descended from their grandmother or mother’ [original emphasis]. But even if I rummaged through the whole wardrobe of my family’s and relatives’, there was no single 30 year-old Gucci bag of my grandmother’s (Kim 2003).

Kim finds that the vintage look requires not only cultural but also financial assets and concludes by asking whether the vintage maniac reflects a pride in the family history or simply in the history of wealth which has been inherited throughout the three generations. Kim’s lack of fashionable heritage from the previous generation in her family members is exactly what Nelson (2000) pointed when discussing in the commercialisation of the imagined “Nostalgia 1960s” found in the 1990s South Korea. Therefore, I suggest that the extreme poverty in the past has led the current South Korean vintage markets to a considerable shortage of fashionable second-hand garments and moreover, to the deliberate lack of reference to the reality of

¹³⁰ ‘Reform’ (written as English pronunciation in Korean 리폼) is commonly used in Korea to describe ‘remade’.

50s and 60s South Korea in the current fashion articles. Consequently, the negation, or social lapse of memory, concerning Korea’s own fashion past can be linked to a, possibly equally deliberate, desire not to remember a misfortunate part of both personal and social history. Hence nostalgia it is – a rose-tinted view borrowed from someone else’s past.

Kim is only one of the majority of fashion consumers who lacks the cultural and economic capital to partake in the inheritance of vintage accessories from their ancestors. As a result, the provision of vintage clothes and styles from abroad is inevitable and also, preferable due to the Western-oriented fashion trends in South Korea, for example, the ‘I love vintage’ boom from New York fashion scene to Korean fashion mentioned in Kim’s writing. Western influences over vintage fashion in South Korea will be dealt with shortly, but, it is necessary first to inquire more closely into the ‘Granny Look’ at this point. Grandmother images play a key role in the construction of the concept of vintage styles in the subsequent examples in this chapter.

Hyunzin Ko (2001) defines the Granny Look as a typical example of antique fashion which is the wearing of “grandmothers’ worn-out clothes in their current state or new replica items in similar designs” (Ko 2001: 484). Her account of vintage (granny) fashion appears to be identical to Kuho Chung’s view of the Granny Look which originated from the 50s and 60s. Moreover, Ko’s (2001) understanding of the vintage styles as equivalent to antique fashion resonates with Lee’s (2008) and Park’s (2006) perspectives, as explained early in this chapter.

Echoing Ko’s (2001) remark, Yoonjoo Chung (2007) also states that the Granny Look comprises over 100 year-old ‘antique’ clothes which used to be worn by grandmothers. First of all, 100 year-old ‘antique’ clothes can only refer to great-grandmothers’ fashion, not to grandmothers’ styles, considering their age. Therefore, the concept of the Granny Look is purely symbolic from the start, from a South Korean perspective. Furthermore, the general fashion practice among Korean women was comprised of traditional Korean dresses about 100 years ago. In this respect, ‘antique’ and vintage in the academic accounts in South Korea (see Ko 2001; Chung 2007; Lee 2008; Park 2006) primarily consider the Western

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fashion history of Victorian era, not Korea’s past. Therefore, vintage fashion in South Korea can only be the Western-oriented dress practice which yet again obliges practitioners to import Western (second-hand) clothing and borrow Western history as if it is Korea’s own memory.

Having identified that the nature of South Korean Granny Look is inherently susceptible to Western fashion culture and history, it will be helpful to consider the Western account of ‘granny look’ in comparison. ‘Granny Look’ has been a popular fashion practice in the West since the 1960s and 1970s – a several decades in advance to South Korea’s adoption of vintage consumption.

Alison Lurie in her book *The Language of Clothes* states that the Neo-Edwardian Look appeared in postwar Britain, a fashion style adopted by young men who wished to emulate their grandfathers (Lurie 1981: 78). She further explains that the actual “Granny and Granddaddy Look” originated with young people in the 1960s and early 1970s in Europe and America. According to Lurie, these young people dressed “as if they were very old” (Lurie 1981: 81) and in contempt of adults at that period, tried to look “like the grandparents in a Norman Rockwell Thanksgiving cover of the forties,” not “like the wearer’s actual grandparents” (Lurie 1981: 82). She describes a typical ‘Granny Look’ as follows;

They wore “Granny dresses” - floor-length, high-waisted, ruffled frocks made of old-fashioned Gingham-Dog-and-Calico-Cat cotton prints-and “granny glasses,” often without any glass in them (Lurie 1981: 82).

In ‘Anti-Fashion: The 1970s’, Valerie Steele also identifies the wearing of longer skirts and granny dresses by hippies in the 1970s (Steele 1997: 283). In terms of its appearance and fashion concept, a typical ‘Granny Look’ described by Lurie (1981) and Steele (1997) displays an obvious distance from the ‘*Halmonee* Fashion’ or ‘Granny Look’ in South Korea.

While ‘*Halmonee* Fashion’ seems far from the looks of very old people or the styles of ‘floor-length dresses’, it is very close to, what Lurie (1981: 79-81) called, the ‘sophisticated super-adult look of the 1950s’ or the ‘Baby-doll’ look in the 1960s. Therefore, the ‘Granny Look’ in South Korea is meant to emulate the styles of a grandmothers’ heyday in the 1950s and 1960s as described in Chung’s (2004)

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remark and is not represented by most academic views (Ko 2001; Chung 2007; Lee 2008; Park 2006) as they fail to account for the actual consumer practice of this fashion.

Whilst this might seem to provide yet more common ground between the Western and Korean Granny Looks in that people do not opt, in either instance, to resemble their actual grandparents. However, Lurie’s (1981) comment should be understood as the 60s and 70s youth fashion practice based on the idea of repudiation towards their parents’ generation –a fashion concept which is entirely lacking in South Korean consumer practice of ‘granny look’ in the 2000s. Therefore, I argue that the ‘granny look’ in the early 2000s in South Korea is not an autonomous dress practice. Rather, it employs the Western historical references, and must be understood as a carefully intended adoption of a more active global fashion trend. In 2004, the concept of ‘granny chic’ was one of the essential fashion styles in the Western countries, as presented in diverse sources of fashion articles as follows.

He [Knightly, a designer of a British fashion house Mulberry] enjoys the fact that many young women are currently dressing like their grandmothers (‘Back to granny’s attic’ by H. Brown, in *Telegraph*, 15 July 2004).

Fashion conscious women are expected to be seen in the straightlaced tweed and hair rollers ‘granny chic’ style of Sixties Britain (‘Fashionistas go for Hilda Ogden’ in *Metro*, 17 August 2004).

Imagine raiding a rich grandmother’s closet. [...] The major looks for fall borrow heavily from gram’s wardrobe. [...] “Granny chic” embraces the prim pieces from New England matrons as well as flashy items from Palm Springs retirees. “That looks like something my grandmother would wear” has become the ultimate compliment (‘It’s Inherited’ by A. Rasmus, in *Carolina Woman Magazine* September 2004)

“The theme, I’d say, is ‘Granny chic,” said Glamour magazine fashion editor Suze yalof Schwartz. “It’s Grandma’s closet that’s come out to the runways this season. And it’s sexy” (‘Winter Fashion is ‘Granny Chic’ by C. Donaldson-Evans, in *Fox News*, 9 December 2004).

Having considered the above texts, ‘granny look’ and her wardrobe which were described in ‘*Halmonae* Fashion’ by Chung (2004) is identical to the transatlantic global fashion theme of ‘granny chic’. Moreover, South Korean consumers seem to have the far lesser degrees of cultural and historical possibilities for resonance with

the Granny Look, considering their lack of fashion heritage and memories from the past being alluded to. In this sense, the Granny Look and vintage fashion in South Korea can be viewed as a truly postmodern dress practice based on pastiche of Western artefacts and history, not as a nostalgic act.

Construction of a myth: Western cities as a representation of vintage fashion culture

This section will illustrate the ways in which South Korean fashion press has constructed the geographic, cultural and historical myth of the West in relation to vintage clothes consumption. The importance of Western cities and history along with the reproduction of grandmothers’ styles grows bigger here. An article from a fashion magazine with the long title of ‘British the Runway, a new interpretation of the British ways of elegant dressing: British vintage (January 2005, see Figure 61),¹³¹ demonstrates the uses of the narratives of grandmothers’ fashion naturally blended into the image of the West.

Vintage is one of the key British looks. Why don’t you match the clothes which look like being discovered in *grandmother’s old wardrobe* with a piece of handmade-style knitwear? You can present this style as if you are just *walking out from London’s Piccadilly Circus* which is full of love with diverse vintage styles. *Girlish vintage* is completed by layering a comfort cotton T-shirt, a flower patterned shirt... (Park 2005)

This article places the imaginary construct of grandmother’s wardrobe and the far distant Piccadilly Circus in the same ideological space for its Korean readers. Does this article deliberately promote a call for Korean vintage consumers to imitate British grandmothers’ looks? If not, why is ‘grandmother’ being used in this text? It is hard to find any stylistic and historical correspondence between Korean grandmothers’ past fashion and Piccadilly Circus. I suggest that ‘grandmother’ is an illusory concept, acting as a mediator which encourages Korean consumers to empathise with the Western vintage fashion styles more naturally.

¹³¹ ‘British The Runway’ and ‘british vintage’, both are written by mistake, I presume, in the capital ‘T’ and the lower case ‘b’ in the original text.

british vintage

브리티시 룩을 이야기할 때 빼놓을 수 없는 것이 바로 빈티지. 할머니의 낡은 옷장에서 찾아낸 것 같은 옷과 손으로 직접 만든 것 같은 니트를 매치해보자. 다양한 스타일의 빈티지를 사랑하는 런던 피카딜리 서커스에서 방금 걸어나온 듯한 스타일을 연출할 수 있다.



편안한 면 티셔츠, 플라워 패턴이 가득한 셔츠, 구김이 자연스러운 스커트, 퍼가 트리밍된 가디건 등을 레이어링 하는 것으로 걸리시한 빈티지 스타일 완성.

퍼 트리밍 브라운 벨티드 가디건 20만5천원, 김영 체크 링클 스커트 15만9천원, 장갑 1만9천원, 베네통, 브라운 플라워 프린트 셔츠 4만9천원, 아놀드 바시니, 그린 컬러 면 티셔츠 가격 미정, 쓰리닷 by 쏘물 목걸이 6만원, 힐정, 귀고리 2만6천원, madein-heaven.com

Figure 61 ‘British vintage’ featured in one of the major monthly women’s magazines in *Lady Kyunghyang* (January 2005).

[글로벌 위크엔드]기 ♥ 빈티지 룩*

서울모드

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모스카 시상식의 레드 카펫에서 뉴욕 다운타운의 이스트 빌리지까지, ‘빈티지(vintage) 패션’은 뉴욕 패셔니스타의 키 룩 (key look)으로 자리 잡았다.

Figure 62 [Global Weekend] “I love vintage look.”

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If grandmother is a fabricated idea, then grandmothers’ wardrobe is an imaginative space; and ‘old clothes which look like being found in her wardrobe’ is also an illusory narrative. Not to mention that the look presented in Figure 61 does not seem so much like the styles which would have been found in grandmother’s ‘old’ closet, this is even more evident examining the text: ‘the clothes which *look like* being discovered’, not ‘the clothes which were discovered’. The imagination can also be applied to Piccadilly Circus because it is being highly fantasised as a place ‘full of love with diverse vintage styles’. Therefore, Piccadilly Circus in London offers a geographic reference to -ambiguous- ‘British’ vintage styles and appears as a symbolic place wherein vintage styles can be fully embodied. The influence of British styles in this vintage fashion practice can be found in the popularity of “‘granny chic’ style of Sixties Britain” (‘Fashionistas go for Hilda Ogden’ in *Metro*, 17 August 2004) since the early 2000s.

While the previous example offers the geographic association by employing one of the most famous places in Britain, the following text exemplifies the historical involvement by juxtaposing grandmothers’ fashion along with the British periodic style in the context of vintage trends. ‘Romantic Vintage Fever’, a fashion review was found in one of the most famous Korean make-up artists Kyungmin Lee’s website archives as early as 2001.

Vintage means something which increases in value as it gets older, is designed with high elaboration and presents an antiquated atmosphere. Especially, romantic vintage is a romantic style popular in early 20th century England when Edward VII ‘ruled’ the country Romantic vintage stands out even more by altering *our grandmothers’ old brooches* into a necklace or decoration on a belt.¹³²

Here, the romantic Edwardian style is presented with historical reference to English vintage; and Korean consumers –might superficially- gain the knowledge of King Edward VII and become familiar with the style of that period. Therefore, a part of British fashion history is naturally blended into Korean vintage clothes

¹³² Lee Kyungmin Foret> Star Inside> Fashion Show: ‘Romantic vintage fever’, 18 December 2001.
http://www.leekyungmin.co.kr/starinside/tf_view.asp?kind=3&seq=40&page=1&act=&find=&search=

consumption. In other words, transatlantic global fashion styles are increasingly influential on local vintage dress practices in South Korea.

At the end of the quotation, Korean grandmothers’ fashion in the past is naturally saturated with British Edwardian romantic styles, as if globalisation of fashion trades had already been prevalent in the 1950s or 1960s. Again, how many households would have this kind of family story regarding accessories and fashion styles which could compete with the Edwardian romantic styles? Bearing in mind Korea’s extreme poverty until the mid 20th century, Korean women at that period generally had to make do with everyday bare necessities including clothes (as did the majority of British women).¹³³ Therefore, Korean fashion history of everyday life is misled and instead, is fabricated into British history and dress styles.

It is most likely that the majority of South Korean vintage consumers would look for old(-style) brooches in the market rather than in their grandmothers’ jewel cases. In this respect, not only garments and accessories based on Western cities and fashion history, but also the narrative focusing on grandmothers’ wardrobe is constantly being exploited in Korean vintage clothes consumption.

The same mechanism applies to the introduction of ‘New York vintage fashion’ in another fashion archive in Seoul Mode Fashion Design College, ‘Global Weekend: “I ♥ 빈티지 룩 (Vintage Look) (2005, see Figure 62).” An almost identical narrative is used in this example; only the geographical background shifts from London -or Piccadilly Circus, more specifically- to New York.

‘Vintage fashion’ has become a key look among ‘New York fashionista [the original expression]’. [...] New Yorkers’ vintage fever is remarkable. There are numerous items which caught the fashionista’s eye like *crochet necklaces from grandmother or the 1960s sunglasses from mother*. Now New York vintage fashion is known for ‘chic [original emphasis]’ style which can take you from uptown to downtown, and traverses age and occupation.¹³⁴

In this text, New York is portrayed as an exotic and admirable place full of vintage connoisseurs. Grandmothers’ or mothers’ fashion from the past is understood as a

¹³³ The details have been discussed in the contextual chapter with overall Korean history.

¹³⁴ http://www.seoulmode.or.kr/bbs/view.php?id=Fashion04&page=9&sn1=&divpage=1&sn=off&ss=on&sc=on&select_arrange=headnum&desc=asc&no=166

chic style in New York vintage. This perception proves that grandmothers’ fashion in South Korea is even more irrelevant to the actual Granny Look in the context of fashion history. Therefore, as mentioned previously, the granny look in South Korea is perceived as (Western) grandmothers’ looks from the past which can be varied from sophisticated, baby-doll or hippie styles.

Finally, the author of the text plays the role of a style observer and a connoisseur of street fashion, by identifying the items which ‘look like’ being descended from the wearers’ families. However, the exact historical references or family background weigh less heavily in terms of importance here, and there is little concern as to whether crochet necklaces were popular in the heyday of a grandmother’s or mother’s youth. This case can represent the extent to which Korean vintage lovers covet the –imagined- grandmothers’ wardrobe of Western vintage consumers. If Koreans possessed their own ‘affluent fashion heritage from their grandmothers’ or could allude back to their own glamorous and distinctive period styles, then they might not so eagerly search for the inspiration of vintage looks from either London or New York.

A site of exoticism/mimicry: London, a fantasised Western city as a reservoir of vintage fashion

This part will typify the ways in which London has been exploited as one of the most fantasised Western cities in recent Korean fashion magazines and books. In recent years, the fashion magazine *Anan*¹³⁵ has opened a flea market as an annual event, aiming to gather ‘fashion people’ in one place ‘to share their [fashion] sense and passion’¹³⁶. The report of their second event in 2006 states, “If you have ever bought something in a foreign flea market, you must have wondered, ‘When would real foreign-type flea markets ever open in South Korea?’”¹³⁷ Here, the word ‘foreign’ connotes the Western countries, not anywhere abroad outside Korea. While Japan or Hong Kong arises as one of the popular shopping destinations,

¹³⁵ *Anan* is originally a Japanese women’s fashion magazine. Here, *Anan* denotes a Korean version.

¹³⁶ *Anan*, June 2006, no.76: 154-55. Also for more discussion on the foreign flea market see ‘Rummaging through all over the world, not family’s wardrobe’, later in this chapter.

¹³⁷ *Anan*, June 2006, no.76: 154-55.

especially for vintage or second-hand garments and therefore, can be included in a ‘foreign’ country in this context, other Asian, African, or Middle Eastern countries do not belong to this categorisation of ‘foreign’. This is more evident when examining the title of this report ‘going to a Europe[an]-style vintage flea market’ as it clearly points the ideal place as Europe. As shown from this case, the idea of ‘foreign’ in the fashion context in South Korea mostly discriminates against non-Western in favour of all seen as Western or the advanced.

Among these ‘foreign’ countries regarded as ideal fashion places, London is one of the most discussed cities in Korean fashion discourse and is illustrated as a romantic, nostalgic and creative site for vintage fashion. London refers to the cultural background of vintage styles in Korean fashion magazines featured with female celebrities. The following (lengthy) article titles exemplify the interest in fashion discourse around London and vintage styles;

‘I love Hongdae¹³⁸ because I can’t forget London.’¹³⁹

‘Be British Lady: Everything is beautiful as a picture postcard, a travel diary by Heykyo Song¹⁴⁰ who dressed up as a classic lady in London’¹⁴¹
‘Ryeo Won¹⁴²’s British Diary’¹⁴³

They are a reflection of the memories of people who were living in London for a while in the form of a postcard or a diary written by celebrities. I suggest that aesthetic practices shown in these types of articles are clearly self-reflexive as they often take the form of a ‘diary’; this also applies to the book titles which follow next.

‘Ryeo Won’s British Diary’ (see Figure 63 and 64) is a good example here. This is more like a visual diary rather than verbal one; this article is fairly extensive in length which amounts to 24 pages, but only contains six very short paragraphs –

¹³⁸ A cultural and commercial district around Hong Ik University (called Hongdae in short in Korean) in Seoul.

¹³⁹ *Anan* August 2002, no. 30: 122-25.

¹⁴⁰ An actress, one of the most popular female celebrities in her twenties now in Korea.

¹⁴¹ *Anan*, November 2004, no.57: 82.

¹⁴² Chung, Ryeo Won is her full name, an actress and former singer in a dance group, best known with her cool fashion sense.

¹⁴³ *Anan*, February 2006, no.72: 114-37.

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almost all the length of a sentence in total, except the long subtitle on the first page.

The subtitle tries to depict London as a romantic city;

The moist air of the morning and the fog of the day, modern galleries and antique vintage shops, the punk look and trench coat, a British diary, sent by Ryeo Won from London where the past and future, sensibility and rationality coexist (*Anan*, February 2006, no.72: 114, see Figure 63).

The photo shoots display Ryeo Won’ fashion with the diverse scenarios of Portobello Market, Buckingham Palace, Harrods, Millennium Bridge, a hotel room and so on. However, except for these background pictures, the photo shoots are indifferent from any other fashion feature. Especially, the clothes –except a trench coat- and accessories here, which seem almost irrelevant to the concept of its title (and subtitle). So, nothing visually appears to represent ‘the coexistence of the past and future’ in London. Naturally, this article does not introduce vintage shops, the punk look or galleries. Therefore, it is hard to say that there is any consistency between the fashion writing and images, that is to say, the idea of London is not conceptually elaborated in the visuals of fashion features, but is verbally constructed in a few words which attempt to evoke readers’ attention. Here, the verbal meaning is imposed on its readers regardless of a great discrepancy with the visual images. Perhaps, this is the reason why there are only a few sentences throughout twenty-four pages of full fashion coverage.

Nonetheless, from the start, this article gives salience to ‘the idea of antique vintage shops’¹⁴⁴ which are listed as one of the most distinctive aspects of London. Even though it does not display any photos actually depicting antique vintage shops or vintage clothes, Ryeo Won states in one of the six short paragraphs in her would-be diary, “Vintage T-shirts, antique jewellery, skinny jeans and a faded trench coat, the reasons why I cannot stop loving London” (*Anan*, February 2006, no.72: 132, see Figure 64).

¹⁴⁴ Because the concept is mostly verbally constructed, it is ‘the idea’ of a vintage shop, not the actual vintage shop.



Figure 63 Ryewon's British Diary



Figure 64 content of Ryewon's British Diary

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Not to mention that skinny jeans and vintage T-shirts do not particularly represent London, the image which is shown underneath this text looks largely irrelevant. While they talk about vintage T-shirts, the image (Figure 64) in the same page illustrates cheap souvenir-type T-shirts with Union Jack prints. The place looks more like a tourist shop around Piccadilly Circus than anywhere close to vintage styles. Regardless of the discrepancy between the texts and images, the article verbally stylises the idea of London as an inspirational place for the concept of vintage fashion.

The popularity of London as an ideal city to be seen in cannot only be identified in fashion magazine reports such as those discussed above, but also in some of the recent book titles like *My Own London* and *Style City: London, Paris, Rome, Praha* in 2007 and *Days in London* in 2008. Not only do these books include a section of vintage fashion, but they also tend to adopt the style of a diary, which is apparent from their titles. *My Own London* (Yoe 2007) has subtitles, such as ‘a vintage feast in King’s Road [in London] (Yoe 2007: 91)’ and ‘Notting Hill: exquisite harmony between romanticism and vintage (Yoe 2007: 99)’. Firstly, as it was the case in ‘Ryeo Won’s British Diary’, London is explored in more details, district by district, whereas remainder of British cities remain almost as a vacuum in the representation of British (vintage) styles, at least in the current Korean fashion discourse. Secondly, it is worth noting that the geo-cultural conceptualisation of ‘London’ is common in fashion writing, for example, ‘festivity in King’s Road’ and ‘romanticism in Notting Hill’ in the context of vintage fashion.

The next example extends its focus to individuality and freedom. A self-claimed vintage lover, Naekyung Kwak’s book *Days in London* (2008) depicts the ways in which London is perceived as an everyday space for individuals to accomplish vintage styles freely. The following quotation is from the cover sleeves of the book.

Days in London

An office worker who goes to work wearing a classic suit and trainers
A female elementary school teacher who has a relationship with a rock
and roll singer
A graffiti artist who paints on the wall of an antique building

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Londoners who meet the challenge of the new while loving the worn-out
and old!
Today, let’s forget an insipid daily life for a while and enjoy their
[Londoners’] cheerful vintage styles

The individuals and the lives presented here might sound nonsense to non-Koreans, but at the same time, the copy noting here represents the ways in which some vintage-loving Koreans –at least the author and its readers- view this Western city. By suggesting the ways of life which are totally different from ‘us (Koreans)’, here, Koreans are thought to be confined to “an insipid daily life,” while Londoners “enjoy their cheerful vintage styles.” This is written as if vintage fashion brings happiness to individuals’ everyday life and posits the author herself as different from ‘us’ because she understands vintage tastes and different lifestyles and therefore, is (almost) within the reach of ‘happiness’.

In addition, based on Kwak’s previous text, it is more likely that the one who ‘has to meet the challenge of the new’ is actually Koreans, not Londoners because they have already become used to the ‘vintage’ styles –or fashion, whatever the author implies here-. This perspective can be identified in the following lengthy quotation, when she introduces ‘[t]he best vintage shops for vintage *mania*[cs]’,

In fact, the categorisation of ‘vintage style’ might be unfamiliar to them [Londoners]. This is because they often take crumpled old clothes from their mom’s or dad’s wardrobe and wear them as they are now without having any alteration, whereas Korean vintage *mania*[cs] intentionally go out and looks for the 60s-80s style clothes. To wear vintage dresses [in Korea], it is usual to go and rummage through Kwangjang Market¹⁴⁵, buy an 80’s vintage dress and wear it after alteration. But this rarely happens for them [Londoners] (Kwak 2008: 237-238).

Kwak’s description of wearing ‘old clothes taken from their [Londoners’] parents’ wardrobe¹⁴⁶ without alteration’ does not appear to be a big fashion challenge. On the contrary, the challenge lies more in Koreans fashion practices whereby they passionately rummage through a large market district and try to fit into the 60’s -

¹⁴⁵ Kwangjang Market is the oldest and most popular destination for *guje* and vintage consumers in Dongdaemun district, Seoul, Korea.

¹⁴⁶ This kind of narratives is often used to emphasis the natural mode of (western) vintage consumption in Korea. See the previous part of ‘granny look’ and the grandmothers’ wardrobe.

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80’s dresses, and then become involved with their reinterpretation altering them before wearing. Kwak carries on her explanation as follows:

Of course, there are shops [in London] who sell vintage-style clothes and accessories, but they just have the identical concept to normal shops and are not busy specialising the idea of ‘vintage’ [original emphasis] by promoting ‘vintage is in the current season’ [original emphasis]. [...] Korean people are not accustomed to vintage styles; is this why natural taste appears lacking when they try out vintage styles? (Kwak 2008: 238)

The popular destination for vintage dress shopping, Kwangjang Market, which is mentioned earlier by Kwak, does not have any explicit marketing strategy sending a commercial message towards consumers because this market is already one of the oldest, most traditional clothing stalls. If there is any whimsical fashion promotion saying “vintage is in the current season,” the main body of it is normally found in fashion magazines or style books like Kwak’s, not at traditional market stalls.

It is true that ‘Koreans are not accustomed to vintage styles’ as the concept was actually brought into South Korea in the wake of global fashion trends. When mom’s, dad’s or granny’s old wardrobes are mostly empty, unlike those in the West, where and how should Korean consumers get information and inspiration? There are more discussions about vintage fashion taking place because Koreans are not used to it, so Kwak’s comment seems unfair as it sounds like she is looking down on vintage consumption as it is practiced in South Korea

It is more surprising that people like Kwak, in a short period of time, have come to a definite understanding about the ‘naturalness’ of Western vintage styles and distance themselves from the unnaturalness of ‘us (Koreans)’. She goes further by concluding the section in the following ways;

Though I am an omnivorous vintage mania[c], I have come to know one thing for sure by wandering vintage shops in London and watching numerous fashionistas on the street. True fashionistas in London are exactly thereal vintage lover! (Kwak 2008: 239)

This quotation depicts Kwak’s process of the embodiment of vintage styles as an observer and learner. Even Londoners cannot hide from her rigid standard and ‘natural’ tastes and therefore, are stylistically discriminated as vintage-loving

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Londoners are considered as the most fashionable people. This typifies the ways in which the ideal other (a vintage loving Londoner) is constructed according to one’s fashion practices and knowledge.

I wanna be Carnaby’ Street punk fashion with British sensibility; wearing socks underneath stockings, wearing trousers over a skirt and a sleep-top over a T-shirt... A punky room filled with freedom of Carnaby without fixed rules, ‘Retro Punk’: ‘Vintage Punk’: ‘Feminine Punk’. A clothing shop called *Carnaby*, named after Carnaby street in London. (*Anan* no.30 August 2002: 116-21)

Similarly, the fashion stylist Eunyoung Seo, in her newspaper column ‘Style Icon: the power of vintage collection’ (2008), contrasts Korean actresses’ preference for new (Western) designer collections at the newly started red carpet ceremony with Hollywood actresses who wore (designers’) vintage collections at the Academy Awards. According to Seo, at the Academy Awards, people pay the best tribute to the rare vintage collection wearer, and these vintage wearers have become fashion icons. While there are not enough supplies of vintage clothes, and when, in any case, the taste would not be the same between Korea and the West. Why do Korean actresses (or vintage consumers) have to be compared with Western fashion icons? This illustrates the ways in which some Korean fashion consumers take the notion that what is considered to be stylish in the West must therefore be stylish in South Korea for granted, without using critical processes or autonomous practices to determine this. Nonetheless, Seo, like the Korean vintage connoisseurs previously discussed, seems to possess an embedded natural empathy with vintage fashion to a degree in which, “Finally, [I] burst into tears. I shed tears in silence in front of charming Madame Grès’ [vintage] dresses.” (Seo 2008)

This kind of obsessive *style competence*¹⁴⁷ shown towards the Western vintage fashion is well illustrated by the Korean shop owner in London, Kichul, in this interview conducted by Kibum Chung (2007).

I want to run the most proper vintage shop in London to show what real vintage is to people who have the wrong understanding of vintage as second-hand goods [...] Now it has been over three years running this place [...] journalists of magazines from England, Italy, Japan and Korea

¹⁴⁷ Taken from the idea of ‘*clothing competence*’ in ‘The Second Hand Clothing Trade in Zambia’, Karen Tranberg Hansen, in *Old Clothes, New Looks*, edited by A. Palmer and H. Clark, 2005: 114.

often come to my shop for a fashion shoot and hire some articles (Chung 2007: 52).

Seemingly, Korean vintage lovers admire the free, natural and haphazard manners of vintage style in London, and see these as vastly preferable to the monotonous and insipid Korean fashion styles. Yet, the above examples demonstrate that Korean fashion practitioners employ strict and extensive degrees of discernment to be aesthetically natural and free in their dress styles. In this context, his aim of ‘running the most proper vintage shop in London’ can be considered indifferent no less ruthlessly competitive than an athlete’s determination to win a gold medal at the Olympic Games.

Rummaging through the world, not in the family’s wardrobe

Given the fact that vintage clothes are inherently in short supply in South Korea; this section focuses on the ways in which vintage clothes are brought in from abroad by the individual (or at a micro business levels). The first chapter of the book *Style City: London, Paris, Rome, Praha* (Chung 2007) starts with the following quotation:

You should not miss out on shopping if you go to a trend mecca, style city. London, Paris, Rome ... It is an interesting journey to purchase items which just fit your taste and style at the origins of world fashion which then become a strong prop for you to present your own personality when you return home (Chung 2007: 8).

London, Paris and Rome are described as ‘a trend mecca, style city and the origins of world fashion’. The Western clothes in these cities are thought to fit Korean bodies and suit their personality, notwithstanding the geo-cultural and physical differences. Also, presumably, globalised tastes and a certain degree of knowledge on fashion are preconditions for Korean travellers to be able to partake in the shopping excursion successfully.

‘Ryeo Won’s British Diary’¹⁴⁸ tells a similar narrative, “Leaving [London] is not all sad because a full bag of pretty clothes and the memories of London will make me happy for a while” (*Anan* no. 72: 131). Ryeo won’s ‘full bag of pretty clothes’ from London is a trophy of the successful fashion excursion which is described as

¹⁴⁸ *Anan*, February 2006, no.72: 114-37.

‘a strong prop’ in the above Chung’s comments. This kind of pride is even more valid when it comes to vintage clothes due to the short supply of stylish second-hand garments in South Korea.

The fashion professor Gill Soon Park (2006) noted the adoption of vintage styles and the influx of ‘foreign’ (second-hand) clothes, in her book *An Exciting Fashion World*:

Vintage look is a style which cross-coordinates old-looking worn-out clothes found in a flea market or bonded shop. In our country [South Korea], so called ‘*chontee*¹⁴⁹ fashion’ has started with the revival of the popular styles from the past by [a female TV star] Euijung Lee in the late 1990s, and with the rage of overseas travel, clothes were purchased from foreign flea markets and brought into [South Korea]. (Park 2006: 102)

As explained earlier, ‘foreign’ flea markets generally mean the Western ones with the recent addition of Japan and Hong Kong. If this *chontee* fashion has started by a Korean female celebrity, why do people bring in used clothes from a foreign flea market? It is possible that the influx from abroad results purely from the lack of fashionable second-hand clothes in South Korea; but, it seems likely that *chontee* fashion has been inherently influenced by the Western vintage styles.

The significance of Park’s remark lies in indicating one of the most important social changes in South Korea at the turn of the 1990s; “Following the relaxation of foreign travel restrictions on Korean citizens [by the government] in 1989, Korean outbound travel grew rapidly, increasing by 526.6% between 1988 and 1995.”¹⁵⁰ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Trade also records that the numbers of outbound travellers have been increasing every year since 1989 (see Figure 65):¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ It is a Korean word for the styles of a clodhopper, a rustic.

¹⁵⁰ Prideaux, Bruce R. ‘Korean Outbound Tourism: Australia’s Response’ in *Journal Travel & Tourism Marketing*, University of Houston: Haworth Hospitality Press. <http://contents.archives.go.kr/next/content/listSubjectDescription.do;jsessionid=6CB6B0274083AFE8F23E6D892E39101E?id=003642>

¹⁵¹ http://www.0404.go.kr/call_01/call01.php

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Year	Korean outbound travellers (million)
2001	5.7
2003	6.64
2005	10.37
2006	11.81

Figure 65 increasing number of Korean outbound travelers in the early 2000s

In this social climate of travelling abroad freely, foreign goods and culture have also become easy to access by Korean fashion consumers. Fashion columnist Junghyun Bae (2007: 115) says that in South Korea, she cannot find any flea market selling fancy second-hand goods which attract her;

In 2003, I quit my job and lived in London for a year because I wanted to live together with the world-renowned fashionable Londoners. After I found that fashionistas on the streets of London mostly shops in Brick Lane, flea markets in Notting Hill and vintage shops in Camden, I rummaged through flea markets all over London every weekend [...] become a flea market *mania*[c]. (Bae 2007: 115)

Bae’s story, in many ways, resembles that of the above mentioned style-discovery books like *My Own London* and *Style City: London, Paris, Rome, Praha* in 2007 and *Days in London*. Therefore, the aesthetic thirst to embody the nostalgic ideologies associated with these foreign vintage clothes is distinctive among twenty- or thirty-something Koreans. Secondly, this kind of collective thirst among young people results in the leisure activities like the *Anan*’s annual (Europe-oriented) flea market event mentioned earlier.

PR woman Soomin Kim, who calls herself a ‘master of vintage shopping’, also considers the flea markets held at the weekend as indispensable destinations whenever she goes to England, Hong Kong or Japan.¹⁵² As shown in Bae’s and Kim’s cases, it is now usual to acquire vintage items from abroad. Due to their rarity in Korean second-hand clothes markets, these vintage garments can be more distinctive in a crowd and are considered exotic.

¹⁵² ‘Shopping Specialist’ in *Sure: Fun & Smart Shopping*, October 2007, pp. 132, South Korea.

While Bae and Kim represent the examples of personal shoppers, there are numerous shops which trade vintage clothes brought from abroad. More expensive ranges of vintage clothes tend to come directly from Europe, while cheaper ranges are supplied by other Asian countries such as Japan and Hong Kong; the rest of the countries are not explicitly mentioned due to the pejorative or counterfeit connotations attached.

An online vintage shop, Ugumni, states that “clothes in our vintage wardrobe are directly imported from Japan and also personally bought from Hong Kong and Thailand every two months.”¹⁵³ This kind of vintage clothing business is quite typical in South Korea. Similarly, a newly opened multi-shop called Ssamzi Market (March 2006) also provides imported vintage clothes and objects in the most traditional area of Insa-dong in Seoul. The following report promotes Ssamzi Market:

[Y]ou cannot be a true fashionista if you look away from the vintage appeal. Vintage generally signifies clothes, furniture, everyday objects, etc. which have been produced *within the last 100 years* [my emphasis]. For instance, [...] 50s Hepburn look [...] astronauts’ helmets in 1969 [...].¹⁵⁴

Ssamzi claims that they sell ‘real vintage’ goods which their designers have carefully chosen and bought while rummaging through markets in Hong Kong and Europe; for instance, they have optical pattern dresses which were popular among European women in the 1960s. However, Ssamzi’s claim of ‘real vintage’ is rather contradictory and ambiguous, considering their concept of “being retro and disco-like, and at the same time modern.”¹⁵⁵

Nonetheless, the supplies of foreign vintage clothing in the shops like Ugumni and Ssamzi demonstrate that the Korean vintage clothes market largely relies on both foreign fashion culture and products, while the hyperbole of South Korea fashion journalism mostly writes about the fabricated images of our grandmother’s look in

¹⁵³ <http://www.ogumni.co.kr/FrontStore/iCorpIntro.phtml>

¹⁵⁴ ‘City Travel: Ssamzi Market in Insa-dong’ in *My Wedding*, May 2005.

http://www.design.co.kr/section/news_detail.html?info_id=1236&page=&category=000000010003

¹⁵⁵ ‘City Travel: Ssamzi Market in Insa-dong’ in *My Wedding*, May 2005.

http://www.design.co.kr/section/news_detail.html?info_id=1236&page=&category=000000010003

the past to draw in vintage consumers. In short, the introduction of vintage fashion in South Korea is mainly based on Western culture.



Figure 66 *guje* /vintage shop in Dondaemun at the interview.

As briefly indicated in the previous examples of vintage shoppers and buyers travelling abroad, the resources of imported vintage clothes are no longer limited to the U.S. and Europe, but have been expanded to other Asian countries. Though, this does not mean that the Western-oriented vintage concept has shifted to Asian fashion history. Japan and Hong Kong have a variety of Western (or Western-style) used clothes as they both opened a door to the West long before South Korea did; and underdeveloped Asian countries have good quality Western second-hand clothes available at low prices, as they obtain plenty of relief goods which are donated by affluent countries.

For example, a 24-year old, female designer and shop owner¹⁵⁶, in the popular Dongdaemun shopping district, said that she bought the vintage collections displayed in her shop from Cambodia as well as from Italy and Spain, indicating some European brand second-hand shoes and bags which were actually brought in from Cambodia (see Figure 66). However, this owner normally introduces these articles as the European by emphasising their ‘unidentified’ origins instead of telling the place of import. In vintage markets, it seems to be increasingly important to identify the origins; where a garment has come from is a more pressing issue than its brand value. Nevertheless, this kind of material flow is a typical example of globalisation.

To conclude this chapter, I suggest that the recent vintage trends in South Korea represent the ways in which young adults have adapted to Western and global material culture. In order to increase their cultural affinity towards the idea of vintage fashion, Western cities and period styles have been used as aesthetic references to deliver the idea of being fashionable; and at the same time, in Korean fashion journalism, images of the Western and Korean grandmothers’ past fashion overlap. Therefore, within the cultural practice of vintage fashion consumption, geo-historical exoticism and the fabricated nostalgic image of grandmother play a key role. Here, grandmothers are not actually a nostalgic persona, but an aesthetically constructed ideal which is popular in the vintage fashion discourses of South Korea. In this respect, the way in which the idea of ‘grandmother’ has been prescribed in vintage fashion can be viewed as the process of ‘mythologization’ via ‘written-clothing’ (Barthes 1990) and resembles the historical myth of the arrival of a miniskirt in South Korea mentioned in Chapter 4.

Meanwhile, vintage shopping in foreign countries has recently arisen as a popular leisure activity by Korean consumers. In this bodily fashion practice, they adapt to the naturalness of Western vintage looks utilising their aesthetic knowledge and discernment. Kibum Chung (2007) states in the sleeves of his book cover, “Trendsetters do not wear clothes. They wear styles. Trendsetters do not consume.

¹⁵⁶ The interview took place on 14 November 2006 in Seoul. She allowed me taking photographs, but refused my interview recording. Therefore, I took a note during this interview.

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They do only creative consumption.” However, the last sentence can be rephrased in South Korea’s case into “they do only follow what is considered to be creative consumption in the West.”

The mode of Korean vintage consumption so far discussed is not about choosing an appropriate piece of old clothing, but is a highly embedded dress practice of collective learning and mimicking the most popular Western styles bygone eras. This only outcome of globalisation in this fashion practice can be found in its material flows, as they are brought in not only from the West, but also around Asian countries –though the origins of these clothes are the West.

8. Conclusion: Cultural and Material Flows of *Guje*/ Vintage Fashion from the West and Japan to South Korea

This thesis deconstructs the revival of *guje* fashion consumption in modern South Korea from socio-cultural perspectives. The three main case studies presented demonstrate the distinctive characteristics of *guje* fashion phenomena, and were conducted by employing both ethnographic methodology and semiotic analysis.

Key concepts in consumer studies, such as ‘consumer freedom’ and the ‘active audience model’ primarily advocate global diversity and consumers’ individuality. I have challenged these widespread academic perspectives counterarguing that these ideologies show great disregard for the impact of global homogeneity and furthermore, Westernisation on non-Western countries. With this in mind, this thesis sought to criticize the ways in which the extravagant volume of imported goods and culture do not only dominate modern South Korea, but also have been normalised within the domain of everyday consumption.

Imported second-hand consumption, along with its Western emphasis on philanthropy and the environment, normally slips out of the criticism of excessive consumption, but in South Korea’s case, at least, there is a tendency that even the popularity of *guje* consumption depends on vogues in Western vintage fashion. Therefore, the individuality which Koreans are seeking to achieve or display is ultimately whatever is the current fashion style of the West. From a post-colonial standpoint, the way in which Korean consumers aesthetically emulate Western styles in their *guje* /vintage fashion practice demonstrates the process wherein the *Other* strives to improve their status by becoming the advanced self.

Guje fashion, in its most popular articles from *yasahng* to blue jeans, has been predominantly practiced by male consumers since the 1950s. The extent to which *yasahng* fashion has diversified –obviously, by following Japanese street fashion styles- coincides with the level of democracy achieved in South Korean politics. Moreover, throughout the historical and social development, the level of mimicry in fashion practice has grown. In the 1960s, the Western fashions, now coveted as vintage, reached South Korea only due to a small number of rock stars, style icons

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who inspired a minority of privileged Koreans. In contrast, since the 1990s, fashion styles of individuals on the streets in the Western cities, as well as numerous Hollywood stars, have been imitated instantaneously by Korean (*guje*) consumers.

Global fashion is not the only explanation for the popularity of used clothes in South Korea, yet unlike Hong Kong, where the turning point was the ideological political changes (Clark 2005), the main cause for the popularity of used garments in South Korea seems more straightforward, popularly being attributed to the way in which the IMF crisis inspired distrust of modernisation. Progress can be seen as an acceleration towards the unknown future, as Ruhlen (2003) suggests, and accordingly, the South Korean public sentiment in the wake of their economic despondency led to the strong yearning for the past. If not for the economic crisis, nostalgia as a global fashion trend would certainly have reached South Korea in any case, just as it has in Hong Kong.

South Korea has achieved economic success so far, but has not fully achieved an autonomous fashion practice which represents their identity, at least in the case of *guje* /vintage clothes consumption. I have demonstrated this by examining the cultural implications of: the American popular culture in *yasahng* consumption; Japanese street fashion in the recommodification of second-hand style jeans; Western vintage fashion culture which displaces South Korea's own history.

In case of *yasahng* consumption, I confirmed that unlike the Western use of military fashion which has its origin in anti-war and hippie movements, South Korean adoption of this trend has never had any such ideological association and is simply a stylistic choice made by individual consumers; as a famous singer Cho indicated during my telephone interview, "I did not have any kind of resistance against the military dictatorship of South Korean government at all [in the 1960s and 1970s]. On the contrary, it was primarily for *fashion*."

The debate surrounding the authenticity and reproduction of various second-hand style jeans demonstrates the irony of attempting to express individuality by embodying the 'original' Western material culture as reintroduced and mediated by Japanese street style. While striving to set themselves apart from the monotony of

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conventional South Korean fashion, Japanese culture so heavily influences these young Korean consumers in their quest for self-expression that they come to rely on branding as an emblem of originality. This type of consumer practice can be understood as “Japanization of South Korea” (Nelson 2000: 152) or as a sign of the latent Nipponophilia.

Finally, having examined South Korea’s fetishisation of Western vintage trends, it seems reductive to suggest that nostalgic fashion practice is an organic consequence of the desire to return to a simpler Korean past in the wake of the economic crisis. On the contrary, Korean consumers identify their past within that of the “imagined West.” Western cities like London are viewed through ‘rose-tinted’ lenses as intrinsically stylish cultural reservoirs for their aesthetic and sartorial aspiration. Importantly, on close examination, the historic reference points informing ‘*halmonee* (grandmother) *fashion*’ are no way indigenous to South Korea. Rather, this is appropriated nostalgia; grounded in a yearning for someone else’s past.

I believe that Koreans’ adoption of these Western (and Japanese) fashions can be seen as a form of exoticism and imitation entirely free from mockery.

Wealthy Europeans have a long history of wearing non-Western dress as a form of exoticism. [...] In the late 1960s and early 1970s hippie fashion promoted the beauty and authenticity of non-Western and vintage clothing discovered in flea markets, [...] and charity shops [...] Today, wearing second hand clothes has become a mainstream phenomenon that is highly commodified within the global fashion system of production, marketing and consumption (Palmer *et al.* 2005: 173-174).

One of the most coherent aspects in these three types of *guje* fashion practices is the influence of hippies’ fashion styles - for example, the employment of military surplus and ‘granny look’ -, but without being affected by the ways in which they reacted to social issues at the time. This has led South Korean *guje*/ vintage practice to the considerable lack of the representation of their own social and cultural issues and therefore, to inevitable imitation of the appearance of the Western and Japanese fashion trends. In this respect, diversity does not necessarily come from authenticity or individuality. In *guje* fashion practice, diversity among

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contemporary consumers originates in the variety of cultural aspiration (role models) based on the myriad of material and cultural resources from the West.

The most important, but hidden, aspect is the crucial role of Japan as a mediator in both cultural and material flows of *guje* /vintage fashion consumption. For instance, the most popular wedding practice in South Korea is the Christian wedding ceremonies, including Western-style white wedding gowns, regardless of people's religion. The everyday practice of Christian wedding was brought into South Korea, not directly from the West, but from Japan (Pak 1991, quoted in Kendall 1996: 67). This cultural flow can be applied to the case of the adoption of vintage fashion trends which have had such a great influence on the re-development of the *guje* clothes market.

The following text about the experience of the prominent anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss can suggest the direction in which this kind of thesis can be developed and extended into various research areas in the future. Lévi-Strauss' impression about modern South Korea is well-illustrated in an interview conducted by another social anthropologist, Thomas H. Eriksen (2000 [1995]).

He was visiting South Korea, and his hosts eagerly took him around to show him the great advances made by this much publicised NIC (newly industrialised country). They show him sports stadia, freeways, skyscrapers and factories. Lévi-Strauss was not particularly interested, and wandered off as often as he could to museums where he could study old masks. 'Professor Lévi-Strauss!', his hosts eventually exclaimed, 'you are only interested in things that no longer exist!' – 'Yes', he replied sullenly, 'I am only interested in things that no longer exist.'
To Lévi-Strauss, *the cultural variation within modernity was not sufficient to call for his attention; to him, Seoul appeared more or less identical with Paris* [my emphasis]. (Eriksen 2000 [1995]: 310)

Lévi-Strauss' retort could be equally well-applied to the way in which Koreans assimilate the Western-led social development and lifestyles, and also dress themselves in Western-style clothes and fashion. If imported Western goods and culture (be it as luxury or as vintage *guje*) are considered as "the cultural variation within modernity," that so failed to hold, Lévi-Strauss' attention, then Seoulites' fashion might 'appear more or less identical with that of Parisians (or Westerners,

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more generally speaking)'. In this fashion practice, autonomy can be easily cancelled out and displaced into the Western hegemonic ideology.

Having considered Lévi-Strauss' acute perception of the appearance of modern South Korea, the important issue lies not in 'the cultural variation within modernity' or 'global diversity'; but in the gradual cancellation of the cultural distinctions between different countries. This kind of erasure results in the Western-oriented homogeneity which most academics opt to hide within the signifier "globalisation" attached to which are many attractive features of modernity such as high speed, wide circulation, new technologies and so on.

However, the Korean host's keenness to display "the great advances made by this much publicised NIC like sports stadia, freeways, skyscrapers and factories" (Eriksen 2000 [1995]: 310) to Lévi-Strauss can also be understood as the desire to receive the assurance on this modern development and to overcome the 'outer' or 'inferior' complex, which is an 'open secret' (Kang 2004). By interrogating *guje* /vintage fashion practice, I tried to reveal this type of open secret rather than to conceal it. If Seoul is like Paris, then the Seoulites emulation of, for example, 'Parisian' fashion should not be overlooked or advocated as autonomous fashion consumption.

I claim that the lack of autonomy and authenticity both in garments and in city landscape is due to rapid industrialisation and modernisation, or more specifically the unbalanced development between economy and culture. Therefore, *guje* fashion is a good tool with which to demonstrate the disproportionate consumer culture which is modern, but primarily Western.

Ultimately, considering their passionate exploration and recommodification of vintage styles and global fashion trends, it is highly possible that South Koreans will develop a distinct sartorial aesthetic in the future. Yet, at present, it is hard to identify a great deal of consumer autonomy in *guje* fashion practice. The role of Japan as a cultural and material mediator is evident in much of the discussion amongst *guje* consumers. Furthermore, there is no doubt that second-hand fashion, like all other aspects of South Korean material culture, is taking its cues from the

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West. Whether appropriating either commodities or ideologies – origin is everything.

Glossary

- anti-kwasobi campaign** 과소비 추방 캠페인 과소비 A civil movement against excessive consumption, often related to the Korean anti-import drives 수입품 불매 운동 who “urge Koreans not to buy imported products” (Nelson 2000: 134). see Citizen’s Action for Expulsion Overconsumption 추방 범 국민 운동
본부 <http://www.cceo.or.kr/>
- Apgujeong-dong** 압구정동 One of the most fashionable luxury shopping districts in *Gangnam-gu, Seoul*. See also *Cheongdam-dong* located next to *Apgujeong-dong*.
- Auction** 옥션 The South Korean branch of eBay.
- (soy)bean-paste girl (or woman)** 된장녀 (doenjang-nyeo) A derogatory Korean term denoting women who display their passionate interest especially in consuming Western luxury goods and lifestyle.
- Beautiful Store** 아름다운 가게 The first charity shop chain in South Korea.
- bokgo** 복고 retro.
- bokgakpoom** 복각품 A replica (product).
- bokgakpan** 복각판 A replica version.
- The Brotherhood of War** 태극기 휘날리며 (Taegukgi) A Korean War film in 2004.
- Cheongdam-Dong** 청담동 The most prestigious luxury shopping district in *Gangnam-gu, Seoul*. It locates next to *Apgujeong-dong*.
- Cho, Young-Nam** 조영남 a South Korean male singer-songwriter and visual artist
- chontea fashion** 촌티 패션 Uncouth or unfashionable-country style, sometimes, it is interpreted as vintage fashion.
- Coke jeans** 코크 진 See Levi’s Coca-Cola jeans.
- Daughter in-law fashion of Cheongdam-dong** 청담동 며느리 패션 The most sophisticated and luxurious fashion style which is likely to be worn by young women in a prestigious area, Cheongdam-dong. A Chanel suit or bag and Ferragamo pumps are emblem of this style.
- Destiny** 숙명 A South Korean gangster film in 2007.
- Dongdaemun** 동대문 East Gate of traditional Seoul - one of the largest and oldest market districts are located around this area. See also Namdaemun.
- Doota** 두타 A high-rise fashion tower in Dongdaemun.

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Eco Party Mearry	에코 파티 메아리 A recycling fashion brand launched by <i>Beautiful Store</i> in collaboration with four young designers.
Gangnam(-gu) or Kangnam(-gu)	강남(구) Known as the most privileged district in (Seoul,) South Korea. <i>Apgujeong-dong</i> and <i>Cheongdam-dong</i> are also parts of <i>Gangnam-gu</i> .
<i>ganzi</i>	간지 means looking cool or very stylish, informal.
Gmarket	지마켓 An online market place like Auction.
<i>gookbang-sak</i>	국방색 Army green colour.
Green Korea United	녹색 연합.
Green Consumers' Networks in Korea (GCN)	녹색 소비자 연대.
<i>guje</i>	구제 Relief.
guje clothes	구제 옷 Imported second-hand clothes. Sometimes, it is called just <i>guje</i> .
<i>guje poom</i>	구제품 relief supplies.
guje jeans	구제 청바지, see other examples liek <i>guje shop</i> 구제 가게 <i>guje</i> fashion 구제 패션 <i>guje</i> T-shirt 구제 티셔츠.
<i>guje-ppil</i>	구제빨 <i>guje</i> style or <i>guje</i> look, informal.
<i>guje poom fashion</i>	구제품 패션.
<i>halmonee fashion</i>	할머니 패션 Grandmother-style fashion or granny look.
Hongdae	홍대 An abbreviation of Hongik University. Hongdae is a leisure area famous for young fashion and its edgy cultural status.
<i>hurugi</i>	후루기 A generic Japanese term, often used among South Korean <i>guje</i> consumers, denoting second-hand clothes
Hyundae Department Store	현대백화점 Is located in the luxurious fashion district Apgujeong-Dong.
Internet Café	인터넷 카페 The English translation of the South Korean equivalent of an Internet forum.
Itaewon	이태원 With the principal U.S. Army base in Seoul close-by, Itaewon is an exotic shopping and leisure district and displays a great deal of foreign influences attracting both military and civilian visitors.
Jeeyoung's bag	지영이 백 Jeeyoung is one of the most popular girls name. Jeeyoung's bag is an alias of the Louis Vuitton <i>Speedy</i> bag.
-jjang	짱 An informal noun ending which means 'the best', for example, <i>ganzi jjang</i> 간지 짱.
Joint Security Area	<i>Gongdong gyeongbi guyeok JSA</i> 공동경비구역 JSA A South Korean film surrounding military tragedy based in Joint Security Area in 2000.
Kangnam(-gu)	See <i>Gangnam(-gu)</i> .

Kwangjang Market	광장시장 One of the largest market district in Dongdaemun and Jongno.
Levi's Coca-Cola jeans (or Coke jeans)	리바이스 코카콜라 청바지 A limited-edition Levi's jeans produced in Japan in collaboration with Coca-Cola Japan.
Levi's Buffalo	리바이스 버팔로 A counterfeit version of Levi's Coca-Cola jeans.
Levi's Pepsi	리바이스 펩시 A counterfeit version of Levi's Coca-Cola jeans.
mania	매니아 A Korean English word for manic(s), denoting a person (or people) who has a great deal of enthusiasm for, or obsession with, something.
Migliore	밀리오레 A high-rise fashion tower in Dongdaemun, <i>migliore</i> is originally an Italian word for 'superior' or 'the best'.
Myungdong	명동 The most famous shopping area in central Seoul, Seoul City Hall is adjacent.
Namdaemun	남대문 South Gate of traditional Seoul where there is a large traditional wholesale market district.
nation's bag	국민백 Another alias of the Louis Vuitton <i>Speedy</i> bag.
Nippon-ppil	니뽀뽀 Nippon (or Japanese) style.
-ppil	뽀 An informal noun ending which signifies 'feeling', 'touch', 'look' or 'style'. See also <i>guje-ppil</i> or <i>Nippon-ppil</i> .
Pusan	부산 The second largest city in South Korea.
Rain	비 A South Korean male singer and actor.
reform	리폼 An English word widely used by Koreans regarding creative alteration and re-use of the existing things.
replica	복각 See <i>bokgakpoom</i> .
Rodeo Street	로데오 거리 A fashion street in Apgujeong-dong.
The Scam	작전 A South Korean film concerning fraud and stock market manipulations in 2009.
Seoul	서울 The capital of South Korea.
SFC, Seoul Fashion Centre	서울 패션 센터 A subsidiary organisation supported by the City of Seoul for the purpose of supporting the fashion industry in South Korea.
Silmido	실미도 A South Korean film in 2003 surrounding the military tragedy of national division.
soybean-paste girl (or woman)	된장녀 See bean-paste girl.
Thai-Big E Levi's	타이 빅 E 리바이스 With its origin of Thailand, it connotes those jeans are counterfeit.
three-minute bag	3분 백 an alias of the Louis Vuitton <i>Speedy</i> bag.
tteghi	떼기 An informal noun which means 'per unit' or 'per bale' in clothing wholesale business.
vintage	빈티지

Glossary

Yoon, Bokhee

윤복희 a South Korean female singer who was very famous in the 1960s and 1970s.

yajeon jumper

야전 잠바 A military field jacket.

yasahng

야상 Another name for a military field jacket. This word is more widely used than *yajeon jumper* by general consumers.

Appendix

Part I: Extra photographs from the fieldwork in South Korea

1) *Guje* consumers on the street (2006)

Figure a. Two school boys with their *guje* look.



Figure b. Two college boys during their *guje* shopping.



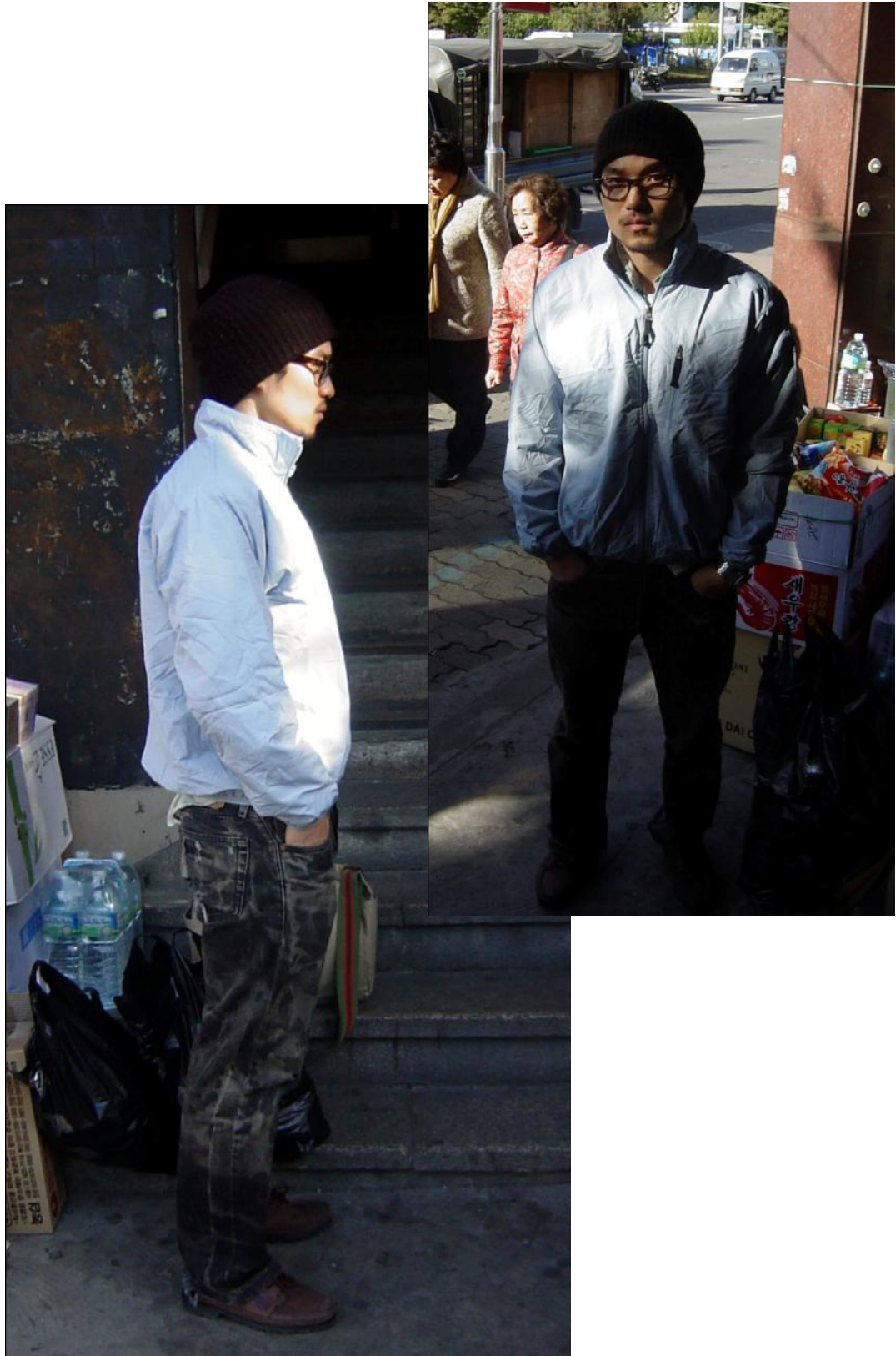
Figure c. A teenage girl demonstrates her adoption of *guje* fashion.



Figure d. A teenage boy with his *guje* leather jacket over a school uniform.



Figure e. A male *guje* consumer.



2) *Guje* sections in Dongdaemun Market (2006)

Figure a. Twenty-five-storey Migliore shopping mall in the centre and ten-storey Doota shopping mall on the lower-right side. A huge white and red board in the middle shows “Imported Multi-*Guje* (in blue letters)” and “Imported Luxury Goods (in red).”



Figure b & c. Interior of Migliore shopping mall. Red signs direct consumers to *guje* clothing sections on the lower ground floor.

Figure b.



Figure c.



Figure d & e. an older and more traditional shopping mall Pyounghwa Fashion Plaza in Dongdaemun market.

Figure d.



Figure e.



Figure f. A sign on the right presents “Luxury, *Guje* World, Princess Fashion.”



Figure g. This market is located opposite Migliore shopping mall and used to be Dongdaemun Football Stadium.



Figure h. A male sales-assistant at a *guje* clothing shop presents a typical *guje* style from head to toe.



Figure i & j. various sections of *guje* clothing shops.

Figure i.



Figure j.



Figure k. “Imported *multi-guje*” is written in yellow on a red sign.



Figure l. A section of a *guje* clothing shop.



Figure m – o. Details of a vintage shop.

Figure m.



Figure n.

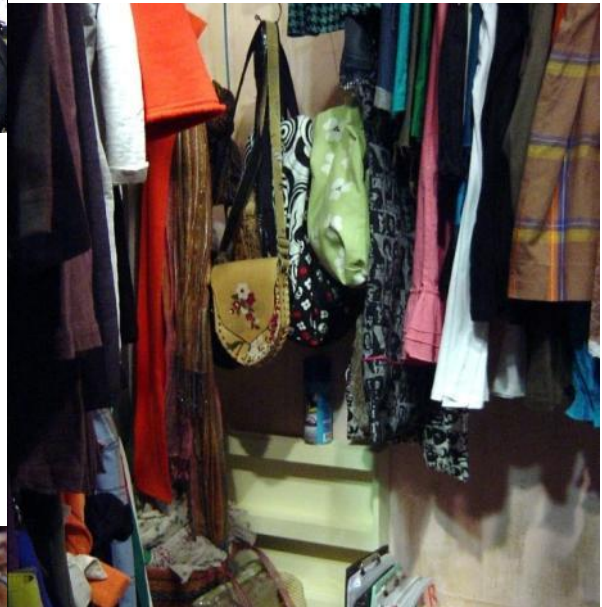


Figure o.



Figure p. An owner of a *guje* clothing shop planning his on-line business.



Figure q. Migliore shopping mall at night. It opens over 12 hours a day from 11.00 till 23.30.



3) Military clothes stalls in Namdaemun Market (2007)

Figure a & a.1. An entrance of a military clothing stall section.

Figure a.



Figure a.1.



Figure b. Numerous stalls are located next to each other. A sign post with red letters in the middle-left says “clothing alteration.”



Figure c – e. Details of military clothing stalls.

Figure c.



Figure d.



Figure e.



Figure f. A male consumer wears a military coat, trousers and shoes on his shopping trip for military clothes.



4) Military clothes shops in Itaewon (2007)

Figure a & b. Exterior and interior of a military specialised shop DMZ.

Figure a.



Figure b.



Figure c. The owner of DMZ.



Figure d & e. Exterior and interior of a military and *guje* clothes shop.

Figure d.



Figure e.



5) Luxury consignment shops in Apgujeong-dong (2006)

Figure a. “Apgujeong-road (in black), Street of fashion (in red)” is written on a stone sign.



Figure b. One of the most prestigious department stores like Galleria is located in Apgujeong-road (or Apgujeong-dong).



Figure c. Numerous luxury consignment stores can be found in Apgujeong-dong, across Galleria Department Store.



Every consignment shop in this area advertises that they deal with ‘second-hand luxury goods’, as can be seen in **figure d – f**.

Figure d. ‘We sell luxury watches like Rolex, Cartier, Hermès, Bulgari on consignment’ is written on the front window of a consignment shop in Apgujeong-dong.



Figure e.



Figure f.



6) Magazine stands (2007)

Figure a – c. A foreign magazine shop in central Seoul.

Figure a.



Figure b.



Figure c.



Figure d – f. A fashion magazine section at Kyobo bookstore; a glass case presents various freebies which are offered by every magazine.

Figure d.



Figure e.



Figure f.

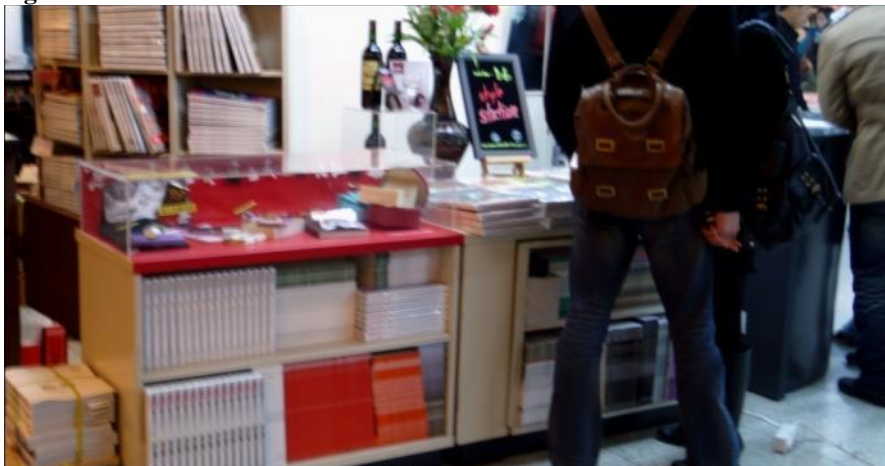


Figure g & h. A magazine stand in a tube station

Figure g.



Figure h.



Part II: Interview transcripts

In this part, English words will appear in italic where they were used directly by Koreans as foreign words, such as *fashion*, (*vintage*) *style*, a *dancer* and so on. Wide usage of English words among Koreans can be seen as yet another reflection of the level of prevalent Western cultural influence.

Interview 1 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 1 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 1: I am twenty-five years old.

JH: What is your name? You can pick an assumed name if you want.

- Speaker 1: I am Min, Min.

JH: I see, and you are twenty-five years old. And your occupation... what do you do?

- Speaker 1: My occupation? I am a *dancer*, a *dancer*.

JH: Ah, a *dancer*. Are you a *full-time dancer*?

- Speaker 1: Yes, I am.

JH: Well then, why did you come here today?

- Speaker 1: I came here to buy some clothes.

JH: What kind of clothes do you want to buy?

- Speaker 1: Well, as it is cold (.) as the weather gets colder, some sort of *jackets*.

JH: I see. By the way, are you perhaps here to buy some *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 1: Yes, I came to see something like that as this is a *guje* market here.

JH: Well, how often do you come here?

- Speaker 1: Um, this is the first visit in a year [laughs].

JH: Do you still buy *guje* clothes often apart from your shopping trips like today?

- Speaker 1: I just come by and browse a lot. But when I want to buy, I normally come along with my friends and try things on. And I buy if I find something I like, if not, then I just=

JH: =Do your friends also buy with you?

- Speaker 1: Yes, they do.

JH: Do you also use the *Internet* [for *guje* clothes shopping]?

- Speaker 1: I don't usually buy on the *Internet*.

JH: I see. Why is that? Do you have any particular reason?

- Speaker 1: It is because there is no actual *size*.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 1: Well, my body is not a standard size as my arms are pretty long. So, the *Internet* [shopping] doesn't work for me. I need to put them on before I buy.

JH: Alright. Why do you look for *guje* clothes? Do you have any special reason?

- Speaker 1: No, I don't. I just wanted to come here [laughs].

JH: Well, do you have any preferred *styles* of clothes? If yes, what's the reason you prefer *guje* clothes to others?

- Speaker 1: Well, no, I don't have any special reason. It is just (.) I am here today just because I felt like coming.

JH: So, do you have any reason for coming over here?

- Speaker 1: I just feel like it.

JH: You just feel like it?

- Speaker 1: Yes.

JH: Well then, do you have any aversion towards second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 1: There is no problem as I can wear them after washing. [To friend] Right? You can wash them before you wear them, can't you?

JH: Then, what about second-hand shoes?

- Speaker 1: Second-hand clothes and bags are fine, but second-hand shoes are not. With shoes, it is good to buy a new pair because they would fit your feet better.

JH: I see, but even if they are your own *size*?

- Speaker 1: Um, I don't like to.

JH: Oh, I see. Well, do your parents or older generations scold you for wearing second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 1: No, they don't.

JH: I see, thank you.

Interview 2 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 2 = male consumer

Speaker 3 = female vendor

Speaker 4 = male vendor

Speaker 5 = female vendor

JH = interviewer

JH: Excuse me. Are you here to buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 2: Yes.

JH: Sorry to bother you, but may I ask you a few questions relating to my thesis?

- Speaker 2: Sure.

JH: Do you mind me recording this interview?

- Speaker 2: No.

JH: You can do this under an assumed name.

[The interview is interrupted by some vendors at the market]

- Speaker 2: What are they saying?

JH: They told me not to do interviews here.

JH: [To the vendors] I am not covering News materials here.

- Speaker 3: It's obvious that you are going to report a story in the newspaper by asking questions to customers and digging things out here.

JH: No, it's not for the newspaper (.) I think you have misunderstood. It is only for personal use. I am writing my thesis. It is only to be used within academia like showing my tutors, not to be printed in public.

- Speaker 4: Where are you doing your thesis?

JH: I am studying in England.

- Speaker 5: If you are studying in England, then you should do this in England. Why here?

JH: I do this in England, too.

- Speaker 4: Writing itself is good, but=

JH: =There have been many studies about Hong Kong or Africa, but none about Korea so far. So, I am doing this only with good intentions.

- Speaker 4: I'll give you a piece of advice young lady. Everything can be taken from you (.) uh, permission=

JH: =Permission? Is there somewhere I can get it?

Speaker 4: You can't get permission. Only people who have businesses here are allowed to work here.

Interview 3 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 6 = male vendor

JH = interviewer

- Speaker 6: There are *guje* customers who are in their fifties and sixties.

JH: In their fifties and sixties?

- Speaker 6: Yes, and we didn't have a lot of clothes in the 1960s and 70s. So, you can consider it similar to the current Southeast Asia.

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 6: By the way, could you be an under-cover journalist investigating something?

JH: No, I'm not. I am doing my PhD course.

- Speaker 6: I have had some trouble before because of that; photographs were being taken without asking and=

JH: =Would you like to see my student card? In fact, there is not so much interest in *guje* clothes in Korea, but in England and other countries=

- Speaker 6: =They are also in England. There are people who wear *vintage* clothes in England=

JH: =There are books out already about the cases of Southeast Asia and Africa; for example, what *guje* markets are like in those places. But, I can't find anything about Korea. Also, as I study in England, I have felt drawn to this subject matter.

- Speaker 6: Then go to Cheonggyecheon on Sunday.

JH: Cheonggyecheon? Where in Cheonggyecheon should I go?

- Speaker 6: It is at the Dongmyo Station. You can collect more information there as people are more open than here. Just one moment, please (.) If you go to the Dongmyo Station, you can hear various stories about the flea market and *guje* market. It is quite closed here. Ever since a damaging story was reported, it has been extremely (.) Oh, if you go there on Sunday, from morning until evening, you can find shoes and various things as well as clothes.

JH: Can I drop by again with my student card during a weekday when you are less busy?

- Speaker 6: But here is (.) There is more variation there.

JH: Well, it will be helpful for me to hear your opinion.

- Speaker 6: Ok, come around some time.

JH: Thank you.

14/11/2006 04: 32 - Continued from the previous interview with the speaker 6:

- Speaker 6: It was just cheap to buy *guje* clothes. It started with the clothes which Americans gave us when we were very poor in the 1950s; 1950s Korea was identical to the current situation in Southeast Asia. We are now giving *guje* clothes to poor countries like Ethiopia. Well, in the past, we

used to receive and wear *guje* clothes; and it has been changed now to a more indigenous and commercialised way (.) so, this is a case of the complete indigenisation. *Guje* clothes are also good for atopic dermatitis. In some cases, children who suffer from atopy have difficulties wearing new clothes, and therefore, chose to wear *guje* clothes which have already been washed and worn, and would not cause a chemical reaction.

- Speaker 6 (cont'd): *Guje* is not something to buy as it is expensive, but because of the Japanese style, *ganzi*, or *ganzi-ppal*, which is another type of *ganzi*.

JH: How would you describe *ganzi* in a [Korean] word?

- Speaker 6: Well, it is something which fits your own image. The *trend* itself is called Japan-*ppil* or Nippon-*poong*. For example, there is a *trend* such as wearing very tight fitting clothes. Well, if you write down questions, I can write the replies as well. Oh, why don't you send an e-mail to me? I will then write back to you.

Interview 4 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 7 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

– An interview with two male friends in their twenties –

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 7: I am Chulsoo Kim.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 7: I am twenty years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 7: I am a college student.

JH: Do you often buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 7: Yes, frequently.

JH: Where do you normally buy them?

- Speaker 7: At Kwangjang Market.

JH: Do you use the *Internet* for shopping?

- Speaker 7: No, *Internet* shopping isn't reliable.

JH: Is there any particular reason why?

- Speaker 7: The *size* does not fit.

JH: Is it all because of the *size*?

- Speaker 7: Yes.

JH: I see. Then, why do you like *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 7: Well, they just look *ganzi*. Yeah, I like that kind of *ppil*.

JH: What does *ganzi* mean?

- Speaker 7: It means just looking cool.

JH: Cool-looking! Yes. When did you first start buying *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 7: It was when I was nineteen years old.

JH: Is there any special motivation for you to buy them?

- Speaker 7: There was no motivation. It was only because they look cool.
- JH: How did you come across *guje* clothes?
- Speaker 7: Together with my friends.
- JH: Do you perhaps go through magazines or films to find that kind of cool-looking *guje style*? If not=
- Speaker 7: =I just come and pick.
- JH: Do you follow any particular style or something?
- Speaker 7: No, I don't.
- JH: Do you particularly like any of the previous eras or something from the past?
- Speaker 7: No, it is only because they are cool.
- JH: Do your friends also buy a lot?
- Speaker 7: Yes.
- JH: How often do you come here to Kwangjang Market?
- Speaker 7: At least once a month, at least, yes.
- JH: What kind of clothes do you mainly buy? What kind of items?
- Speaker 7: Just browsing, and then, something like blue jeans=
- JH: =What about shoes or *accessories*?
- Speaker 7: I don't buy them.
- JH: Is there any reason?
- Speaker 7: No, I don't even have a reason [laughs] no reason.
- JH: So, mainly blue jeans?
- Speaker 7: Yes, and something to put on as well, going-out clothes.
- JH: Thank you.

Interview 5 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 8 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 8: I am Hoon Kang.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 8: I am twenty years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 8: I am a student.

JH: Do you often buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 8: Well, I don't buy them often.

JH: What kind of *items* do you buy?

- Speaker 8: Well, just something like going-out tops, or trousers.

JH: Do you also buy *T-shirts* here?

- Speaker 8: No, I only buy *brand-name T-shirts*.

JH: Why?

- Speaker 8: *T-shirts* are long lasting, but *guje* T-shirts are easily damaged with washing.

JH: Is there a hygiene concern?

- Speaker 8: Yes, there is.

JH: How often do you come to the market?

- Speaker 8: Every two months to buy something.

JH: Do you also come here for other things?

- Speaker 8: Just with my friends.

JH: Well then, do you only visit the market, or do you also do something else around this area?

- Speaker 8D: I just go to the places where my friends go; I would rather buy on the *Internet* than at this kind of place.

JH: Do you often use the *Internet* shopping?

- Speaker 8: Yes.

JH: What kind of sites do you normally visit?

- Speaker 8: Sites?

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 8: The sites like G-market or Daum Onket.

JH: Your friend said that the *Internet* is unreliable; do you have any reason why you prefer the *Internet* for shopping?

- Speaker 8: Yes, it is convenient.

JH: Are there any problems with sizing and delivery?

- Speaker 8: No, there aren't.

JH: Having used the *Internet* for shopping, what do you think of it if you compare it with the market?

- Speaker 8: I think that the *Internet* is better as I don't need to do all the legwork.

JH: What about price?

- Speaker 8: I don't find any difference in pricing, either.

JH: Do you bargain over the price at the market?

- Speaker 8: Yes.

JH: Without being able to bargain on the *Internet*, does pricing still not matter to you?

- Speaker 8: No.

JH: How frequently do you shop on the *Internet*? Well, let's suppose you are buying a pair of jeans.

- Speaker 8: I browse whenever I can spare some time, especially clothing. So, I buy something when I've saved enough money for it.

JH: Apart from the *Internet* shopping, do you still like to browse to see what kind of clothes are at the market?

- Speaker 8: Yes.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 6 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 9 = male vendor

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 9: I am Ilhong Min.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 9: I am twenty-four years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 9: I sell clothing.

JH: How long have you done it?

- Speaker 9: I started my own business three months ago, but I have worked as a shop assistant since I was twenty years old.

JH: What kind of clothing do you sell?

- Speaker 9: I exclusively sell *guje* clothing.

JH: By *guje* clothing, do you mean second-hand clothes which are imported from foreign countries?

- Speaker 9: Yes.

JH: Where do you mainly import from?

- Speaker 9: They are imported mainly from Japan, almost over 90 percent from Japan and 10 percent come from the market.

JH: Have you worked with *guje* clothes since you were twenty years old?

- Speaker 9: Yes

JH: Well then, did you start it because you liked *guje* clothes, or did you just happen to work in this type of clothing shop?

- Speaker 9: I started it because I liked *guje* clothes.

JH: Since when have you been interested in *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 9: Since I was seventeen years old.

JH: Was there any special motivation?

- Speaker 9: It looked different from others when I wore them.

JH: Didn't you wear school uniform when you were seventeen?

- Speaker 9: Yes, I wore school uniform.

JH: Did you? Then, did you buy *guje* clothes only to wear after school? Or, are they for somewhere special?

- Speaker 9: That's right, after school, during weekends or at a picnic=

JH: =Yes.

- Speaker 9: Well then, the school life was (.) I just wore them.

JH: How did you first come across *guje* clothes? Did you get to know them from somewhere in your local area, or through the media and magazines?

- Speaker 9: I first went to a *guje* clothing shop by chance when I was on a shopping trip in Seoul. I have been attracted to the fact that all *guje* clothes are different from one another; this is why I started wearing them. Also, I have received a more positive response from people than when I used to wear ordinary casual clothes.

JH: Who are those people you just mentioned?

- Speaker 9: Mostly my friends. But adults do not normally like it.

JH: I see. What do your parents say about it?

- Speaker 9: They just ask why I buy and pay for worn-out clothes, but they're used to it now.

JH: Do they still allow you to buy worn-out clothes?

- Speaker 9: Yes. When I bought them in the past, I just made up an excuse about borrowing my friend's clothes.

JH: So, did you lie?

- Speaker 9: Yes, I did. So, I have gone through that way.

JH: Did your parents comment about the design of *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 9: No, apart from the styles of being torn and ripped (.) especially the trousers; they used to ask me why I was wearing ripped jeans and were worried that people would judge me that I don't have any money. But with its styles, the general response has become better and better nowadays. As there are a lot of new, unique designs, there are more parents who consider *guje* clothes pretty.

JH: Then, where did you initially go to buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 9: I frequently used to go to the Preya Town here at Dongdaemun and the area around Ewha Women's University. The Preya Town was once very famous, but that's no longer the case.

JH: Have you ever felt uncomfortable being looked at as different by others, like standing out and being conspicuous?

- Speaker 9: At first, I used to be self-conscious about my style. But now I feel at ease when people stare. I realise that I look different because I dress better than others, not just because I stand out. Now, I even enjoy being looked at by others.

JH: Other than clothing, do you have any hobbies, such as music or films to express your individuality?

- Speaker 9: I know that people in this kind of fashion business are often engaged in something relating to music or the arts. But I don't know anything except about clothes.

JH: When did you first plan to have your own business?

- Speaker 9: I thought about starting it when I was twenty-three years old, just after I was discharged from military service. But, I didn't have a chance to start it until three months ago.

JH: Have you ever imagined that you were going to have a career out of this when you first wore *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 9: Well, I felt that this job was perfect for me when I was twenty years old and working at a *guje* clothing shop.

JH: So, did you start working as a staff because you loved *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 9: Yes. As a shop assistant, I can easily explain the styles as I sell what I really like to wear. I can memorize the details easily which make me feel really good about doing this job. So, my abilities have also been recognized better.

JH: Do you also go to Japan to import things by yourself?

Appendix

- Speaker 9: I have a friend in Japan; my best friend sends *guje* clothes to me. But if the things became stale here, I would go there and import by myself.

JH: What makes Japanese *guje* clothes different from others?

- Speaker 9: Japan! Frankly and honestly speaking, Japanese clothing is better in its design and quality than in Korea.

JH: I see=

- Speaker 9: =I really think that Japanese clothes are better, and the Japanese people in the business know what they're doing better. There are lots of unique designs in Japanese imported *guje* clothes. In addition, so many Japanese imported *guje* clothes are very distinctive which you can't normally find in Korea; and most of the imported goods fit well for Koreans' body types as we have a similar figure to the Japanese. So, Japanese *guje* clothes are the most well received here.

JH: It seems that you are mainly selling men's clothing?

- Speaker 9: Yes, it is 100 percent men's clothing.

JH: Have you exclusively dealt with men's clothing from the start?

- Speaker 9: Well, I used to sell both women's and men's clothing when I was twenty years old. But I have started dealing with men's clothing only, after leaving the military service. Exclusively men's clothing. So, my regular male clients have increased since then, and it goes on.

JH: What is the reason? Is it because you are a man yourself? Or is it because the market has been formed in that fashion?

- Speaker 9: I have learned from my own experience in retail; it is better to focus on a single sex, either men's or women's clothing. When I mixed them, men and women seemed uncomfortable shopping next to the opposite sex. I intended to clarify my shop as a men's clothing specialist to prevent any confusion about the characteristics of my shop being either men's or women's fashion.

JH: Was there already a large male consumer group in the market?

- Speaker 9: A male consumer group? *guje* clothing has a following of fashion fanatics, so primarily regular clients, almost=

JH: =Oh!

- Speaker 9: So, all the regulars keep coming back. There are some newcomers occasionally to try on what they have seen on the Internet sites. But it is unusual to find completely new customers who pass by, breaking their regular shopping routines.

JH: You just mentioned fashion fanatics. Can you tell me who they are, like what age or occupation are these people usually?

- Speaker 9: They range from the first year of high school to twenty years, or twenty-three years old.

JH: Are your main customers students?

- Speaker 9: The only exception is men in their forties and fifties.

JH: What are they like?

- Speaker 9: Well, they are very individualistic. It happens occasionally.

JH: Then, what would you say was the percentage of your customers who come from high school to men in their twenties and thirties?

- Speaker 9: Nearly 80 percent.

JH: Do your main customers share similar fashion styles?

- Speaker 9: Everyone differs from everyone else. Everyone has different tastes.

JH: Do they develop these individual styles on their own by mixing and matching with their clothes? Or, have they been influenced by the Internet sites or magazines, as you mentioned earlier?

- Speaker 9: Yes, it is. The fastest way would be to browse pictures of European or Japanese youngsters which instantly appear as a street report on the Internet sites and mixing and matching by collecting those style items one by one.

JH: What would be the reasons why they prefer those fashion styles?

- Speaker 9: It is a trend, in one word. When young people see those photographs, they think they're very cool. Moreover, they continue wearing those styles especially when they receive a good comment from their peer group like 'Oh, you look cool.'

JH: Is this happening between groups of male friends? Or, do groups of girls normally have the same taste in fashion styles as the boys do?

- Speaker 9: Girls' responses divide half-and-half. When men pull off *guje* fashion, it looks über-cool. However, if they don't nail it, then it looks really bad. So, while stylish guys receive a favourable comment from girls; clumsy-looking guys get a negative response, like they're 'dirty' or 'messy-looking'.

JH: How important is the price in *guje* clothes markets? Are there many customers who like them because of the price?

- Speaker 9: The price of *guje* clothes varies; rare ones are even more costly than high street versions, but others can be really low-priced. Seriously, there are two types of *guje* consumers; one likes *guje* clothes because they are cheap; the other values the fact that each *guje* piece is unique and different to every other item. In many cases, people who prefer *guje* do not want to find others on the street wearing the same clothes as them.

JH: What about the issues of hygiene? Is there anyone who avoids wearing *guje* clothes due to an issue with hygiene?

- Speaker 9: They are mostly people who try *guje* clothes for the first time. But, people who used to wear them do not care about it. They even put *guje* clothes on straight after purchasing at the shop. Hygiene issues matter only for newcomers, mainly.

JH: How often do you use the Internet for shopping, like online shopping?

- Speaker 9: No, I don't do it one-hundred percent. By the way, approximately eighty percent will regret buying *guje* clothes on the Internet because there is not accurate sizing at all. Practically, the measurements varies; the same 32-inch trousers can fit one person, but not another.

JH: However, have you ever considered opening an online shopping mall or something?

- Speaker 9: Actually, I am just thinking about the possibilities, and so I have turned on my computer today.

JH: Does it seem that there are many people who do that these days?

- Speaker 9: Yes, there are many people who run their business both on and offline because some customers first browse online and then pay a visit to a real shop. Plus, as there is no extra cost involved in looking at goods online, I can simply upload the product images whenever I have spare time at the shop. So, trying wouldn't do any harm, and there is nothing to lose.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 7 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 10 = male vendor

Speaker 11 = male colleague of the speaker 10

JH = interviewer

JH: What kind of items do you sell here?

- Speaker 10: Imported multi-*guje*.

JH: Does that mean like clothing and accessories?

- Speaker 10: Accessories; we only have bags and belts, and a few shoes.

JH: You mentioned something about luxury goods before. What kind of luxury goods do you have?

- Speaker 10: Just luxury goods.

JH: Can you give me brand names, for example?

- Speaker 10: Oh, brand names? Paul Smith and stuff like that.

JH: Paul Smith's clothes, and?

- Speaker 10: Yes.

JH: You're talking about second-hand clothes, aren't you?

- Speaker 10: Yes, I am. They are *guje*.

JH: Who usually comes to buy them?

- Speaker 10: Young people.

JH: How young are they?

- Speaker 10: Teenagers, junior and senior high school students are the biggest customers here.

JH: So, don't you have many consumers in their twenties and thirties here?

- Speaker 10: Occasionally, because it is pretty, but only if they aren't aware of what *guje* is.

JH: Then if it is the case, why do people in their twenties and thirties come here to buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 11: Well, this is difficult!
- Speaker 10: There is cultural difference, something you can adapt to.
- Speaker 11: Hey, tell her what you think. People who have been wearing *guje* continuously stick to *guje*.

JH: Why is that?

Appendix

- Speaker 10: Why?

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 10: It is because they largely follow Japanese culture. It is the style, style.

JH: Aren't they wearing *guje* because of its price?

- Speaker 10: Yes, partly because of that.

JH: How much do second-hand clothes usually cost?

- Speaker 10: They are more expensive.

JH: Are they more expensive?

- Speaker 10: They are far more expensive than new clothes.

JH: So, regardless of the high price, do people buy *guje* just for the style?

- Speaker 10: Yes. The nature of *guje* lies on its uniqueness. There's no one else but you wearing it in the whole world, as it is the only piece available. There are no identical trousers in the same design.

JH: One of the characteristics of our culture which I remember is in fact being afraid to stand out in the crowd.

- Speaker 10: *Guje* clothes do not stand out too much. Conventions from the past seem too primitive. No one cares about that now.

JH: You said that mainly junior and senior high school students buy these clothes. Don't their parents complain about that? They might dislike them.

- Speaker 10: It has been changed now. It's not like the past any longer.

JH: Wearing second-hand clothes can also be (.) So, is there no negativity towards the issues of hygiene or something, either?

- Speaker 10: That's right. If they are in poor condition, then we can't sell them.

JH: Well, even if they aren't, what about general perception?

- Speaker 10: No, there isn't anything like that.

JH: What do you think is the reason why *guje* clothes are extremely popular among younger generations? Don't they still wear *guje* clothes as they get older?

- Speaker 10: Well, *guje* clothes fit best when they are worn by these age groups. They certainly look better on younger people than on older people.

JH: Well then, do you actually wear *guje* clothes for yourself a lot?

- Speaker 11: Oh, please don't come too close. I also like *guje* clothes. I don't wear *guje* only, but mix and match with other clothes.

JH: Since when have you been wearing them? Did you start when you were in junior high school?

- Speaker 11: Yes, I did, since I was a student.

JH: How did you come across them in the beginning?

- Speaker 11: *Guje*? I just got to know it gradually.

JH: From your friends, or somewhere else?

- Speaker 11: Yes, almost like that, and observing street fashion. If you see the magazines, Koreans largely follows Japanese fashion.

JH: Do you read the Japanese magazine, or if not=

- Speaker 11: =It depends on each person. Some read Japanese magazines; and others=

JH: =What about in your case, then?

- Speaker 11: I read all magazines extensively as well as Japanese magazines. Korean styles are very different from the Japanese styles.

JH: Do you mainly stock the Japanese import here?

- Speaker 11: No, they are not exactly Japanese styles.
- Speaker 10: They are similar, so they are all known as the Japanese-*poong*! These kinds of clothes used to be worn in Japan, but not anymore.

JH: So, do you use the Japanese magazine for reference of what are the fashionable styles?

- Speaker 11: People who make clothes mainly look up to the style in Japanese magazines.

JH: What about consumers?

- Speaker 11: They wear these clothes on display. So, people make styles by referring to the Japanese magazines; and then, we buy and sell those clothes as Japan-*poong*.

JH: Then, do your customers get their style by browsing what you have here and trying to mix and match them?

- Speaker 11: Yes.

JH: Have you also worn *guje* clothes since you were in junior high school?

- Speaker 11: No, I didn't.

JH: Then, when did you first start buying them?

- Speaker 11: When I was about twenty years old.

JH: Was there any special motivation?

- Speaker 11: Well, I just tried one on once as I saw others wore them a lot. So, I have ended up wearing them now.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 11: I am twenty-five (.) twenty-four years old.

JH: Thank you.

- Speaker 11: Don't mention it.

JH: Are they new clothes here?

- Speaker 11: Vintage-*poong* is highly popular around now. When people say *guje*, *guje* can be called vintage-*poong*, it is a more fashionable term.

JH: Does this shop operate online as well?

Male vendor E: We don't do it.

JH: Do you have any reason?

- Speaker 11: The sizes are all different, so it's difficult. Moreover, thousands of Internet shops are being set up everyday, and thousands of them go under as well; only one or two out of thousands survive.

JH: Have you taken a hit because of the emergence of online *guje* shopping malls?

- Speaker 11: *Guje* never suffers from competing with online shops. With *guje*, it is far better buying somewhere like here than in online shops, maybe except new clothes. You never know before you actually wear *guje*.

Absolutely, you can't estimate the sizing even if they provide so-called 'actual measurements' in centimetres.

JH: I see. Do you have many customers from the provinces?

- Speaker 11: Yes. Also, there are many shops like this in the provinces.

JH: Thank you.

- Speaker 10: Is this kind of interview also included in a thesis? I didn't go to college.

JH: Yes. It seems that you mainly deal with menswear. Have men always been conscious about their fashion?

- Speaker 10: Normally, women are more into fashion. But men who like clothes a lot are exactly the same as women.
- Speaker 11: Men have suppressed their feelings for their appearance, as women are more into clothes. Men's fashion magazines have started only recently, so they can get information and things like that (.). It's been about four years since men's magazines came out in the market.

Interview 8 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 12 = male vendor

JH = interviewer

JH: Do you sell on-line?

- Speaker 12: No.

JH: Do you have any plan to do so?

- Speaker 12: No.

JH: Do you wear *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 12: *Guje* clothes?

JH: yes.

- Speaker 12: I occasionally purchase Polo shirts, but that's it.

JH: I thought you dealt in women's clothes as your shop appears to be for women.

- Speaker 12: No. If you see here, then you can find men's clothes as well, even though it's mainly for women. The whole shop focuses more on women's stuff. So, men do not browse here often. Even if men do, it's only for scarves or gloves, and so on.

JH: Does everything mainly come from Japan, you said?

- Speaker 12: Yes.

JH: Have you started wearing *guje* clothes since you worked here? Or did you wear *guje* clothes before that?

- Speaker 12: Previously, I did not know what *guje* clothes were. I heard in the neighbourhood that this kind of clothing was *guje*. I've learnt here that *guje* clothes are very useful. I simply didn't know about them before.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 12: I am twenty-five years old.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 9 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 13 = female consumer

Speaker 14 = female friend of the speaker 13

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 13: I am Hyunjin Cho.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 13 I am seventeen years old.

JH: What do you do?

- Speaker 13: School, I am a student.

JH: You must be a high school student?

- Speaker 13: Yes.

JH: Have you ever bought *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 13: Yes.

JH: What kind of items do you buy?

- Speaker 13: Blue jeans.

JH: Why did you buy?

- Speaker 13: I wanted to buy them easily on the Internet...

JH: Is there any reason for you to buy *guje* rather than a new pair of jeans?

- Speaker 13: No, I just picked what I liked, and *guje* was written in its product details.

JH: Do you know that *guje* normally means second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 13: No! [laughs].

- Speaker 14: *guje-ppil*...

- Speaker 13: Oh, oh!

- Speaker 14: Didn't you know? You're driving me mad!

JH: Did you know that?

- Speaker 14: Yes.

JH: Haven't you ever bought *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 14: Yes, but only occasionally.

JH: Occasionally (.) how?

- Speaker 14: I bought several pairs, just Levi's and something like that with *guje-ppil*.

JH: Did you buy them on the Internet like your friend?

- Speaker 14: Yes, I sometimes bought on the Internet, but also in the places where *guje* clothes are sold.

JH: Where?

- Speaker 14: Around Hongdae area.

JH: Do you remember the names of shops or anything?

- Speaker 14: No, because their names were in English.

JH: Is there any reason for you to buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 14: They look *ganzi* and stylish.

JH: Ok. You mean, compared with other jeans?

- Speaker 14: Yes.

JH: Does price matter, or not?

- Speaker 14: Price matters (.) *Guje-ppil* is a little more expensive.

JH: Compared in general with a new pair of jeans?

- Speaker 14: Yes, no, there are expensive things, as well. So, things which have been 'reformed' are still expensive, but there are cheaper ones and expensive ones, it depends.

JH: If you compare Internet shops with street shops, which ones are more expensive?

- Speaker 14: Oh, they are more expensive.

JH: Where?

- Speaker 14: *Guje* is a little more expensive. It is better to buy things after trying them on.

JH: Do you also place many Internet orders for them?

- Speaker 14: Yes.

JH: Is this same for your friends, too?

- Speaker 14: Yes.

JH: Do you go more to Hongdae, or do you buy on the Internet more?

- Speaker 14: Emm (.) I usually buy on the Internet, and also go to Hongdae quite often.

JH: Do you buy them because they look stylish even though they are not cheap?

- Speaker 14: It is for the style, something like that.

JH: Have you only bought jeans so far?

- Speaker 14: No, I also buy many other things.

JH: What other things do you buy?

- Speaker 14: Thing like going-out clothes and tops.

JH: What about T-shirts, for example?

- Speaker 14: Yes, I also buy things like T-shirts at Hongdae.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 10 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 15 = female consumer

Speaker 16 = female friend of the speaker 15

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 15: I am Yeaseul Park.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 15: I am eighteen years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 15: I'm a high school student.

JH: Have you ever bought *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 15: Yes.

JH: Where and how did you buy them?

- Speaker 15: I went shopping with my friends at Dongdaemun and found *guje* clothes pretty. So, I bought them.

JH: Did you go to Dongdaemun especially for *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 15: Yes.

JH: How did you come across *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 15: They are popular among my friends; that's why I bought them.

JH: What kind of items did you buy?

- Speaker 15: Blue jeans.

JH: Did you buy Levi's?

- Speaker 15: No, I didn't.

JH: Did you have any special reason to buy *guje* clothes, apart from your friends' recommendations?

- Speaker 15: Umm, I thought they looked pretty and my friends told me so.

JH: Even if you compare with new blue jeans?

- Speaker 15: Yes.

- Speaker 16: They are not too fitted or tight.

- Speaker 15: Right! They are baggy, so they are not a tight-fit.

JH: What about the price? Did you buy purchase them due to its price, by chance?

- Speaker 15: No, I don't care about that much.

JH: What do your parents think about your purchase of second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 15: They don't know [laughs]

JH: So, did you just purchase once so far?

- Speaker 15: Yes.

JH: Are you going to purchase again?

- Speaker 15: I don't know yet.

JH: Have you used the Internet for shopping?

- Speaker 15: Well, I've just looked a bit.

JH: How did you like it when you looked on the Internet?

- Speaker 15: I think that it is better to buy directly at a shop after seeing the actual stuff, rather than buying on the Internet. It is more reliable to see the things like design directly.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 11 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 17 = female consumer

Speaker 18 = female friend of the speaker 17

Speaker 19 = female friends of the speaker 17

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 17: Sorry?

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 17: I am Hojung Dong. [laughs]

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 17: I am fifteen years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 17: I am a student.

JH: Are you in junior high or high school?

- Speaker 17: I am a junior high school student.

JH: Do you normally buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 17: No, I don't. [laughs] What are *guje* clothes? Hey, what are *guje* clothes?
- Speaker 18: You know, like clothes that are stone-washed!
- Speaker 17: Oh! Yes, I wear them.

JH: Where do you usually buy them?

- Speaker 17: My mom buys them for me.

[laughter]

JH: Where does your mom usually get them from?

- Speaker 17: My mom? I don't know, probably at Shinsaegae, Bupyeong branch.

JH: Are we talking about second-hand clothes now, right?

- Speaker 17: I don't know. Probably, they are, yes.

JH: Do you like *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 17: Yes, I wear whatever's given to me.

JH: Do you have any special reason why you like them?

- Speaker 17: I just wear them as they are comfortable.

JH: Thank you. Is there perhaps anyone else who wears *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 19: She is the best dresser here.

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 18: I am Jaeun Lee.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 18: I am sixteen years old.
- JH: What is your occupation?
- Speaker 18: I am a student.
- JH: Are you a junior high school student?
- Speaker 18: Yes, I am.
- JH: Do you normally buy *guje* clothes?
- Speaker 18: Yes, frequently.
- JH: Where do you buy them?
- Speaker 18: Erm, I often go to Namdaemun, Dongdaemun or Myongdong.
- JH: What items do you buy?
- Speaker 18: I usually buy clothing with chain details.
- JH: What about jeans or something like that?
- Speaker 18: I wear jeans and jackets a lot.
- JH: Do you have any reason why you prefer *guje* clothes?
- Speaker 18: I like them, and they are convenient.
- JH: The reason being?
- Speaker 19: You can't possibly say they look *ganzi*.
- JH: So, is that the reason?
- Speaker 18: Yes.
- JH: Do you wear them mostly because they are comfortable?
- Speaker 18: My friends tell me they look good on me.
- JH: Is this *guje*, too, what you're wearing now?
- Speaker 18: Yes.
- JH: How much did you pay for it?
- Speaker 18: I bought it for 36,000 won, yeah, on the Internet.
- JH: Do you purchase on the Internet?
- Speaker 18: Yes, I occasionally purchase there.
- JH: What sites do you regularly use?
- Speaker 18: Well, places like *Beetle Juice* and *Crazy Punk*.
- JH: How do you like regular shops compared with Internet shops?
- Speaker 18: It is difficult to buy on the Internet as it is not easy to estimate the sizes. But, I can personally measure the sizes and buy them when I go to shops.
- JH: Then, why did you buy this on the Internet?
- Speaker 18: The Internet (.) makes it easier to find things.
- JH: Did you buy your trousers on the Internet?
- Speaker 18: Yes.
- JH: What about the issues of hygiene and things like that as they are second-hand clothes?
- Speaker 18: Oh, in case of second-hand clothes, it is hygienically OK if I wear them after *reform*.
- JH: What do you mean by *reform*?

- Speaker 18: Like attaching something like *wopping*.

JH: What is that?

- Speaker 18: Something like this.

JH: Oh, did you put that kind of decoration on by yourself? When did you first buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 18: From the 1st grade at my junior high school.

JH: Why?

- Speaker 18: Just because I was browsing on the Internet.

JH: What do your parents say about that?

- Speaker 18: They say it's OK.

JH: So, aren't they particularly against wearing second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 18: I rarely buy second-hand clothes.

JH: Aren't *guje* clothes second-hand?

- Speaker 18: With *guje* clothes, there are second-hand and new clothes. I buy 'normal' clothes a lot more than second-hand ones.

JH: Thank you. Can I take a photograph of your bag with the decoration details you showed me earlier, please?

Interview 12 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 20 = female consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 20: I am Sookyung Ann.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 20: I am thirty-five years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 20: I am currently working on a fashion display at the moment.

JH: What brings you here to the market today?

- Speaker 20: Well, I wanted to look around at some *guje* clothes.

JH: Do you frequently visit?

- Speaker 20: Yes, I come here frequently.

JH: What kind of clothes do you buy?

- Speaker 20: Especially in winter, I buy things like leather or knitwear.

JH: Why do you like the *guje* market?

- Speaker 20: First of all, the price is cheap. Also, it is easy to find lots of unique designs as they are not like ready-made goods. It is also fun to look at the old clothes which my mother would have worn when she was young, for example. Yeah, so I assume it's a bit of nostalgia. Yeah, so I come here often.

JH: Do you worry about the environmental issues when you buy them? Or, recycling, perhaps?

- Speaker 20: Yes, I am a member of Green Korea United. I liked *guje* clothes even before I was conscious of the environment. Now, after joining

Green Korea United I have realised that they should also be good for the environment as they can be recycled, compared to cast-off things.

JH: Didn't you have that kind of awareness before when you purchased *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 20: Yes, I just liked them at first.

JH: Do you perhaps use the Internet often?

- Speaker 20: Yes.

JH: What Internet sites do you use?

- Speaker 20: For a search engine, I mostly use 'JeeshicIn' on *Naver.com*. For my blog, I use *Cyworld.com* which is the most widely known in our country.

JH: What about the key words you use?

- Speaker 20: Key words?

JH: Like when you search for *guje* clothes.

- Speaker 20: Oh, when I search for *guje* clothes? I don't particularly search for *guje* clothes.

JH: Then, how do you buy them on the Internet?

- Speaker 20: Oh, like comparison sites? Oh, oh! I don't use the Internet for that purpose.

JH: Why?

- Speaker 20: *Guje* is expensive on the Internet. This market is close to my house, and I also enjoy browsing. So, there is no need to search for *guje* clothes on the Internet as I come here directly to buy them.

JH: Lastly, do you receive any unfavourable comment from the older generation, especially when you started wearing them in the beginning? And when did you first buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 20: Oh (.) well, it has been fifteen years since I discovered *guje* clothes. Fifteen years ago, *guje* was not yet widely known. So, I often heard responses like 'why are you wearing clothes worn by someone else?' from both friends and the older generation, in particular. However, the perception of *guje* clothes has changed as there are now shops like Beautiful Store (.) Gradually, many of my friends now ask me to go shopping with them whenever they are free. So, I can say that public perception has become more positive.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 13 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 21 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 21: Do I need to say my name, too?

JH: You can give me an assumed name. I don't need to use your real name.

- Speaker 21: Me? I am TTangja Kang.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 21: I am seventeen years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 21: My occupation is (.) I am a student.

JH: Are you a high school student?

- Speaker 21: Yes.

JH: Why did you come here today?

- Speaker 21: I came to buy some clothes.

JH: It's a *guje* clothing market here, right?

- Speaker 21: Yes.

JH: Do you frequently come to buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 21: No, I don't.

JH: How often do you come, then?

- Speaker 21: Me? I don't know.

JH: Once a month, maybe?

- Speaker 21: No. Every two months.

JH: You came with your friends today. So, what do you mainly buy when you come?

- Speaker 21: Just whatever looks pretty.

JH: When did you first buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 21: After I saw one of the seniors I knew, looking at what he wore.

JH: About a year ago, or two, approximately (.) since your junior high school or elementary school?

- Speaker 21: A year ago, it was a year ago.

JH: Can you tell me what your senior friend was like?

- Speaker 21: He looked crackingly cool. [laughs]

JH: What did he do?

- Speaker 21: Sorry?

JH: At your senior at school? Did you ask him where he bought *guje* clothes when you were impressed by the way he dressed?

- Speaker 21: No, I didn't ask. We found out. He wouldn't give us that kind of information.

JH: Didn't he?

- Speaker 21: No, he was so mean.

JH: How did you find out then?

- Speaker 21: The Internet, there's the Internet.

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JH: What do you search on the internet, and what sites do you use?

- Speaker 21: 'JeeshicIn' on *Naver.com*.

JH: What did you search for?

- Speaker 21: I asked a question, "What is *guje*?"

JH: Did you already know that your senior friend wore *guje*?

- Speaker 21: Yes.

JH: Then, with your Internet search results, do you come here to Kwangjang Market only, or to other places?

- Speaker 21: There is also Dongdaemun.

JH: What about the Internet? There are numerous online shopping malls. Do you use them as well?

- Speaker 21: Yes.

JH: What sites do you use?

- Speaker 21: Oh, I don't use the Internet sites.

JH: Do you have any reason not to?

- Speaker 21: Sorry?

JH: Is there any special reason you don't use the Internet?

- Speaker 21: No, there isn't.

JH: What kinds of clothes do you mainly buy?

- Speaker 21: Just pretty stuff, and just browsing.

JH: What did you buy today?

- Speaker 21: Well, it is a leather jacket.

JH: How was the price? And you said that you bought *guje* clothes after watching your cool-looking Senior. Did you have any other motivation perhaps, like pricing or environmental protection?

- Speaker 21: No, I don't.

JH: Only styles?

- Speaker 21: Most of all, they are cool and cheap.

JH: What about hygiene (.) because they are clothes that have been worn already by others.

- Speaker 21: It doesn't bother me.

JH: Lastly, do your parents or the older generation scold you for wearing second-hand clothes, perhaps?

- Speaker 21: They say that it's filthy, really filthy.

JH: Do they?

- Speaker 21: Yes.

JH: And yet, do they still allow you to buy them?

- Speaker 21: Yes, of course, as I always win, naturally.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 14 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 22 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 22: Me, I am Doohwan Park.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 22: I am twenty-three years old.

JH: What is your occupation? What do you do?

- Speaker 22: My occupation? I am unemployed at the moment (.) I am studying music.

JH: Why did you come here today?

- Speaker 22: Today? I just came to shop and browse here to see what kind of place it is.

JH: Do you usually buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 22: *Guje*? Yes, I tend to wear them a lot these days.

JH: Do you come here often? How often do you come?

- Speaker 22: Today is my first visit as someone recommended it to me.

JH: What did you first buy?

- Speaker 22: Me (.) I've worn branded clothes, like American Apparel and stuff.

JH: Oh, have you worn the *guje* style, not a real *guje*?

- Speaker 22: Yes, Yes.

JH: What is the special motivation to visit here today?

- Speaker 22: It was because of my friend's recommendation. Also, the weather's getting colder, so I would like to get a *jumper*.

JH: So your friend recommended particularly this market?

- Speaker 22: Oh, Yes. He said it's just good and has lots of clothes.

JH: As a first time buyer, do you have any aversion to buying second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 22: No, it's okay. There are also many good designs.

JH: It doesn't bother you that they are worn-out or maybe have other defects?

- Speaker 22: No, I don't care about that.

JH: Are you going to come back here frequently in the future?

- Speaker 22: Yes, I think it is a good market.

JH: Do you intend to use the Internet shopping malls as well?

- Speaker 22: I am not comfortable using the Internet shopping malls because I need to personally see clothes if they fit me well. It isn't particularly good to order only by looking at images.

JH: What are the special reasons for you to purchase today? (.) You liked the style and what else?

- Speaker 22: Most of all, the clothes are cheap. And they also fit my tastes well. Well, they are cheap considering how good the style is.

JH: By style, what kinds of styles do you have in mind?

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- Speaker 22: Me? It is some kind of vintage, like leather materials with a retro feel.

JH: When you buy *guje* clothes, do you perhaps also consider the environmental problems and similar issues?

- Speaker 22: Environment? I don't know, I don't think that far.

JH: Don't you have an awareness of recycling, etc.?

- Speaker 22: Oh, I have not thought about that at all.

JH: Then, do you just like the style?

- Speaker 22: I bought them because they are cheap and pretty.

JH: Does the older generation, like your parents or relatives, scold you for wearing the clothes with that style?

- Speaker 22: Oh, for example, my parents dislike the trousers I am wearing now because they are like ripped.

JH: Even if they are brand-new?

- Speaker 22: Yes, parents do not tend to like our fashion anyway.

JH: What would they say about the second-hand clothes which you bought today?

- Speaker 22: I think it'll be okay buying second-hand clothes. It would be fine even from their perspectives. In the case of my trousers, a bit of my underwear shows as they are ripped.

JH: Then, does the style matter more than whether the clothes are second-hand or brand-new?

- Speaker 22: Yes, that's right. There are better quality second-hand clothes than brand-new ones, in some respect.

JH: What did you buy today, and how much did you pay for them?

- Speaker 22: Today, *jumper* and (.) three *jumpers*.

JH: Have you bought three *jumpers*?

- Speaker 22: Well, I am going to travel and it is winter and cold. I also bought a bag.

JH: How much did each item cost?

- Speaker 22: Price? A *jumper* would have cost around 100,000 Won at usual high street shops. But this is *guje* after all, so around 50,000 won, 40,000 won.

JH: And the bag?

- Speaker 22: The bag costs 30,000 won, yeah.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 15 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 23 = male consumer

Speaker 24 = male friend of the speaker 23

JH = interviewer

JH: Please tell me if you feel uncomfortable.

- Speaker 23: It's not like being uncomfortable, just embarrassed.

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 23: I am Heeyun Sohn.

- Speaker 24: I am Minsoek Kim.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 23: I am twenty years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 23: I am a college student.

JH: Why did you come here today?

- Speaker 23: I came here to buy several pieces of *guje* clothes.

JH: Do you frequently come here?

- Speaker 23: I don't normally, but occasionally. You know, *guje* clothes are not expensive. So I buy one by one whenever I have some spare money.

JH: Do you visit once a month, or every two, three months?

- Speaker 23: I mostly go to Dongdaemun where my friends have a shop and I buy *guje* clothes from them.

JH: Do your friends run clothing shops?

- Speaker 23: Yes, they work for the shops. Or, if I want to buy cheaper, I come here.

JH: Are they cheaper here?

- Speaker 23: Yes, they are cheaper in here.

JH: When did you first start buying *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 23: *Guje*?

JH: Like two, three years ago?

- Speaker 23: Since my first grade of high school.

JH: Did you have any motivation then?

- Speaker 23: I didn't like to wear something everyone else was wearing.

JH: Why didn't you like it? Did you wear a school uniform at your high school?

- Speaker 23: Yes. You know, for a while, people follow Japan, Japanese people a lot. So, as I also followed that trend, I have worn *guje*, like now.

JH: Is it popular to follow Japanese guys during that period? Or is it just a one-off to follow Japanese styles in the first grade at high school?

- Speaker 23: Yes, in the first grade at high school, everyone, at least once, thinks to follow Japanese style.

JH: By the way, are you still thinking about that?

- Speaker 23: I don't think that much at the moment. I can now wear whatever I feel like. It depends on the occasion; I wear *guje* for my daily wear and neat and tidy clothes for a special day.

JH: You said that people follow Japanese styles. What and how did you see what the styles were, like on TV or something?

- Speaker 23: Yes, something like that.

JH: What did you see?

- Speaker 23: Mostly photographs and things. Well, if you watch TV, there is a channel called DongA TV. They have a programme called Youhang Yeagam [Trend Forecast].

JH: Is that a Korean programme?

- Speaker 23: There is no Japanese programme on TV. It shows European fashion collections of Chanel, Gucci or Burberry. These kinds of fashion are introduced and dominate everything. It is impossible to have lots of these luxury brands, so I wear a lot of *guje* in those *styles* instead.

JH: Do you also use the Internet a lot?

- Speaker 23: No, I don't use the Internet.

JH: What is your reason not to do so?

- Speaker 23: There is no particular reason. I just don't look for clothes on the Internet. I don't really know what I'm looking for. It just happens naturally when I see something I like. Things I like are stored in my head, and then it occurs to me that I should buy something. So I just try on that stuff.

JH: What would be the reason why people prefer Japanese *style* to European or American *style*?

- Speaker 23: There's no point dividing them strictly. Japan also follows Europe or those kinds of styles. *Fashion* is common, after all and is only the matter of when each country accepts them.

JH: You said that people largely follow Japanese *style* after entering high school. Is it same for music and other things, or just for clothes?

- Speaker 23: Well, I don't know about music and stuff. For clothes and things (.) by looking at their lifestyle.

JH: Do your parents or the older generations like your senior friends or relatives scold you for wearing *guje*?

- Speaker 23: My parents just told me to wear my clothes properly and also ask me to wash them. But I kind of don't bother and wear them anyway. So, they used to scold me for that, but they don't say much about it now.

JH: When you buy this kind of stuff, do you also consider the issues of environment or recycling, by chance?

- Speaker 23: No, I don't.

JH: Is there anything you would like to add to your previous comments?

- Speaker 24: I like the style of Bae Jungnam.
- Speaker 23: He is a model, a Korean model. You know, most models are around 185 cm tall. But his height is only 178 cm.

JH: A male model?

- Speaker 23: Yes. By the way he is the one who actually disseminated the idea about *guje* in Korea. So, many guys have started wearing *guje* thanks to him.

JH: When did he first appear?

- Speaker 23: That is (.) I think he appeared when I was about in my second grade at high school, towards the end of the second grade.

JH: Was it about two, three year ago then?

- Speaker 23: In that way, *guje* has developed more variously. And also by looking at what he wears and the way he wears them.

JH: Where did you hear about him?

- Speaker 23: I've just searched on the Internet because I heard some stylish guys talking about how cool Bae Jungnam is.

JH: Don't you buy magazines or something?

- Speaker 23: I don't have money for magazines.

JH: Is it important for your girlfriend to have the same *style* as you?

- Speaker 23: No, not at all. If she has a pretty face, then that's it.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 16 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 25 = male consumer

Speaker 26 = male friend of the speaker 25

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 25: I am Huysung Park.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 25: I am twenty years old.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 25: My occupation (.) I am a student.

JH: Are you a college student?

- Speaker 25: I am a high school student
- Speaker 26: He flunked one year.

JH: What did you purchase today?

- Speaker 25: A velvet corduroy jacket.

JH: *Guje* corduroy?

- Speaker 25: Yes.

JH: How much did you pay for it?

- Speaker 25: Initially, they asked for 25,000 won. But I bought it for only 22,000 won.

JH: Do you often ask for a discount?

- Speaker 25: Yes, I always ask for a discount.

JH: Do you come here often?

- Speaker 25: I don't come often, but two, three times a month.

JH: Do you also go to some other markets apart from here?

- Speaker 25: To buy clothes? Originally, I used to buy at Dongdaemun. I come here as I heard that it is cheaper here.

JH: How did you get to know this market?

- Speaker 25: From my friend's recommendation.

JH: When did you first buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 25: My first or second grade at high school.

JH: Did you have any special reason?

- Speaker 25: There was no reason. They just look good.

JH: So, that can be your reason?

- Speaker 25: Yes, it was because they looked good.

JH: Did you think *guje* clothes looked good when you visited the market, or did you see someone else wearing them on the street or in a magazine?

- Speaker 25: I saw people on the street and also on TV.

JH: Did you instantly recognise them as *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 25: Yes.

JH: Why did you think they looked good? Is it the *style* you like?

- Speaker 25: Yes, Because of the *style*.

JH: So, what is the *style* you like? For example (.) What kind of image do you mean by that?

- Speaker 25: Image?
- Speaker 26: That is the *old* image.

JH: Do you have any reason why you like the *old* image, especially?

- Speaker 26: Just the past *old*, *retro-poong* rather than clean and neat stuff.

JH: When you first buy those types of clothes, didn't the older generation scold you for wearing them?

- Speaker 25: My parents just told me like "why do you wear clothes like that!" and so on, but they weren't totally against what I wore.

JH: Do they think they are badly designed when they say 'clothes like that'? Or, do they mean that it is filthy wearing second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 25: Well, it was not particularly that the clothes were second-hand, but=
- Speaker 26: =Like ripped jeans or something.

JH: Don't they say much about that now?

- Speaker 25: No, they don't care much now. [Laughs]

JH: Do you also use the Internet a lot?

- Speaker 25: I don't trust the Internet.

JH: Why?

- Speaker 25: They often don't post my purchase.

JH: Do not post?

- Speaker 25: No, or they deliver very slowly.

JH: Have you ever experienced that?

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- Speaker 25: It wasn't clothes, but something else.
- JH: So, it wasn't *guje* clothes?
- Speaker 25: No, it wasn't.
- JH: Then, generally, the Internet is not trustworthy?
- Speaker 25: Yes.
- JH: Are you perhaps concerned about environmental matters and things when you purchase *guje* clothes? Do you have recycling and things in mind?
- Speaker 25: I don't exactly care about the environment and things.
- JH: So, is it purely for the *style*?
- Speaker 25: Yes. And also, it's not a burden to me as the price is cheap, you know, cheap. Dongdaemun charges double the price than here.
- JH: So, are places like the Preya Town more expensive than here?
- Speaker 25: Yes.
- JH: Are you wearing any *guje* clothes now?
- Speaker 25: Yes, they are all *guje*, the trousers and this.
- JH: Do you perhaps remember the price?
- Speaker 25: I bought the jacket last Thursday. I bought it for 34,000 won on Thursday, and the trousers are old.
- JH: Do you spend a lot on buying clothes?
- Speaker 25: I don't spend that much, about 50,000 won?
- JH: How much a month?
- Speaker 25: Around 100,000 won a month.
- JH: Including bags and accessories?
- Speaker 25: Yes.
- JH: What's your name? Can you tell me your name first.
- Speaker 26: Me? I am Hyungjun Ahn.
- JH: How old are you?
- Speaker 26: I am twenty years old.
- JH: What is your occupation?
- Speaker 26: I am a student, same as him.
- JH: How much do you spend a month?
- Speaker 26: I spend about 100,000 won a month.
- JH: Do you have the same reason as your friend why you like *guje* clothes?
- Speaker 26: Yes, we are all same.
- JH: What about the clothes you are wearing now?
- Speaker 26: They are all *guje*.
- JH: What is the price of this [leather jacket]?
- Speaker 26: I bought this for 50,000 won.
- Speaker 25: You told me it was 150,000 won! [laughs]
- Speaker 26: I bought the shirt for 8,000 won, T-shirt for 4,000 won and the trousers for 28,000 won.
- JH: But, you told your friend that you paid 150,000 won?

- Speaker 26: I just wanted to show off a bit. [laughs]
- JH: Is your bag *guje* as well?
- Speaker 26: No, it isn't.
 - Speaker 25: Please ask the price of the bag for me.
- JH: How much was the bag?
- Speaker 26: The bag was 150,000 won. [laughs]
 - Speaker 25: Don't bloody lie!
 - Speaker 26: It is genuine leather.

Interview 17 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 27 = female consumer

Speaker 28 = female friend of the speaker 27

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 27: Sangeun Kim.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 27: I am thirty-two years old now.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 27: I work as a freelance architectural drawing planner.

JH: Do you normally buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 27: Yes, I buy them very often.

JH: Where do you mainly buy them?

- Speaker 27: I buy at the market and also at the shop.

JH: Do you buy the actual *guje* or the *guje-style* clothes at the shop?

- Speaker 27: No, I mostly buy *guje* clothes.

JH: How often do you come?

- Speaker 27: About once or twice a month.

JH: How much do you spend, let's say each month?

- Speaker 27: I don't buy that much, in about the 30,000-40,000 won range.

JH: What kind of *item* do you mainly buy?

- Speaker 27: I hardly buy cotton T-shirts. I mostly wear blue jeans or *jackets* or *jumpers* from here.

JH: When did you first purchase *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 27: About two, three years ago. I've been wearing them a lot recently.

JH: Did you have a reason?

- Speaker 27: My motivation was seeing the *guje* clothes section when passing by the market. I didn't know whether they were thrown away or donated by people, but they looked good and clean. So I've been buying and wearing them since then.

JH: Have you previously purchased second-hand clothes and goods a lot?

- Speaker 27: I didn't particularly look for them, but sometimes I bought things if they were in good condition.

JH: Then, have you bought *guje* clothes because they look good?

- Speaker 27: (.)They're nice and comfortable and also cheap.

JH: Did you consider the environmental impact at all? What about recycling and things?

- Speaker 27: Yes. I can't deny that there is a recycling aspect; as I thought it's a shame for them to be wasted.

JH: Do your friends recognise that they are second-hand clothes or not?

- Speaker 27: No, they don't. They just think that the clothes are my own.

JH: It seems you like easy *style*. What kind of *style* do you go for?

- Speaker 27: Yes, easy *style* goes with my tastes.

JH: What kind of taste is that?

- Speaker 27: It's like just being comfortable and neat and tidy and things like that.

JH: What about unique and distinctive things?

- Speaker 27: I try to avoid anything too distinctive. I don't like to stand out much.

JH: Do you purchase a lot on the Internet?

- Speaker 27: I do not purchase on the Internet as, I only directly (.) I need to see by myself with *guje*. As I have to check how worn they are, I come and buy at the market, selectively.

JH: Thank you. [To Q's friend] What about you?

- Speaker 28: No, no, I don't. [Laughs]

Interview 18 (2006, South Korea)

Speaker 29 = male consumer

Speaker 30 = male friend of the speaker 29

JH = interviewer

- Speaker 29: It is *vintage*. [Laughs]

JH: Does that mean it's a good thing?

- Speaker 29: Yes (.) It is like (.) something like *guje*.

JH: OK. Firstly, for the sake of formality, what is your name?

- Speaker 29: Changgeun Choi.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 29: I am twenty-seven years old.

JH: Occupation?

- Speaker 29: I run a clothing business now, wholesale. A wholesale clothing store.

JH: Is it a *guje* clothing shop by chance?

- Speaker 29: A *guje* clothing shop? (.) Well, I sometimes make *guje*-like clothes as well. And the most basic *styles* I make are pretty mainstream. Normal clothes.

JH: Do you personally buy *guje* clothes for yourself?

- Speaker 29: Yes, that's right, that's right.

JH: Do you have any special reason to buy them?

- Speaker 29: Well, most of all, *guje* is not like brand-new clothes as it is shabby old clothing. So, I have in *mind* that I can wear it comfortably, you know. These clothes are somewhat shabby, so they can be worn comfortably, and also I don't need to bother washing them frequently compared with a white cotton T-shirt.

JH: So, for a purely practical reason?

- Speaker 29: Yes, that's right. It's because they are practical and also fit the current *trend*, so=

JH: =Do you consider things like price, and the environmental impact or recycling?

- Speaker 29: Recycling?

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 29: After all, because when you put on *guje* clothes you want to be fashionable, it seems those kinds of issues hardly matter.

JH: Yes, that can be true. By the way, you did not mention about the fashion, but only practicality. Does being fashionable matter to you?

- Speaker 29: It's important to be fashionable and practical. *guje* has both aspects.

JH: I see. Which aspect is more important?

- Speaker 29: Frankly, being fashionable is the most important. [Laughs]

JH: What kinds of clothes do you mainly buy?

- Speaker 29: Clothes?

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 29: Well, ripped jeans like his [pointing to his friend]. Things which look like they've been used here and there, and have been marked with a smear of oil, things like that.

JH: What kind do you mainly buy?

- Speaker 29: Clothes? I mostly buy imported *Guje* clothes.

JH: So it is. By the way, what places do you go to, especially? Do you use markets or perhaps even the Internet?

- Speaker 29: I use the Internet and also frequently go to the places like Kwangjang Market at Dongdaemun.

JH: Have you recently used the Internet a lot? How do you like it?

- Speaker 29: I don't buy clothes on the Internet, to be honest, as I run a clothing shop on my own. It's because mostly everything on the Internet can be found at the market, too. I can selectively buy cool things at the market.

JH: Do you spend a lot of time looking for cool clothes at the market?

- Speaker 29: Yes, of course. I spend a lot of time everyday searching for nice clothes.

JH: How much time?

- Speaker 29: Well, it's because I can wear and make clothes only if I can find good ones.

JH: How long have you been buying them?

- Speaker 29: About four years.

JH: Does the older generation say something about your fashion style? Do they like it, or?

- Speaker 29: Well, if I go downtown or to the city centre like Myungdong wearing *vintage* like, *vintage-poong* (.) you know, while mass-produced clothes look just neat, *guje* draws looks from people every once a while. As there is an aspect of *guje* that makes people seem to think 'ah, that's cool,' something like that, you know.

JH: What about your parents and others?

- Speaker 29: My parents like them, like they say that they fit me well.

JH: Thank you. What about your friend? [To R's friend] What is your name?

- Speaker 30: Myungjin Chung.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 30: I am twenty-six years old.

JH: And your job?

- Speaker 30: I'm a designer.

JH: Now that you are doing design, do you normally deal with men's wear or women's wear? For *guje* clothes.

- Speaker 30: I do both men's and women's wear.

JH: So, you are in the design field. Do you also buy lots of *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 30: *Guje* clothes? Well, I do buy *guje* clothes a lot.

JH: Since when have you been buying and wearing them?

- Speaker 30: In my case, since the third grade of junior high school.

JH: You started wearing them pretty early, didn't you?

- Speaker 30: Yes, even before *guje* became popular.

JH: Did you have any special reason?

- Speaker 30: My reason? Well, when I was young, I tried to wear something others didn't, and wanted to stand out. So, I followed the *trend* by looking at lots of styles from famous foreign magazines.

JH: What kinds of magazines did you read?

- Speaker 30: When I was young, I used to read [Japanese] magazines like Men's Non-no and things like that.

JH: Weren't you afraid of standing out from the crowd?

- Speaker 30: No, it was fine as I liked the clothes.

JH: So, did you want to stand out?

- Speaker 30: Yes.

JH: Have you had a similar interest in music or other hobbies apart from fashion? Or have you been interested only in clothing?

- Speaker 30: It was only for clothing.

JH: What kind of *style* do you mainly look for when you buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 30: When I buy *guje* clothes?.

JH: Do you have any particular *style* in mind?

- Speaker 30: Well, it depends on each season; the leather gear in winter and T-shirts in summer, or I mainly wear blue jeans as they can be worn all year round.

JH: You have worn *guje* since your third grade at junior high school. Didn't your parents say anything about that?

- Speaker 30: They didn't say anything in particular about what I wore as I liked the clothing from when I was young.

JH: Didn't they have any aversion against what you wore, like second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 30: Yes, Yes.

JH: Are you perhaps an expert at washing or *reforming* as you have had a lot of second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 30: When I was young, I used to put some oil directly onto my *guje* denim *jacket*, or rub a mandarin skin on to my jeans to transform the colour into a golden yellowy tone.

JH: With the inside of outside of the mandarin skin?

- Speaker 30: If you rub with the inside of the skin, then you can achieve the natural dyeing effect as the mandarin skin soaks into the material, especially onto a ripped part. So it becomes more yellowy appearing *guje-ppil*. Or, you can achieve a bit more of a vintage feel by scratching somewhere on a *jacket* with an awl.

JH: It looks like many people follow Japanese-*poong* these days. Is there any particular foreign *style* which you follow?

- Speaker 30: Most what I see in the magazines.

JH: Do you hardly use the internet, like your friend?

- Speaker 30: No, I don't buy on the Internet, you know.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 19 (2006, UK)

Speaker 31 = female consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 31: Jungeun Lee.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 31: My age (.) I am twenty-nine years old in England; well, I am thirty -years old [in Korea].

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 31: My job (.) I teach at Dundee University as a lecturer and now have my own *studio*. So, I have registered as an individual entrepreneur.

JH: Can you tell me what kind of field you are working in?

- Speaker 31: I do *textile design*.

JH: Have you ever bought *guje* clothes in Korea?

- Speaker 31: I didn't buy them in Korea. If I think about it now as I have been living here for five years, the reason I didn't is because the *guje* market or *guje* fashion was very small back then in Korea. The movement of the market is much faster here [in the UK] than in Korea.

JH: Do you think so?

- Speaker 31: Yes. There are many places like Oxfam, second-hand shops or charity shops here, so I have come across things easily. By contrast, in Korea, charity shops are rare, while *guje* clothes are an absolute luxury, and expensive somewhere like Apgujeong-dong. But here, in charity shops or in flea markets, *guje* clothes are very common, so I have become familiar with them.

JH: Then, have you visited a place like Dongdaemun to buy *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 31: I haven't bought *guje* clothes as I only saw the expensive ones in Apgujeon-dong. I usually went to Dongdaemun to buy fabric or T-shirts, and I don't think I went there to buy *guje* clothes.

JH: Are you interested in *guje* style?

- Speaker 31: I have been interested in retro, but not in *guje* style. Well, talking about the style, I like retro belts, jeans, jackets and things. But I haven't bought myself *guje* clothes to wear even if I like to use them in my own design work.

JH: What do you think are the differences between *guje* and retro?

- Speaker 31: You know, *guje* has a kind of vintage feel, like a bit worn-out and from the 1960s. No! I meant retro is like the 60's style, and *guje* is, well, how can I put it (.) *guje* is only the second-hand feel, something like that.

JH: Do you think that retro is vintage?

- Speaker 31: I don't know the exact definition of the word. [Laughs]. But, there are so many second-hand shops in Glasgow. There are also lots of charity shops here [in Edinburgh], but in Glasgow, there are numerous second-hand shops apart from the charity shops and there is also a street where you can buy *gjeue*.

JH: So, do you mean *guje* as vintage, or?

- Speaker 31: In my opinion (.) I need to know first what is *guje*, and what is vintage. What do you mean?

JH: We can talk about that later if you want. But my purpose here is to understand the individuals' own idea about that. Anyway, does the *guje*, that we find here have a similar style to the ones in Apgujeong-dong?

- Speaker 31: Ah, about that, it seems to me that vintage in Korea appears to be standardised. One of the reasons why people look for vintage and buy *guje* clothes, is because they are unique. In Korea, this seems to be an issue. *Gjue* clothes (.) you know, they make lots of brand-new clothes which look like *guje*. But I do *guje* shopping here as I can find something really unique.

JH: You also mentioned the price before?

- Speaker 31: Yes, I buy here as there are cheap and there are rare designs here, but just in Korea, I wanted to say this, vintage or *guje* fashion looks like it has been produced to look old, but it's actually new. In contrary, the concept seems different here; they are like the only one. Unique items or something with a distinctive design.

JH: What shops do you go in Edinburgh?

- Speaker 31: I haven't been to any shops in Edinburgh. As I used to live in Glasgow, I went to several shops there; there are many shops in Glasgow's West End.

JH: What's the story of your friend you mentioned before this interview?

- Speaker 31: Ah, about my friend? Well, I was about to tell you how my friends see it from a designer's perspective. I then realized that you wanted to interview me from a consumer's position. So, I was confused a little [Laughs]. But, I think that there is a cultural gap in the atmosphere of using vintage between here and Korea.

JH: Thank you.

Interview 20 (2007, UK)

Speaker 32 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 32: Byungeun Lee.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 32: I was born in 1978.

JH: So, your age is?

- Speaker 32: Twenty (.), no, I'll soon be thirty in Korean age.

JH: What is your occupation?

- Speaker 32: My occupation is (.) After I graduated in English Literature from Sangmyung University, I did a clerical job at a private educational institute for a year. As soon as I started as an English lecturer at the institute, I realised that I wasn't good enough. So, now I am taking a language course at Stirling which will continue till September. I am going to start the

graduate course in Tesol next year. I will then go back to Korea and work as a lecturer at an institute. My final objective is to establish my own institute, school, university. That's my final goal.

JH: Ah, I see. Since when have you been wearing *guje* clothes?

- Speaker 32: Regarding *guje* (.) I'd like to draw a line between *guje* clothes and *vintage* clothes because they are different as far as I know. *Guje* clothes are just worn-out clothes, while *vintage* adds a little more meaning to the concept of worn-out clothes, I think. For instance, vintage is like a limited edition to celebrate something for a specific year and therefore, is sold at the premium price. I am more interested in *vintage items* than *guje* clothes, so I'd like to talk more about that aspect (.) I very much enjoy dressing well with it. It is one of my hobbies: saying 'Ah, someone has such *item* which has some kind of historic meaning (.) It is produced to commemorate something, in whatever year. This is from that particular year. It's age is something and has been kept in such condition because of,'

JH: Then, are you interested in the *style*, not in recycling worn-out clothes?

- Speaker 32: Well, my interest has grown since I was at high school.

JH: At which grade?

- Speaker 32: My second, second grade at high school. At the time, Lee, which might no longer be sold in Korea, and Levi's were imported probably by Ssangbangwool; so, Lee was officially imported and was sold at its own stores back then. When was that (.) about fifteen years ago or over ten years. I used to enjoy wearing Lee and Levi's, Levi's 501 a lot.

JH: Also the brand-new ones?

- Speaker 32: Well, they are *maejangpan* [a store edition]. I have been very much attracted to 501 since then while I enjoyed wearing *maejangpan*. So, I was really attracted to 501 over other jeans. Then, I was also interested in jeans from the brand called Lee. But after my military service, I lost interest in that field for a while. Then, I happened to go to a *guje shop* by chance, and there, I found=

JH: =How old were you when doing your military service?

- Speaker 32: I was about twenty-three, twenty-four years old.

JH: Was it in the mid or late 1990s?

- Speaker 32: No, it was around the 2000s, just before and after 2000.

JH: Were you a college student at the time?

- Speaker 32: Yes. I was just back to college after my military service. When I went to a *guje shop* at Myungdong at the time, there were *guje* clothes, just worn-out clothes. Among those worn-out clothes, many pairs of 501 which I used to like, 501 *guje* trousers were lined up. And I bought a pair which just caught my eye. It reminded me the past like, 'ah, I used to love these jeans so much.' Since then, I have regained my interest in 501 jeans. What I am interested in at the moment is, um (.) so, that was the start of my interest. So, the level of my interest now is to know that 501 jeans used to be produced in San Francisco, but they are no longer made in the United States. 501s were made at the Levi's factory in San Francisco only until the end of the 1990s; and then, Japanese people liked jeans so much so that

they bought all the licences. So, they bought the licences from Levi's and Lee and have reproduced as so called *bokgakpan* which is a *replica*. It is a reproduction; making them new, but with the same *design*, the same *style* and the same form. It's like; Levi's 501 models are not all identical in their shapes and normally have little differences in some *details* since their beginning. But, Japanese people have succeeded in perfectly reproducing the original model. When closing the factory in San Francisco around five years ago, all the original models were reproduced as some kind of commemoration to an event by embodying the similar fabric, rivets and stitches as were used earlier. So, they reproduced the closest equivalent to the original models. It seems that in Japan, these *bokgakpan* have been produced as '*made in Japan*' until now. And yet, even now, the American version of *bokgakpan* 501 jeans, which is no longer in production, has a greater *merit* and *premium* among jeans fanatics. Moreover, the original versions sell at a much higher price than we could ever imagine.

JH: Are *bokgakpan* versions being circulated at the official Levi's stores or at *guje* or *vintage* clothing shops?

- Speaker 32: They are sold at Levi's stores, not in general stores, but only certain stores in large cities as they were produced as a limited edition. They were sold as *maejangpan* with identification numbers in places like Tokyo, New York and London till they were all sold out.

JH: What was the charm of 501 when you first wore them?

- Speaker 32: I, uh=

JH: =Is it just a feeling, or being looked *cool*, or something else?

- Speaker 32: Firstly, it is my personal opinion to consider Levi's representative of jeans. And for example, with watches, it is Omega or Rolex; I think that Chanel or Gucci does not have any *merit* in that respect even if they make expensive watches or surpass Omega or Rolex in their *designs*, because they are not genuine watch *brands*. So, does Diesel for jeans. In my personal opinion, Lee and Levi's jeans are genuine. Therefore, when I first wore Levi's, what I liked the most was their button *fly*; not a zip *fly*, but a button *fly*. Moreover, 501 jeans are the only type that uses button *fly* among all Levi's *models*.

JH: So, after you bought a pair of Levi's in a *guje* clothing shop in Myungdong=

- Speaker 32: =After that, I mostly (.) you know, it was difficult to get them from general markets. They are mainly imported from Japan; Japanese people sell off their collections at Auction or other Internet sites, so I purchased them in that way. But now um (.) it is Pusan [in Korea] where such *vintage* and *guje* markets are formed and vitalized as Pusan has lots of possible *routes* whereby they can import and obtain things from Japan. So, I've mostly bought things directly from people in Pusan with whom I communicated on the phone after searching on the Internet and thinking, 'ah, I want to buy this product.'

JH: Are you originally from Pusan?

- Speaker 32: I am from Chunan, Chungnam. At first, I didn't know where these sellers are from when I found them on the Internet. Anyway, I called the number they gave there and explained that I'd like to buy such and such

a product. When I asked them to send me the product as soon as I made the deposit to their bank account, they told me ‘I live in Pusan and will post right away after receiving money’ in most cases.

JH: Do you mainly purchase on the Internet?

- Speaker 32: I mean, the Internet is the only possible way for me to get them because shops (.) in Pusan. Well, in case of Levi’s *replica* and Japanese *bokgakpans*, as there is a huge interest in jeans in Japan, there are Levi’s Japan with the official licence and also numerous other brands who have manufactured *bokgakpans* in their own ways, such as Fullcount, Samurai and so on; there must be approximately thirty Japanese brands who make high quality jeans. By the way, every brand presents its signature *bokgakpan* of the *daejeon model*, ‘*daejeon*’; *daejeon* means pre-war, pre-WWII. If those models win recognition like, ‘Ah, Fullcount’s *daejeon model* is a really good *quality* and is properly replicated,’ then it goes (.) there are so many like this.

JH: By the way, one of the reasons why people buy second-hand clothes is because the clothes are cheap. Does this apply to you as well?

- Speaker 32: Such (.) the people saying ‘the clothes are cheap,’ are probably the people who like *guje*. Ah, I (.) this is not my case. That was surprising to me. On the contrary, I think they are rather expensive because of their rareness; well, it is because my interest lies only in the products added with a *premium*.

JH: When you bought on-line, wasn’t the sizing a problem?

- Speaker 32: I only bought jeans. In case of jeans, there are the formulated sizes even if no one fixed them for length, measuring from this point to that and from ten centimetres below thigh to where, etc. So, I know my size, and I find stuff that fits.

JH: Didn’t you make a mistake with your first purchase?

- Speaker 32: Well, you can afford one or two centimetres of error as I checked. Really, really good fabrics have been transformed to fit your body after wearing them for about two or three months, for example, and can stretch and shrink them as needed. This is why I bought *bokgakpan* jeans even if they were expensive. To be honest, those *bokgakpans* are not like the currently popular low waist style, but an unsophisticated old and *classic model*. So, if I consider the shape itself, then I would probably buy *premium* jeans such as Diesel or True Religion if they were the same price. But the shape itself is not my major interest, but I am more into such=

JH: =Do your parents or the older generations say anything about your wearing of such jeans?

- Speaker 32: Well=

JH: =So, what’s their response to you wearing second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 32: By the way, the jeans I’ve been wearing are not second-hand. So when you first buy *bokgakpan*, their colour appears as *indigo*. Then you can create your own washed-out look, as time passes, by wearing them. That is one of fun things for me to wear jeans.

JH: Then, are there both brand-new and second-hand clothes in the *guje* market?

- Speaker 32: Well, there are mostly Japanese products in the trade rather than in the *guje* market. The things which are traded here are the products from Japanese markets. For example, there are brand-new *bokgakpan* 501s from a certain year; but also I can place the same model which I used to wear on the list [on the Internet sites]. I should first take a photograph to show the condition of jeans and list sizes and price. If I suppose selling off the jeans I'm wearing now, I can probably get 100,000-150,000 won for it; I bought these at a really good bargain, for 160,000 won as new which would normally cost between 250,000-300,000 won.

JH: How long have you been wearing these jeans?

- Speaker 32: For about three years.

JH: Aside from jeans, I heard that you are also wearing *yasahng*.

- Speaker 32: Well, so as I've been interested in jeans, I've come across other *vintage items* one by one.

JH: From where do you get to know about them?

- Speaker 32: It was the Internet sites. On the Internet, things like Adidas Détente from XX year can be found. Well, what Adidas Détente is, seems to me, to be a model name of Adidas. Yeah, Détente sounds like a model name. By the way, *premium* products in *vintage* are mostly 'made in Germany.'

JH: In the case of Adidas?

- Speaker 32: Yeah. With jersey clothing, shoes and sneakers, Adidas products are circulated at *premium* prices; but Nike products are not. It is because old Adidas products are now being considered more *fashionable* and appear more pretty and cool.

JH: Do you learn about the *styles* from websites (.) the sites for *vintage* or *guje* clothing or from men's magazines or films (.) what's your ideal?

- Speaker 32: I (.) in some ways, I just don't know *fashion*. I only have lots of interests, so I've joined *Internet cafés* filled with people who are keen on *fashion*. Whenever I can spare some time, I constantly log on and check upon what is going on currently to find out; such designers make such kinds of clothes; stylish men prefer what clothes and what *brands* and so on. Well, I can see many people whose *fashion* seems so far away from my own, especially when I walk around department stores in Seoul, such as Galleria and Hyundai department store in Apgujeong-Dong. When I compare my fashion with those who dress themselves in *luxurious* designer goods, I am still satisfied with myself at the moment even if I don't have that much money to dress like them. Anyway, my favourite magazine is *Esquire* where I get some tips while I obtain most of information from *Internet cafés*. On the other hand, I hardly get a satisfying shopping session done when I look around shops in Korea and here [Stirling].

JH: Well, then what about military *jackets* and things?

- Speaker 32: Please remind me as I tend to digress repeatedly. Well, that was because I've eventually ended up with possessing so many pairs of jeans.

JH: How many pairs in total?

- Speaker 32: By time to time, I gave some to my friends who asked me how I achieved the *washing* effect with my jeans. And now I've got about ten pairs in total. So, as I have become quite satisfied with my wearing of jeans, I was thinking like, 'What can go perfectly well with my cool jeans?' I then fancied the Adidas jersey clothing and, so called, *yasahng* which is a typical *vintage style*, if you think about it; *yasahng* with the *gookbang-sak* (Army green) colour, not with the camouflage pattern.

JH: Why is that so? A typical *vintage style* is (.) for men's *styles*?

- Speaker 32: I think that it probably originates in that (.) *hippies* from the time when the United States was involved in the Vietnam War. Based on highly influential people like John Lennon. Yeah, it appears to have started in that period. In my opinion, they were full of people dressed in *vintage*, *vintage style*.

JH: So, what represents the current *vintage* fashion in Korea are military *jackets*?

- Speaker 32: There is a guy who is considered among *vintage* lovers as a perfect embodiment of real *vintage*; he is called Bae Jungnam. I don't know if his model career helps, but he always finds a really good match with colours, with balancing a *jacket* and trousers and so on. Well, by the way, I can't distinguish what is *vintage style* and what is not, and also do not know what clothing *items* make the look *vintage style*. But, I just consider people who dress in certain stylish *items* in a natural manner as having a *vintage style*; for example, stone washed jeans, especially in the case of *bokgakpoom* of XXXX year; a *jacket*, old and shabby, is shabby chic but not with its luxury brand name; or *accessories* or *bags* with aged patina.

JH: So, what about your military *jackets* (.) How did you initially start?

- Speaker 32: Ah, I haven't told you that yet (.) Military *jackets* are similar to 501, you know. It was probably the early 1900s when the US Army started making that colour of military *jackets*.

JH: The early 1900s?

- Speaker 32: Yes, as far as I know. And, they have continued changing their *design* every twenty years ever since, I think. The prettiest model of all is from 1951; and the next prettiest is from 1965; so they are called M51, M65. But while M65s are relatively easy to buy as they are being traded here and there, M51s are really difficult to get hold of. It may be for that reason people think that M51 is the most ideal model and the most stylish, ideal of *vintage yсахngs*. I was lucky to find it as it just slipped out of my mouth when inquiring about jeans to a seller, 'Ah, I'd like to get *yasahng*.' Unexpectedly, he said that he could sell it to me if I would buy the jeans in question, as he was going to join the Army in a week time. So, I ended up buying them, and it was from 1951, but a brand-new one.

JH: How was that possible?

- Speaker 32: The seller was from Pusan. I think that there are many people who sell things from Japan like him in Pusan. They bring things in from Japan per unit of *tteghi*, like things being traded by crate. They sort out a crate by taking out and pricing every piece like under 20,000 won or

something, sometimes, ‘Ur, this can be sold for around 100,000 won,’ and it goes on.

JH: Are brand-new American products also imported through Japan?

- Speaker 32: That’s right. Japanese people’s affection for *vintage* has a longer history than ours. They seem to be ten years ahead of us, in my opinion. So, they must have secured a steady supply [of *vintage* clothes], good enough that surpluses can slip through to Korean markets. These surplus stocks would have been traded at expensive prices in Japanese markets; but in Korea, they are sold for relatively cheaper prices due to the lack of recognition [of *vintage*]). People respond like, ‘Why is this kind of thing so expensive?’ or ‘I don’t understand the price because they are old and worn-out.’ Then sellers can do nothing but lower the price of the things they need to sell off.

JH: So, how much did you pay for the *jacket* when you bought your jeans?

- Speaker 32: I think the *jacket* was 180,000 won.

JH: And were your jeans a brand-new pair of *bokgakpoom*?

- Speaker 32: Yes, the jeans are Lee, not Levi’s, Lee. This model itself was not overly difficult to get, but I couldn’t find my size. So I bought this for 150,000 won, I think.

JH: Did you use to wear the military *jacket* when you worked in Korea? Did you wear it when you went to work, or did you need to dress in a particular way?

- Speaker 32: As I worked for an educational institute for teenagers, I preferred the clothing which could cause minimum aversion. And I wore it [the military jacket] when I didn’t have any class. But I didn’t want to be recognized by others when I wore it because it is natural not to know about the brand and model name of this type of clothing. It is rare to find people like me across the country, so it is purely self-satisfaction. I don’t expect others’ responses to each of my *items* to be like, ‘Yeah, he pulled the proper *vintage* [look] off.’ But there’s such a thing between connoisseurs on the street. Sometimes, I find a guy who catches my eye and makes me think, ‘Uh, that guy really wears cool clothes’; then he also look me over from head to toe. Do you know what I mean?

JH: Yes, yes, yes.

- Speaker 32: I have these kinds of experiences.

JH: Well, regarding the aversion to the style during class, did you have any special *dress code* given by the institute?

- Speaker 32: No, it’s autonomous.

JH: Then, did you control yourself by thinking ‘this can cause problems’?

- Speaker 32: There were two high school boys who were very interested in clothing. So they always *checked* whatever I wore by asking questions like ‘teacher, what brand are you wearing today?’ or ‘you’ve never worn these trousers before.’ From a certain point, I became bothered with the kids because they showed more interest in my clothing than in studying. So, there was this aspect that I worried about them, the more I showed off, the more they became interested.

JH: If there were students who liked your way of dressing, then was there an opposite case, thinking ‘why does he wear such stuff?’

- Speaker 32: Of course, there was.

JH: How did they express that?

- Speaker 32: ‘Teacher! Why do you dress like a college student, not wearing formal trousers, a *cardigan* and a shirt like other teachers?’

JH: Did they say that?

- Speaker 32: Yes, they did. I answered, ‘This is comfortable for me. I think it is better to be natural than to be uncomfortable during the class.’

JH: Was there any pressure about *style* from your boss at the institute?

- Speaker 32: No.

JH: What about your parents then? Haven’t they asked you to wear neater and tidier clothes?

- Speaker 32: Well, they knew the fact that I have been interested in clothing and liked jeans since my high school, so=

JH: =How were they like when you were still in high school?

- Speaker 32: I think they understood naturally at that time like ‘you’re now a high school student, so you’re interested in clothes and want to be stylish’. By the way, both my elder sister and brother are not keen on fashion, so my parents might have also liked to see how I became. While my elder sister and brother were good at school without paying attention to anywhere else, I didn’t care about studying much, but was hooked on such things.

JH: So, were your main purchases the military *jacket* and jeans?

- Speaker 32: No! For *yasahng*, I’ve only got one.

JH: I see. There are also second-hand clothes among *bokgakpoom*. But doesn’t the issue of hygiene with second-hand clothes bother you when you buy them?

- Speaker 32: Well, I can’t possibly know the previous wearers or their personal stories. And with hygiene, it won’t be like the clothes were dipped into a hole of bacteria. Even if they might be worn by a person with AIDS, AIDS won’t be infected to others through clothes. In that respect, I don’t have any strong aversion. No problem after washing, except *underwear*.

JH: In case of good quality jeans (.) Ah, speaking of *underwear*, do you also buy shoes?

- Speaker 32: No. I am very much interested in shoes, but I can’t wear second-hand shoes.

JH: Why is that so?

- Speaker 32: In the case of shoes (.) it is because of my personal taste; as far as I consider, feet are the dirtiest part of the body. So, I can’t even give my shoes to anybody else. But, they are being traded a lot; there are many transactions with lots of people who request and buy. Also with shoes, I prefer the type of shoes which can match well with jeans. And I also really like *suite*. When I was in Korea, I wanted to buy really high quality ones as I was earning a bit of money. Well, I was just interested whether I could afford them or not.

JH: What kind of *brand*?

- Speaker 32: I have three *suites*; they are all Time, a brand which make the most similar styles to what I originally wanted to buy, but couldn't afford.

JH: What are they?

- Speaker 32: Well, luxury clothes, obviously. I've never worn, but I think Burberry Prorsum will be most suitable to my *style*.

JH: Do you also care about your *hair*[style] or other things to fit your clothes?

- Speaker 32: No. I think that being most *natural* appears most *fashionable*. So, I don't like to do anything artificial.

JH: Does it bother you standing out too much as you are *fashionable*?

- Speaker 32: I don't think that my *fashion* stands out anywhere, it is just=

JH: =Weren't you singled out from your colleagues with formal trousers and a *cardigan*?

- Speaker 32: Yes, I was. What was the question again?

JH: It was about being bothered about standing out too much, or if you want to be distinctive from others?

- Speaker 32: I don't think I look distinctive. I am very confident about my *coordination* [of clothes], and I also try to be confident. Suppose if I wear a *pink dress shirt* and a *bow tie*, even if others would think it strange, but (.) it might be my nature thinking, 'Ah, this is also my chance to prove that I have the most stylish fashion sense,' in that kind of occasion. I just accept others' responses, even if they are negative, and knock down my *fashion* [sense], but instead of admiration, they are only backbiting. It is fine as long as I feel like 'ah, I look good today' while passing people on the street.

JH: You've just mentioned that good jeans are adjusted onto its wearer's body shape in two or three month. Would it be the case when they are second-hand jeans (.) jeans which have already been worn and therefore, fitted to another person's figure?

- Speaker 32: That is a common mistake among people who don't know better and naively think that second-hand jeans can fit to a new owner. So, connoisseurs buy a brand-new one from the beginning.

JH: Um, like *bokgakpoom*?

- Speaker 32: Yeah, they just try to adjust a new pair to their own body.

JH: Didn't you say that you bought the second-hand Levi's at the start?

- Speaker 32: Ah (.) at that time, I didn't know about this kind of things at all (.) But later, I learnt about *bokgakpan* which are not just ordinary jeans due to such fabrics and such details and therefore, need to be worn in such ways.

JH: In the case you can't afford *bokgakpan* then would you consider buying a second-hand pair?

- Speaker 32: That is a personal taste. Ah, me?

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 32: If I don't have enough money to buy *bokgakpan* (.) But it's not like you need an awful lot of pairs of jeans for practicing your *vintage* jeans fashion. One pair of jeans can last up to three years, just one pair. What you need is only one pair. So, even if they seem expensive, you'd better save money and buy a proper pair than collect many cheap, rubbish ones. I think

it is a lot better creating cool jeans by wearing them everyday. If you have many pairs, it is more difficult to make a good *washing* effect as you need to change every now and then. If you have only one pair, then you have no choice but to wear them all the time which will result taking the colour out more quickly to make a *washing* effect. This cannot be achieved in a single day, but in minimum six months to maximum.

JH: By doing the laundry?

- Speaker 32: No, if you do the laundry, the fabric can be distorted.

JH: Then, how do you clean it?

- Speaker 32: So, occasionally, you need to do such (.) it is not the way I do it, but how should I put it?

JH: Do you mean specialists?

- Speaker 32: They are not specialists, but like=

JH: =Experts who are proficient in=

- Speaker 32: =No, no. I forgot the Korean word for it. Anyway, there are these guys who have gone mad at this. Well, when they decide to make a *washing* with their new *indigo* jeans, then they wear them all the time for six months without doing the laundry even once. In the end, they make a *washing* effect which everybody praises. So, it goes like this, I think, some guys think, 'Ah, I've achieved such a level and will show off at the [Internet] Café after I perfectly make it.' Then, there are other guys who actively participate at the Internet Café. They are specialists in a way. They add their replies to a posted image of jeans, for example, 'I know what it takes. He must put this much effort to drain the colour out till that point,' and so on. With these positive responses on the Internet Café, they feel a sort of pleasure or something. I would feel the same, more or less, if I received that kind of favourable responses by others.

JH: So, for the second-hand jeans which have been bleached really well=

- Speaker 32: =You can't do it with anything else.

JH: If they come into the market due to whatever reasons, for example, if the owner is drafted into the army?

- Speaker 32: If those jeans are in the market, then they are treated as an art work. Sometimes, an auction starts when the owner asks to bid a price for jeans with such *washing*.

JH: Yeah.

- Speaker 32: When a potential buyer responds like 'sell them to me for such and such a price, then an auction starts.

JH: Is an auction taking a place at a certain Internet Café, not at an official Internet site like eBay?

- Speaker 32: Yes, it happens like that.

JH: Unofficially?

- Speaker 32: So, they announce what time an auction starts and finishes. There are other cases; for Adidas, brand-new pairs of old model are sold like that. There are lots of auctions of the old models of Adidas shoes which have been kept in a box as brand-new. And same for jersey clothing;

hardly obtainable items in a new condition can be sold for 600,000 – 700,000 won.

JH: Finally, it might be tricky to answer, but why do you pursue this kind of *style*? What do you want to express?

- Speaker 32: There's nothing much to be expressed, but I just don't like rigid moods and rigid fashion.

JH: What do you mean by rigid?

- Speaker 32: Well, like a stiff line, *colourful* stuff and an artificial feel.

JH: Do you mean something like formal suites?

- Speaker 32: So, well, um (.) for example, it will be really uncomfortable for me to see a person with a spotless white T-shirt, brand-new and never-washed *indigo jeans* and squeaky clean shoes. On the other hand, a genuinely natural and cool-looking person for me is the one who dresses with worn-out neckline, washed-out styles and unclean sneakers

JH: So, do you judge people's personality by the way they dress?

- Speaker 32: Yes, it is something like this; 'this guy's really paid too much attention, so he seems really uncomfortable. But the other one looks really natural, so he seems really comfortable.' I think you should consider time and place. I normally wear what I like, but I willingly wear a suite and have an appropriate hairstyle on a formal occasion.

JH: Does it affect your choice of occupation? For example, wouldn't you consider being a government employee or something if it reflected your nature? And having been an English teacher?

- Speaker 32: Yes. I think that I am not the type who can work under another, and my parents think so, too. When I told such intentions to my parents, they said, 'uh, we thought that, too. It'll be difficult for you to work for others'.

JH: Have you had a propensity for being a free spirit since you were younger?

- Speaker 32: I've wanted to do what I like, and go the way I want. And my parents also raised me in such (.) well (.)

JH: By working under another, do you mean like becoming an employee of major companies or the government, which others generally prefer?

- Speaker 32: My elder brother lives as a stereotypical Korean breadwinner. He studied very well, graduated from a good college and now works for a major company. My parents seem to get enough satisfaction from him, 'your brother satisfies our expectations, so you can live your life as you wish.'

JH: Did you have any desire to follow in your brother's footsteps?

- Speaker 32: I am thankful to my elder brother, but don't want to follow him. The reason why I appreciate him is that he offers me a chance to do whatever I like freely, and also, he is doing really well by our parents. But I have never envied his way of life.

JH: I see.

Interview 21 (2007, UK)

Speaker 33 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 33: Taekyung Kim.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 33: I was born in 1978. I am thirty years old in Korean age, but here [in the UK], I am twenty-eight years old as my birthday hasn't passed yet.

JH: Are you a student at the moment?

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: What do you study?

- Speaker 33: Philosophy.

JH: Philosophy? I'd like to make sure in case the recording doesn't work as I am not good at using gadgets.

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: Is this what you wore last time?

- Speaker 33: Ah, this?

JH: Yes, yes. Where did you get it?

- Speaker 33: Ah, I bought this here [in Edinburgh].

JH: You bought it here?

- Speaker 33: Yes, I did because it's so cold.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 33: And I haven't got the parcel from home yet.

JH: Where did you buy it exactly?

- Speaker 33: It was a shop in Princess Street (.). There should be a label (.). Burton or something?

JH: Burton?

- Speaker 33: Yeah, this is it, Byron.

JH: Ah OK!

- Speaker 33: It is a cheap shop compared with others.

JH: May I ask the price?

- Speaker 33: Yes, it was £50.

JH: £50. Is it a genuine military uniform, or just a military-uniform style?

- Speaker 33: Yes. This is nothing to do with military uniforms.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 33: I don't understand why people often see this as a military uniform, but=

JH: =Do they?

- Speaker 33: It might be because there is a name tag on and also, an epaulette to mark the military rank on the shoulder.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 33: Moreover, its colour is Army green.

JH: You just mentioned that people often misunderstood this as a military uniform. Who are they, English or Korean?

- Speaker 33: People from here do not say anything about my clothes, but only Korean people.

JH: Do you believe that people from here still think your clothing is a military uniform even if they don't comment on it?

- Speaker 33: It seems that they don't even think about it at all. When I first wore this, my classmates asked me, 'Did you buy it?' So, I answered 'yeah, I did.' And they only said it looks good. There is not a huge difference in the way people dress themselves among foreign students here. So, there is no comparison between each other, and no one bothers with it. But only Korean people keep asking about the clothing.

JH: What do they ask?

- Speaker 33: Well, they asked if people in the field of philosophy normally wear this type of clothes.

JH: What type of clothes do they mean by that?

- Speaker 33: Such *styles* of looking different and somewhat shabby.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 33: Actually, people in philosophy do not wear this kind of clothing much.

JH: Ah, yeah.

- Speaker 33: But Korean people said 'it makes me look like a person in philosophy,' something like that.

JH: Ah!

- Speaker 33: They start commenting like that and keep asking if I bought it intentionally. Especially, when we drink together, they ask me if I bought this on purpose.

JH: Have you met people who regard this as a real military uniform?

- Speaker 33: Yes, particularly younger friends.

JH: Korean friends?

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: What did they say?

- Speaker 33: They said that it looked like a military uniform.

JH: Looked like a military uniform?

- Speaker 33: Yes, so=

JH: =Do they ask whether it is a military uniform, or not? Or, do they just comment that it looks similar to a military uniform?

- Speaker 33: They say that this looks similar to a military uniform.

JH: Ah (.) well, you mentioned earlier on the phone that you haven't worn this much as you've received so many comments on it.

- Speaker 33: So, I try not to wear it when there are many Korean people around me.

JH: Why? Isn't it the case that people find it interesting? And haven't you got a positive response for being unique?

- Speaker 33: I have never felt that I was receiving a positive *nuance*, never .
- JH: Ah!
- Speaker 33: So=
- JH: =Well, do you think that they meant a negative *nuance*?
- Speaker 33: Well, they think that it is strange.
- JH: Strange? (.) Is it received as strange because it looks similar to a fraying military uniform? Why?
- Speaker 33: I think that two things bother them. Firstly, it is my major. I absolutely have no idea why so many people, especially, older ones, say that I look like a person in philosophy; while younger people cannot comment on my clothes easily. But then, I ask them if I really look like a person in philosophy. Then they say that it looks like a military uniform and sometimes, ask me why I wear it over and over. I say that I don't have other clothes. Then these young people even suggest that I don't go out and an older people ask if I don't have other clothes.
- JH: [Laughs]
- Speaker 33: They say, 'Don't go out if you need to wear this.'
- JH: Is it only because it looks like a fraying military uniform?
- Speaker 33: Yes.
- JH: There was a guy who studies in the computing department. Ah, don't you remember?
- Speaker 33: Um, that=
- JH: =Didn't he wear something similar to yours on that day?
- Speaker 33: Ah, I don't specially pay much attention to others.
- JH: Um, it was just similar, so (.) By the way, haven't you worn such clothing in Korea or in the U.S.?
- Speaker 33: In Korea, there were not such *styles* at that time.
- JH: You mean the military uniform-like *style*?
- Speaker 33: That kind of *style* existed, but there weren't lots of *vintage* types in Korea. And when I was in the U.S., I didn't need to wear thick clothes a lot as Oklahoma is not so cold.
- JH: I see. Are you very much interested in *vintage*?
- Speaker 33: Ah, I like it. Well, I like something that looks worn-out, for example, in the case of trousers, ripped or scratched jeans like these.
- JH: Then, did you perhaps buy *vintage*-type clothes because it matches well with ripped jeans?
- Speaker 33: Yes, that is one of the reasons.
- JH: Is it your own idea?
- Speaker 33: Yes, it's just my opinion.
- JH: If you didn't wear something like this when you were in Korea, and then what did you used to wear?
- Speaker 33: When I was in Korea, I had a girlfriend back then. So, she chose clothes for me.
- JH: With *vintage*?

Appendix

- Speaker 33: No, something different. Well, she picked things like a *duffle coat* or lots of leather, like a leather *jacket* and so on.

JH: Were they new clothes with *vintage styles* then?

- Speaker 33: No, they were different, different.

JH: Since when have you been interested in *vintage*?

- Speaker 33: It was recently=

JH: =After you came to the U.K. or when you were in the U.S.?

- Speaker 33: It was probably when I was in Korea recently, that time=

JH: =Was there any reason?

- Speaker 33: Just by passing through here and there. You know, there is a huge difference between my fashion in the U.S. and in Korea. So, I didn't care about clothes when I was in the U.S., but I automatically started minding it when I returned to Korea as they all dress well. So, I looked around and found *vintage* appropriate without being too loud.

JH: Where about in Korea were you?

- Speaker 33: Daejeon.

JH: Ah, Daejeon? Are the people in Daejeon also fashion conscious?

- Speaker 33: Well, I did my postgraduate course in Daejeon, so there are still many people who I know.

JH: Are you talking about students?

- Speaker 33: Both undergraduate and graduate students. College students tend to wear cooler clothes.

JH: Are they in their twenties?

- Speaker 33: Between mid and late twenties; for women, from early to mid twenties. I noticed that those people wear those *styles* a lot.

JH: Did you recognize those styles as *vintage* straight away?

- Speaker 33: I already knew the word *vintage*, but when I saw people in those styles, I realized, 'ah, that is *vintage*.'

JH: *Vintage* but still new clothes?

- Speaker 33: Yeah, yeah.

JH: Are you not going to wear this garment in the future?

- Speaker 33: [Laughs] I'm trying if possible (.) I didn't want to wear it today, but as my other one was dirty from playing football earlier in the morning. So, unfortunately, I had no choice.

JH: Have you finished your military service in Korea.

- Speaker 33: Yes, you need to say 'discharged from the military service,' not 'finished' [laughs].

JH: [Laugh.] Ah, excuse my expression. What did you think about the military uniform when you joined the military service? And do you normally buy military uniforms when you join?

- Speaker 33: Generally speaking (.) military uniforms? You don't buy them. They are provided by the government.

JH: Of course, they should be provided. But is there nobody that buys them as well if they don't like the ones given? I heard that some wear the American army gear.

- Speaker 33: When I was in the military, you couldn't do that. Military uniforms were supplied, so could not be bought with money. But you can buy fatigue caps.

JH: They say that there are shops selling military uniforms.

- Speaker 33: Yes, there are. And there are people who like *military*=

JH: =With the genuine military uniforms?

- Speaker 33: Yes. You know, there are people who like the real ones.

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 33: There are those people, and others need them for their reserve forces training.

JH: Do you return your own military uniforms after being discharged?

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: So, do you need to return them?

- Speaker 33: You go back home wearing them when you are discharged from military service.

JH: Then, with wearing the clothes=

- Speaker 33: You can use that uniform when you later go to the reserve forces training. But there are some people who don't have it. And there are also a lot of *military look* enthusiasts.

JH: Were you not interested in that at the time?

- Speaker 33: No, I wasn't.

JH: And now, would you like to buy those clothes?

- Speaker 33: It is not the clothes themselves, but because of my particular body figure which is difficult to fit well with general clothes. Well, this [jacket] is not exactly a good fit, but better than other clothes.

JH: What did you think about the military uniform when you were in the military?

- Speaker 33: Most people in the army don't care about their military uniforms as they only think about their discharge date.

JH: It seems that there are many men who are not happy with it?

- Speaker 33: In Korean military, only officers are entitled to have summer and winter uniforms while the ranks are not. So, the ranks manage to get by rolling the uniform sleeves up in summer and down in winter, but still, feel hotter in summer and colder in winter.

JH: Is that *yasahng*, the one which the ranks wear all year round?

- Speaker 33: No, it's not. *Yasahng* is something like a *jumper* with a pad of cotton and can be worn in winter.

JH: Ah, do you still keep the military uniform which you wore during your military service?

- Speaker 33: Yes, I have it at home.

JH: Have you ever worn it except for the reserve forces training?

- Speaker 33: No, never. There is even a name tag on it.

JH: It seems that there are some men who intentionally wear it.

- Speaker 33: [Laughs.] But men can distinguish whether others wear the *military look* or their own military uniform.

JH: How?

- Speaker 33: So, they are different; different in *designs* and different in colours. And most of all, we know it instinctively. The one you buy in the shops looks cooler.

JH: Even if they are the same *design*?

- Speaker 33: Yeah, they are different.

JH: As far as I know, it is not allowed to wear military uniforms on the street by law. Do you know that?

- Speaker 33: Then, what about soldiers on holiday?

JH: Except soldiers.

- Speaker 33: Ah, I didn't know about that.

JH: They say that it is not allowed except for soldiers.

- Speaker 33: I haven't heard of that.

JH: So, don't you have any special attachment to the military uniform?

- Speaker 33: Not at all.

JH: Even just for the sake of *fashion*?

- Speaker 33: No, I'm telling you repeatedly that I never considered this as a military uniform. I bought it just because I like such *style*.

JH: But, Koreans still regard it so=

- Speaker 33: =Yes, that surprised me.

JH: Um, both men and women? Were you surprised by that?

- Speaker 33: Yes. Personally, I can't understand at all that they view this as a military uniform by overlooking the details like the attachment of a cap on this jacket.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 33: So, I like it because it is a *vintage style*, not because it is similar to the military uniform.

JH: Fine. It can be weird having such responses by Koreans.

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: Interesting! Why do they have such aversion against people wearing the military uniform? Is it common?

- Speaker 33: I'd like to ask them, too, the reason why.

JH: Have you never asked?

- Speaker 33: In my opinion, there are two aspects. Firstly, in TV dramas from the 1970s and 1980s, you can often find philosophy students carrying books with them and wearing military uniforms dyed in black. So, when I wear this jacket, some people regard me as such an *image* and guess that this type of men would be in the philosophy department. And others, especially younger people, simply consider that I like *military-style* clothes.

JH: What is those young people's perception towards a person who likes *military-style* clothes?

- Speaker 33: I didn't ask them the details. It hasn't been a long while since I came here. And also, it is not very easy for young people to comment freely

about their seniors' outfits. So, when I asked them if this looked like a military uniform, they answered it did. That was all.

JH: And where do you buy jeans, things like ripped jeans? Do you buy brand-new pairs?

- Speaker 33: Yes, new ones. But I don't even know where to find such styles. It is always like this: if I like the colour, then it doesn't have the ripped details; and if it is beautifully ripped, then the colour's not right for me. Then, I buy the one with a nice colour and tear it by myself at home.

JH: Are you good at doing such things by yourself?

- Speaker 33: I do well as much as I want.

JH: Um, did you do it by yourself, or look up some information from here and there?

- Speaker 33: The Internet.

JH: The Internet! How?

- Speaker 33: *Naver(.com)*.

JH: On *Naver* (.) do you then search for things like how to tear jeans and follow the instructions directly?

- Speaker 33: Yes. I used to do that a long while ago, about one or two years ago.

JH: Well, were you satisfied with what you'd done?

- Speaker 33: Yes. I liked it, but people around me didn't quite like it.

JH: People around you?

- Speaker 33: My family.

JH: Your family? What did they say?

- Speaker 33: They asked why I tore normal trousers (.) When I was in the U.S., my roommate asked me why I did such a thing and why I put so much effort instead of buying the readymade ripped jeans. This cannot be achieved just by doing it randomly, but by carefully picking strand by strand with a *cutter* knife. After picking strands, you need to rub that part with a loofah to get a smudge effect. So, it is to twist the joints of jeans and reveal the whiter part of the fabric, not to tear up completely. This is not easy.

JH: It seems difficult indeed, but you sound confident.

- Speaker 33: When I tried for the first time, it turned out properly.

JH: How interesting! You must be good at it.

- Speaker 33: I am a capable person.

JH: Why do you like such things that require so much effort?

- Speaker 33: I think that they suit me very well!

JH: With yourself?

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: With what aspects of yourself?

- Speaker 33: I think I look so-called *cool* when I wear such clothes rather than normal trousers. When I look at myself, I think that I am *cool*.

JH: Being *cool* might sound a little abstract. Do you have any specific *images* of being *cool*?

- Speaker 33: Abstract! Well, if I put it in words, it is like getting the right feeling when you wear it. When you try the same *design* in different colours, you might feel a bit strange with one, but a perfect fit with another. I just buy clothes which I think make me look great in front of a mirror. I don't consider things like my *image* very much.

JH: From your family's perspective, ripped clothes might not suit you well=

- Speaker 33: =Most of all, they think that these clothes are rather gaudy.

JH: Do you think that the *image* of a gentleman does not suit you?

- Speaker 33: Yes, there is something like that, actually. I am not like a gentleman.

JH: Ah, I see. Do you think so because you are still a student, or?

- Speaker 33: I am like this by nature, by nature.

JH: Some people are changed with age, like when they become thirty-something, they are either naturally changed or try to be different than before. What about you?

- Speaker 33: I realise that I'm getting older when I see my friends living their working life and my cousins growing; and yet, I don't feel that kind of desire to change myself yet. Well, I occasionally wear a suit. But I don't understand why people need to be neat and tidy as they get older. There's no reason to do that.

JH: What is your reason to refuse the *images* of a gentleman?

- Speaker 33: If needed, for example, at the wedding or at the interview, then I wear a suit. But, frankly speaking, I don't become a gentleman by wearing decent and refined clothing; and equally, my mind isn't torn even if I tear my clothes. So, I don't bother when I personally meet up with people, as long as I don't harm anyone.

JH: What is the reason for you to stick to such styles regardless of your family and friends?

- Speaker 33: Speaking of my family, I have my mother, my father, an elder sister and elder brothers, and we have a huge age gap between us. If my sister says something to me, then I ask her to care about her own children as they would be worse than I am, or blame her for being old. Similarly, I also say to my mother that she doesn't understand this generation. So, I mostly regard their comments as related to the generational gap. And between friends, as men are short on expressions, they just say 'oh!' and that's it. By the way, this pair of trousers was even more torn before, so I had to fill up the gap as my family scolded me for that so much.

JH: Sorry, would you say once more?

- Speaker 33: I sewed up a seriously fraying part as people's remarks got on my nerves. When I went for a drink, especially female juniors complained that my jeans were really bugging them as it was ripped too much. So, I stitched them up so I wouldn't make anyone uncomfortable.

JH: Then, is it also a factor having a profession which doesn't require you to be decently well-dressed?

- Speaker 33: Frankly, that is not to do with being like a gentleman (.) Even if I become a professor after my study, I don't need to wear a suit everyday. I will wear whatever I feel like. Even if I get a job which is expected to be a gentlemanly by others, I will wear what suits me.

JH: Well, indeed=

- Speaker 33: =So, if I say such things to others, they say to me 'is that why you study philosophy?' But I have somewhat different reasons to study philosophy.

JH: Yeah, I think I heard that reason before.

- Speaker 33: Yes, I told this and that reason at that time (.) By the way, philosophy students are rather chic. Most of them wear proper and neat clothes. So, male students in humanity dress better than in engineering; I think male philosophy students dress a lot better.

JH: Don't you stand out among other people?

- Speaker 33: Yes, but I wouldn't know that myself. I wouldn't possibly know if I stand out or not.

JH: Wouldn't you?

- Speaker 33: It is for the others to know that.

JH: Did others tell you about you standing out?

- Speaker 33: Sometimes they did. But I don't think that I stand out that much. When others tell me that I stand out, I just respond like 'do I?' That's it.

JH: Well, if they hear that they look different, most people=

- Speaker 33: Ah, I know some people who also dress like this.

JH: [Laugh.] Well, it's only because you mentioned about receiving lots of comments.

- Speaker 33: Well, I try not to let it bother me. When people comment on that, I tell them to care about their own clothes.

JH: So, do you think that they look good?

- Speaker 33: Well, in my opinion, this style suits me well. I'm not a type who buys a lot of clothes. So, I might buy something different next time if I find.

JH: Why don't you wear this jacket much if you don't care about others' responses?

- Speaker 33: Well, it's just so annoying even though I don't harm anyone by wearing this.

JH: I just thought that you really don't care=

- Speaker 33: =But I can't help getting annoyed by them. Also I can't pull a long face as we are not so close to each other.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 33: This is not very thick, so I can no longer wear it when it gets colder, anyway.

JH: But, it really seems like a military uniform, indeed.

- Speaker 33: This is not a military uniform. If you look carefully, there is a waist line like this.

JH: [Laugh.] They sell lots of this kind of clothing here.

- Speaker 33: Yes, they do.

JH: As Koreans hardly buy this kind of clothing, is the impression of military uniforms not positive among Koreans?

- Speaker 33: Yes, especially for people who have been discharged. So, when young people, who have not yet joined the military service, enjoy wearing something similar to military uniforms, discharged men say that young people don't know anything.

JH: What do they not know?

- Speaker 33: Well, something like, 'They don't know a thing about the military itself and military uniforms and how tedious it will be. So, that cannot possibly be called fashionable'

JH: They don't like it because it is tedious?

- Speaker 33: That's one reason; and also, they doubt how it can be stylish.

JH: Do people dislike the uniforms only due to one reason that the army is tiresome?

- Speaker 33: Tiresome is one thing. They say that the military becomes better and better these days, but in my time, there was beating, too=

JH: =Sorry?

- Speaker 33: =Beating, like hitting people.

JH: [Laugh.] What year did you go to the military service?

- Speaker 33: In 1999.

JH: If it was 1999, then when were you discharged?

- Speaker 33: In 2001.

JH: In 2001 (.) where did you work?

- Speaker 33: It was the army.

JH: Were you an active-duty soldier?

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: So, you didn't like it because of the beatings?

- Speaker 33: No, it is complex with various reasons. Basically, there is no freedom.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 33: You need to live a controlled life there. They say that there is no more bullying by seniors now.

JH: Is there not?

- Speaker 33: No, not so much. They were too harsh and mean to us when I was in military service, but they can't do such things any longer.

JH: Do they?

- Speaker 33: And the time really drags when you are in the military. A day passes real quickly as you get busy, but a month, a year seems really dragging as you get irritated by the repetitive routine everyday.

JH: Does that kind of military culture cause your distancing from the military uniform itself?

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- Speaker 33: You would never miss the clothes which you have continuously worn for the last two years and two months.

JH: Then how do you manage washing? Were you given two pairs of trousers?

- Speaker 33: Two pairs of trousers and other clothes.

JH: Ah, so you had no problem washing then.

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: Occasionally, you can find some men who still miss the military culture after being discharged.

- Speaker 33: Yes, there are some like that. Men go to the reserve forces training normally with their military uniform loosely open and unbuttoned. But those types of people wear a belt and a cap in place and straighten the lines of their ironed clothes from a shirt to trousers. These men are also bashing away at the training by shouting commands out loud while most of us hardly lift the gun from the ground. But there are only a few of them, let's say, one or two out of every 150 men.

JH: How often do you need to join the reserve forces training?

- Speaker 33: Once a year.

JH: Once a year? Then, don't you need to do it when you are abroad?

- Speaker 33: No.

JH: Ah.

- Speaker 33: Mine's ended now.

JH: You finished early, didn't you?

- Speaker 33: I did it for four years.

JH: Is it only for four years? Has it been reduced?

- Speaker 33: No, it is six years, six years, sorry.

JH: It's okay.

- Speaker 33: It is six years, and after that, they just identify your residency over the phone or something.

JH: So, if you study or travel abroad within the first six years; and then are you exempt from the reserve forces training?

- Speaker 33: If it is longer than six months or a year, that case, you need to report at your local council before your departure.

JH: You might know as you haven't worked at the office yet. But isn't the working life a sort of extension of the military culture?

- Speaker 33: You know, people at the workplace are mostly the one who finished their military service.

JH: Yeah!

- Speaker 33: The thing is that it is easier to control people in the military way.

JH: Easy to control?

- Speaker 33: Military-style *rules* are most efficient in achieving a certain goal. I have no doubt about that. Men sometimes are negative about the way women work by saying that women are not good at such things

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because they didn't go to the military. When men work together, they are very quick as they learn things in the military organisation.

JH: Then, are there only positive sides remaining within men?

- Speaker 33: No. Within that kind of process, the hierarchy comes into being as someone should give an order, and others should act accordingly. It is the same within a company; the boss should do nothing but nag the one who cannot execute his commands, things like that.

JH: If nagging, would it be like telling someone off?

- Speaker 33: Telling off and stressing them and personally insulting them.

JH: Personal (.) What kind of personal insult?

- Speaker 33: When you first join the military as a private, you feel like you're falling down a bottomless pit and think that 'I am nothing.' For example, you are being called by your nickname instead of your real name. Nicknames can be okay, but you are mostly quite rude, and sometimes you're called not even by your nickname.

JH: What kind of abusive language do you?=
=

- Speaker 33: =Every kind. You hear and use all sorts of swear words you can possibly imagine.

JH: So, didn't you swear before your military service?

- Speaker 33: Well, I did, but that is too much.

JH: Can you give me an example?

- Speaker 33: It is a man's world, so the swear words used are mainly something to do with sexual organs.

JH: Ah (.) have you heard about the social life from others, as you hadn't experienced it yet?

- Speaker 33: From my friends.

JH: So, you hadn't personally experienced it?

- Speaker 33: I don't know in details as I haven't experienced it myself.

JH: Like it or not, it seems that men are deeply influenced by the military culture.

- Speaker 33: Well, managing an organisation is not something autonomous. The military is definitely non-autonomous. But by being non-autonomous, you can produce a lot more results than by being autonomous, let's say, if you spend one hour in both ways. I acknowledge that aspect, but not other sides.

JH: By the way, it is still interesting that many other people have expressed their opinions against your military-style jacket, but you haven't thought about it in that way at all.

- Speaker 33: It's because it never appeared to me as a military uniform [laughs].

JH: Have you honestly never thought that even when others commented on it?

- Speaker 33: No.

JH: Because it is not a real military uniform after all.

- Speaker 33: Yes, because the Korean military uniforms are camouflage patterns.

JH: Ah (.) Is there no plain colour?

- Speaker 33: There is no brown.

JH: I mean a plain colour.

- Speaker 33: There were plain colours before, but it's been changed.

JH: It appears that many plain colours can be found in foreign military uniforms.

- Speaker 33: Well, yes. Foreign countries use plain colours a lot as it is depending on the topography of the country. Our county has lots of mountains, so the design of military uniforms follows the geographical features of these mountains; while the troops who are dispatched to Iraq and the desert area wear more yellow-earthly colours in accordance with the region. The military uniform is not to mark out a soldier, but is made for a disguise.

JH: Do Korean troops change their military uniforms when they are sent to Iraq?

- Speaker 33: Yes, they change.

JH: Do we import new ones from abroad or are they from our country?

- Speaker 33: I think that a Korean company supplies them for Korea's Zaytun Division. So, the Iraqi army newly signed the contract this time after they saw what Korean troops wore over there.

JH: Ah, they must like it.

- Speaker 33: Yes. I heard that the military uniforms for the Zaytun Division are of a high quality.

JH: They are? I better look it up later.

- Speaker 33: Yes.

JH: Do young people wear a *military look* in Korea mostly?

- Speaker 33: Mostly young people wear it; old people don't.

JH: Do you recognise it?

- Speaker 33: What do you mean?

JH: Do you recognise whether it is a *military look* or not when you see people's outfit?

- Speaker 33: I know the feel of military uniforms.

JH: Even if they are not with the typical camouflage pattern?

- Speaker 33: You know, in case of trousers, there are so-called 'hardtack' trousers with pockets.

JH: Ah, yes.

- Speaker 33: That is for military use, military trousers.

JH: I hadn't thought about that.

- Speaker 33: Ah, I wear that, too.

JH: Ah, that type of trousers but in a different colour!

- Speaker 33: They are comfortable, you know.

JH: I think we are done here. By the way, did you finish as an officer?

- Speaker 33: Yes. I was discharged as a sergeant.

JH: Did you become an officer having started as an active-duty soldier?

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- Speaker 33: I originally applied for an officer when I joined the military service.

JH: But, if you and most others don't like the military culture, then your officer career might not be something to be very proud of.

- Speaker 33: Well, they are strictly divided at the reserve forces training; one is civil services and defence assistants, and the others are officers.

JH: Sorry for asking too many basic questions now. What is the difference between civil services and defence assistants?

- Speaker 33: Civil services are for the men who are unsuitable for active service. They receive a four-week basic military training and then work for the 'public interest' at the places like city halls or schools. Civil services do not wear military uniforms, while defence assistants wear them. Defence assistants work for councils to manage the reserve forces or for the Px.

JH: What about drivers for high ranked men?

- Speaker 33: I was a driver, and drivers are all active-duty soldiers.

JH: Aren't there commuting drivers who work for the wives of high ranked men?

- Speaker 33: They don't live at home, but commute from their military camps. I was a driver for a high ranked officer for a year. They are all active-duty soldiers.

JH: Do civil services work for councils?

- Speaker 33: No, not for councils. They work for city halls and somewhere. Defence assistants work for local councils or Px.

JH: What does the Px stand for?

- Speaker 33: It is a canteen, a canteen, Military canteen. They say the name has changed now to '*Chungseong* (Loyalty) Mart.'

JH: Do they commute to work for the canteen?

- Speaker 33: There are both active-duty soldiers and commuting defence assistants working at the canteen.

JH: Then, are former defence assistants and civil services rather quiet at their reserve forces training, in contrast to the former officers?

- Speaker 33: Yes, they are quiet as they've never shot a gun before.

JH: So, there are defence assistants, civil services and officers.

- Speaker 33: It is because they were the ranks. All the ranks dislike officers, so they mostly keep quiet in front of officers.

JH: What about here, when you told people that you were a former officer?

- Speaker 33: Well, they don't care as it's been long time since I was discharged.

JH: Do people perhaps think that you wear a military jacket because you were an officer?

- Speaker 33: That's illegal, taking things out.

JH: You said earlier that they can take at least one pair of military uniform or something upon discharging.

- Speaker 33: You might wear occasionally, but (.) it is not something you can just take out when being discharged from military service.

JH: How do you recognise it if it's been illegally taken out?

- Speaker 33: I can tell.

JH: Can you spot it straightaway? What can be taken out by the former officers? If you take it out regardless of its illegality, then you must have been attached to it somehow?

- Speaker 33: No. It is just because the uniforms for officers are really great.

JH: Ah!

- Speaker 33: So, it is very warm and also good as a windbreaker.

JH: Do they take it out due to its practicality?

- Speaker 33: That is one reason; and also, there are things like military sleeping bags which are mostly given to drivers who need to go outside. They secretly send a parcel of a sleeping bag to their home as it is really good.

JH: Why? When were you going to use that sleeping bag, for travelling?

- Speaker 33: They sneaked a supplied 'A-Class' sleeping bag, so that they can use it for travel later.

Interview 22 (2007, UK)

Speaker 34 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 34: Jihoon Lee.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 34: I am in my early thirties.

JH: You can use an assumed name if you want, but I'd like to know your precise age.

- Speaker 34: Ah, I am thirty-three years old in Korean age.

JH: What do you do now?

- Speaker 34: I am studying architecture.

JH: Are you doing an undergraduate programme?

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes, yes.

JH: How long have you been living in Edinburgh?

- Speaker 34: Seven years in Edinburgh, yes.

JH: Then, did you leave Korea seven years ago?

- Speaker 34: Yes, this is my seventh year here, so it's been over six years now.

JH: Do you visit Korea frequently?

- Speaker 34: I go back to Korea around once every two years.

JH: Now that you are doing an undergraduate here, what did you study back in Korea?

- Speaker 34: Ah, I did various studies in Korea.

JH: I see. Did you finish your undergraduate there already, or postgraduate, perhaps?

- Speaker 34: Yes, I have two undergraduate degrees.

JH: In Korea?

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: Did you do multiple degrees?

- Speaker 34: No, I didn't. I did them separately.

JH: May I ask what subjects you did?

- Speaker 34: Yes, I did journalism, and before that, interior design and before that=

JH: =When did you join the military service?

- Speaker 34: The military service (.) in 1994.

JH: Did you join in the middle of your undergraduate course?

- Speaker 34: Yes, when I was a junior, at the end of the first term.

JH: During your first undergraduate degree?

- Speaker 34: If I calculate, the very first one.

JH: Ah, was it during your first undergraduate right after high school?

- Speaker 34: Yes, I went to a sports university to start with. Then, after the first term, I quit and joined the military service as a professional soldier.

JH: Ah, were you a professional soldier? Can you choose between being a professional and a normal soldier?

- Speaker 34: Yes, you can.

JH: If you work as a professional soldier, then are you exempt from your compulsory military service?

- Speaker 34: Ah, of course, yes. I don't know the current period for the compulsory military service, but back then, it was from two and a half to three years.

JH: What about a professional soldier's case?

- Speaker 34: In my case, I was in the service for five years.

JH: If you start as a professional soldier, would it be possible to change your mind and quit after one or two years, just fulfilling the duty of an ordinary active service?

- Speaker 34: Ah, you can't do that.

JH: So, once you've started, then you need to complete the minimum period as you did?

- Speaker 34: Yes, you need to, of course.

JH: Did you have any special reason to apply to be a professional soldier?

- Speaker 34: I was young, and Korean men have to join the military service anyhow, so (.) can I just go on like this? Shall I just continue?

JH: Yes, yes.

- Speaker 34: I was eighteen years old, back then.=

JH: =Yes.

- Speaker 34: When I entered college in 1994, I was eighteen years old. Normally, college students go to the military service in their second year.

So, when I calculated the period to return to college after discharge, there was not such a big difference. Moreover, it seemed better earning money as a professional soldier than being in the active service.

JH: Have you ever considered being a career soldier for your entire life?

- Speaker 34: Ah, that wasn't my intention at all.

JH: So, did you intend to serve as a professional soldier just for a short while?

- Speaker 34: Yes, I did. The minimum period required was four and a half years.

JH: There are always loads of ordinary students who try to avoid or delay their military duty as long as they can. Did that never occur to you?

- Speaker 34: No, I've never thought in that way.

JH: Then, did you have a natural affinity for military life and culture, such as doing group activity or life under discipline?

- Speaker 34: That might be the case, but I haven't thought about it seriously.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 34: The main reason why I entered the military was because I realised that the sports university wasn't working for me. And even now, I don't know whether I am taking the right path for me or not. It is always a big question for everybody to decide what they should do for a living. Back then, it was too vague for me to choose what to do as I was so young. So, I decided to complete my military duty first as it is compulsory for all Korean men at any rate. I also expected to grow up as a man from that experience, as the adults often say so.

JH: Still, many people must have been worried about you as you joined the service at a considerably young age.

- Speaker 34: They did. I have a brother who is three years older than me. He went to the military in the same year as me. He delayed it over and over, but finally had to enter the service the week after me. My parents seemed relieved at the time. They obviously missed us in the beginning as both of us left home at the same time, but they soon got over it.

JH: When you join the military as a professional soldier, do you start as the same rank as the conscripted soldiers?

- Speaker 34: No, it's different.

JH: So, do you start from a superior position than the others?

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes.

JH: Even from the beginning?

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: How was it like adapting yourself to the military?

- Speaker 34: Adapting?

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 34: It was very hard to adapt as I was young. I cried a lot in the beginning.

JH: The ranks normally seem to dislike the military both before and after their duty.=

- Speaker 34: =That's right.

JH: I think that loads of men dislike the military.=

- Speaker 34: =There are plenty.

JH: What about you?

- Speaker 34: I am not like them. It was a really great *motivation* for me to live my life. There are many reasons, but I experienced my first taste of social life in the military. We are normally suppressed till high school. So, there is a difference between men who fully enjoy their freedom at a college for the first few years of their twenties and a person like me who experiences another life group almost straight away after high school. The military is a miniature of a society. Especially as a professional soldier, I really learnt many things, like how to behave in front of older and younger generations.

JH: It seems that the ranks get loads of *stress* because of such *hierarchy* in the military.=

- Speaker 34: =That's right.

JH: Professional soldiers can be more (.) were you fine with that?

- Speaker 34: Yes, I didn't have that kind *stress* perhaps because I was young. Even my mates who started with me at the same time in my unit were at least two years and normally, three or four years older than me. I was always the youngest, so hierarchy didn't bother me at all.

JH: Some says that professional soldiers and officers receive their military uniforms in better quality than the ranks, is that true?

- Speaker 34: I didn't feel that way. But there is a thing; the ranks use the supplied uniforms, while professional soldiers like commissioned and non-commissioned officers buy their own military uniforms, so the quality is better.

JH: Ah, does each officer buy them? They don't get a supply from the country?

- Speaker 34: There are supplies, but normally, they don't use them and buy at shops where they sell military supplies personally. We can buy there on our way to the unit as we commute. The official supplies are given only twice a year, so they hardly last till the next supplies.=

JH: =Yes, I see.

- Speaker 34: So, we go there and buy with our *coupons*.

JH: Then, do you need to wear only Korean-made military uniforms?

- Speaker 34: Yes, at least when you work inside the unit.

JH: When not working?

- Speaker 34: What I am saying is that while you are an active-duty soldier, you have to wear supplied or designated uniforms. You can buy and wear whatever you want, high quality uniforms after discharging, like me (.) in my case, I was discharged a long ago.

JH: By high quality uniforms, do you mean foreign military uniforms?

- Speaker 34: Yes, either foreign military uniforms or brand goods.

JH: Are there brand goods apart from the supplied uniforms?

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes.

JH: What kinds?

- Speaker 34: For example, in the case of the US Army, there is supplied gear; but mostly, even the ranks buy uniforms which fit them. The Korean Army provides military uniforms by rough eye measurement regardless of the exact sizes. But in the US Army, the uniforms are provided according to arm length, shoulder width and so on, so the quality cannot be the same with us.

JH: So, that must be the American military uniform whether it is provided by the country or is on sale in a shop?

- Speaker 34: Yes. There is a brand called Goretex which is a hiking boot specialist. This company is the main supplier of military uniforms in the US Army. It's great [laughs].

JH: Have you been continuously wearing military uniforms after your discharge?

- Speaker 34: Um (.) in fact, I like it.

JH: I don't know if you returned to college right after your discharge or after a while, but there are many male students wearing military uniforms after their military duty.

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: Did you wear them in that way? If you did=

- Speaker 34: =Ah, I wore them.

JH: Was it in the first year after you returned to college? But didn't you care about your impression as an old returning student to other girls in college?

- Speaker 34: Ah, I didn't.

JH: Why did you dress like that?

- Speaker 34: When I was in college?

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 34: It depends on the individual, but at that time=

JH: =What about yourself?

- Speaker 34: If I think about my case only, I feel more comfortable wearing military uniforms, in fact.

JH: For a practical reason?

- Speaker 34: Yes. And also, it gives me peace of mind.=

JH: =Um.

- Speaker 34: The reason being (.) well, this is my personal thought; the reason why people indicate us as a returning student is the fact we hardly care about our appearance after discharge.

JH: Yes, yes.

- Speaker 34: Men aged from twenty to twenty-two years old are keen on fashion, and occasionally, there are some discharged men who are still fashionable. But I don't need to buy many pieces of clothes, instead if I go out slipping on only a military uniform, it is warm and comfortable [laughs]. And I can roll over anywhere without worrying about my clothes. But when I wear a good suit, I need to be attentive and feel uncomfortable. I need to

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match the appropriate socks and shoes to my trousers. With military uniforms, I don't get that kind of *stress* at all.

JH: Instead of being under *stress*, did you have any desire to look good for girls or anybody around you?

- Speaker 34: Yeah, yeah.

JH: Military uniforms are surely comfortable, but did you care about people's perception or aversion against those, in the case of a blind date or something?

- Speaker 34: I think I didn't care about it because it is charming in its own way.

JH: Did others respond in the same way as you feel, thinking it looks cool?

- Speaker 34: Ah, they wouldn't probably think that way.

JH: Then, what did they think of your appearance?

- Speaker 34: Well, they might just think of me as a kind of older brother types, or=

JH: =So, you were okay being perceived as an old brother? Have you thought about changing your appearance to look cooler?

- Speaker 34: I haven't thought about that a lot.

JH: Is your main concern being comfortable?

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: If men suffered from their military duty, would they wear military uniforms again after discharge, even if they are comfortable?

- Speaker 34: But men still wear it no matter what.

JH: What about in your case? Did you dislike the military culture, but still wear them only because they are comfortable?

- Speaker 34: No, I like it.

JH: Is it some sort of nostalgia?

- Speaker 34: Certainly, there is. And they are very practical and really comfortable.

JH: Well, there must be many different reasons to wear clothes, including practicality. By the way, it seems like you did enjoy your experience at the military service a lot, didn't you?

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes.

JH: If you liked it so much, why did you quit?

- Speaker 34: I couldn't possibly continue my military career just because I liked military uniforms [laughs].

JH: Well, you seemed to say that you like and enjoy the military culture as well.

- Speaker 34: Yes, I like it. But, it doesn't seem so great living as a professional soldier in Korea.

JH: Ah-ah!=

- Speaker 34: =In my opinion.

JH: From what aspects?

- Speaker 34: With various reasons. There is not such a big difference between commissioned and non-commissioned officers. But, you need a connection in Korea, even in the military. Even, men from ROTC leave the

army after three, four years. What this means is that it is difficult to survive if you are not from the Military Academy. I thought about this a lot. You need to request your discharge one year advance. I did it when I was twenty-three years old. When I thought over about what it would be like if I lived this life for another thirty years, it seemed suffocating. And don't get me wrong if I divide the class, but my parents wouldn't have educated me so much if they had expected such a career for me. There is a thing; there is a sheer division between highly educated and uneducated people in the military. I don't disregard anyone for that, but some people are happy at a certain degree while others are not satisfied.

JH: I see. By the way, you hadn't been educated much at that time, had you?

- Speaker 34: Ah, I hadn't. But my parents' expectations were very high.

JH: For your future?

- Speaker 34: I wasn't that bad at school, and I wasn't that good either; but my parents were really enthusiastic about my education. I faced their strong objection when I decided to go to the military.

JH: You must have. They must have been opposed to it if they were keen on providing you with a quality education.

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes.

JH: Didn't they suggest to you going to the Military Academy instead?

- Speaker 34: They did, they did. But I told them the same story as I did earlier that I need to go to the military service anyhow and will be only twenty-two, twenty-three years old when I finish; and I can do anything then.

JH: Have you done the high school military drill?

- Speaker 34: Yes, we were the last generation for that and wore the drill uniform till my first year at high school.

JH: Did you wear military uniforms, drill uniforms?

- Speaker 34: I wore it during my first year.

JH: Well, apart from the high school military drill class?

- Speaker 34: Ah (.) I often wore it, occasionally, but not that much.

JH: On what occasions, like when you went out with your friends or something?

- Speaker 34: No, inside the school, yes, yes, when it was cold.

JH: Did you wear it only because of cold weather? Or, did you want to show off or emphasise your masculinity to others?

- Speaker 34: Ah, that kind of image of manhood is wrongly portrayed in films. Films can easily spoil the reality. It was not like that in reality. It is simply because there was nothing particular to match with school uniforms even in the coldest winter.

JH: Maybe this is not the case for you, but a 70's film star said that he was a bad-boy in high school and used to wear a military drill uniform to show off and to express his youthful rebellion.

- Speaker 34: Well, that can be possible.=

JH: So, he wore that uniform opened and loose or rolled up the sleeves.

- Speaker 34: But the new generation has changed a lot now.

JH: Because you are from the 1990s [when he was a high school student]?

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: So, I just wonder if you wore similarly, or had such friends at school?

- Speaker 34: There were only a few like that; there was almost no one.

JH: Only some students who wore it because it was cold?

- Speaker 34: Yes, we used to wear it underneath our school jacket as it was cold.

JH: Was it nothing to do with your identity or character during high school?

- Speaker 34: Yes, I was, and I guess others were the same.

JH: Even the delinquent or punk?

- Speaker 34: No, they did something with their school uniform, but didn't bother much with drill uniform.

JH: Do you still wear your military uniform from the service, or have you bought new ones?

- Speaker 34: I've bought new ones. I can't wear my old one any longer as I gained a lot of weight since then, and they are old now.

JH: Did you bring the old ones here?

- Speaker 34: Here?

JH: After discharge?

- Speaker 34: Ah, yes. They are at home in Korea.

JH: Did you take them with you upon discharge?

- Speaker 34: We can take them out as we need to join the reserve forces training.

JH: A pair?

- Speaker 34: That's right, a shirt and a pair of trousers and a so-called *yasahng* for to wear over the rest.

JH: I see. So, did you wear them for a while and then buy the new ones later?

- Speaker 34: That's right, for better quality [laughs] and larger ones as I started to gain weight.

JH: You said they are comfortable. It sounds reasonable enough that you continued wearing what you had in your wardrobe. But there must be loads of good, inexpensive clothes in the market apart from military uniforms.

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes.

JH: Then, what makes you continuously buy military uniforms?

- Speaker 34: They are really attractive, this *military look*; very appealing to me.

JH: There are many *military look* lovers who don't wear the real military uniforms, aren't there?

- Speaker 34: I think that there is almost no one who wears the actual military uniform among *military look* devotees.

JH: Yes, it is.=

- Speaker 34: =What they wear is usually sold with *fashionable* alteration, yes.

JH: Was the *military look* popular in Korea at the time when you were in college or after graduation?

- Speaker 34: No, it wasn't like that. In my opinion, the *military look* doesn't follow trends by creating a sensation like 'ah, such a trend is *military fashion*.' But there are always insistent demands among fanatics; that's what I think.

JH: So, you are not interested in *fashion* and have mostly worn comfortable clothes, you said.=

- Speaker 34: =Yes.

JH: Yet, are you a *military look* enthusiast?

- Speaker 34: That's right. I am not very much into *fashion*, but I couldn't wear the *military style* I wanted because it was illegal to wear military uniforms [by civilians] seven, eight years ago.

JH: I think it still is to a certain extent.

- Speaker 34: Yes, you shouldn't wear exactly the same military uniforms [as the Korean Army]. So, I looked up the *military look* on the Internet and found various alternatives; they were made out of the same patterns and fabrics, but have different designs inside, like duck down fillings or something. I've become more and more interested in that way and even found out about German or British Army uniforms.

JH: Are they all authentic?

- Speaker 34: In my opinion, there are two different types; one is produced in Korea, at a place like Dongdaemun, by being modelled on the authentic ones; and the other is distributed through importers. It might be imprudent to say they are authentic, but they are made by the authentic military suppliers with improved quality and high retail prices to be sold to civilians.

JH: What countries' military uniforms have you bought?

- Speaker 34: I only prefer this Army Green colour.

JH: Ah, are they then the Korean ones, a Korean *design*?

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: Is the Army Green colour a Korean design?

- Speaker 34: Yes, that's right. But military uniforms are all similar in most countries. And they change every year, usually using this kind of colour; but recently, there are more changes.

JH: Then, is this an American or a Korean military uniform?

- Speaker 34: They both use this type.

JH: What about this one?

- Speaker 34: This is an American military uniform, produced by Goretex.

JH: Does this one have a product name or a number like "M"-something?

- Speaker 34: There might be one written inside, but I don't care much about that. There is a new version that came out, but this one is a *guje-poom*, the very first version of Goretex.

JH: A *guje-poom*!

- Speaker 34: So, it is an old *design*, the first *design*. The new versions have a shinier texture than this one.

JH: Do they have the camouflage pattern?

- Speaker 34: Exactly the same, but there is another waterproof coating added because they are worn a lot for snowboarding and skiing.

JH: Ah, are there many men wearing them when they go skiing?

- Speaker 34: Um! They are popular for skiing.

JH: Then, what else do you have except this [jacket]?

- v: I have this one and a pair of trousers in the U.K.

JH: Do you also wear the trousers?

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: With the camouflage pattern?

- Speaker 34: Yes, exactly the same [as the jacket].

JH: Do you wear them together as a suite?

- Speaker 34: Ah, I don't [laughs]. That is not the case. That is not the case.

JH: Do you always wear them separately?

- Speaker 34: Of course, that is not acceptable.

JH: Why is that so?

- Speaker 34: That would make me look too much like a soldier. Then I almost feel as if I am a soldier, so I always wear them separately, separately.

JH: Was that your own thought or was it other's impression that you looked like a soldier?

- Speaker 34: I also feel like that and think it would look funny if I think about it, wearing this with matching trousers. It would look strange enough here in the U.K., but it would be even more weird in Korea. It'll look too strange in Korea. It'll be hilariously funny.

JH: Do you mean people's reaction?

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: What would they say?

- Speaker 34: If I wore both?

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 34: I've never worn both like that when I go out, not even once.

JH: What kind of response are you afraid of if you did that?

- Speaker 34: People would poke fun at me for looking like a complete soldier.

JH: When you wear them separately here, do you still get some *comments* from people?

- Speaker 34: Only Koreans do that. People here never ever care about that [my appearance]. And this, ah, my school friends commented like 'where did you buy it?', or 'it looks good.'

JH: Did they? What about Koreans' response?

- Speaker 34: Korean guys are just (.) Ah, they didn't care much as I've worn this for a long while.

JH: And what did Koreans say about that in the beginning?

- Speaker 34: Well, 'How come you still wear such things a long time after your discharge?!' and 'Where did you buy them?' Then I told them where I bought it.

JH: Did this kind of conversation happen mainly between men?

- Speaker 34: Yes, it did.

JH: Did you receive any comments from women?

- Speaker 34: They said nothing in particular; I don't know since when, but they have perceived [military uniforms] as my *trademark* for some time. I often wear military trousers loosely and comfortably; but then I wear jeans or formal trousers for a change, they seem awkward.

JH: Do they feel awkward?

- Speaker 34: Yes, the beholder. Women commented a lot on those occasions.

JH: Regarding the awkwardness, is it because you look fresh or charming?

- Speaker 34: Well, I think it was an impression of looking fresh.

JH: Ah-ah!=

- Speaker 34: =It seems that the *military style* has such a strong recognition among people. If you change from wearing jeans to formal trousers, no one even notices. But if I change once to formal trousers from my usual [military] trousers, then they see me as a completely different person.

JH: By a strong recognition, what kind of impression or prejudice do you mean?

- Speaker 34: What kind?

JH: Well, when people see you wearing the military uniform, how do they perceive you as a person, or what kind of impression do they get from you?

- Speaker 34: As a person wearing the military uniform?

JH: Well, you might be perceived as having a strong personality, or something?

- Speaker 34: Ah, yes. Lots of people think in that way. Sometimes, I look a little tough. Or, some people think of me as being mischievous or something. But, strangely enough, when I wear military trousers, I feel loose in my mind and unconsciously become mischievous like I used to be in the military.

JH: I thought that the military puts people under tension with a higher discipline rather than being loose, isn't it?

- Speaker 34: When you are in a class society, depending on your position, you have to be polite to your superiors while you need to stand above your subordinates even if you don't want to.

JH: Is the hierarchy in the military more serious than in the general society?

- Speaker 34: Yes, it is similar.

JH: So, what you are saying is that some people think about you as being mischievous or tough?

- Speaker 34: Most women do, I think.

JH: Are men not like that?

- Speaker 34: It seems that men also think that way.

JH: Do you personally pursue that kind of style?

- Speaker 34: Being scruffy?

JH: It might be too much to say being mischievous, but being tough. You might want to add such characteristics if you were a docile type, perhaps?

- Speaker 34: I am not like that.

JH: So, do you intentionally avoid others' gaze or perception hoping to look tougher than yourself?

- Speaker 34: It wasn't my intention, but how should I put? (.) The reason why I think military uniforms suit me well is because I am not a docile and gentle type. I talk in a very *direct* and *straight* way; and on top of that, adding a military uniform fashion creates a fantastic harmony for my personal *character*.

JH: Do you like such a *character*?

- Speaker 34: Ah, I don't mind.

JH: You could have worn a less colourful one.

- Speaker 34: Less colourful? Ah, yes.

JH: Because you prefer a more distinctive pattern even from a long distance, so=

- Speaker 34: =There are many kinds of patterns with military uniforms, but I like this pattern the most [laughs]. When I went to Korea the last time, new designs had come out (.) among those, they showed me the Zaytun Division style.

JH: Where (.) in a shop?

- Speaker 34: Yeah.

JH: Do you buy directly [from the market]? Where do you go?

- Speaker 34: Yes, Namdaemun.

JH: Do you buy much *online*?

- Speaker 34: No, I never buy *online*.

JH: Why?

- Speaker 34: The quality is not that good. And, this is something else, but things which are sold online are at a lower price. So, it is good to find something cheap, but, honestly, the quality is not good. I've hardly worn things I bought online.

JH: What's the price like?

- Speaker 34: I bought this cheap, cheap like 180,000 won.

JH: A cheap, cheap buy for 180,000 won?

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes. When it comes to its season, it gets more expensive.

JH: When is its season?

- Speaker 34: Nowadays, its season is winter because a lot of people wear them for snowboarding.

JH: Then, how much are the trousers?

- Speaker 34: Ah, I bought my trousers here in the U.K.

JH: Is that with an Army Green, camouflage pattern?

- Speaker 34: All [I have] are camouflage patterned. But they [my trousers] are not Army Green, but black and white.

JH: When you wear those trousers, what top do you match them with? A formal jacket might look weird with those, but you don't wear this [military jacket] either.

- Speaker 34: I wear a T-shirt or some casual *jackets*, but not something formal.

JH: Where did you buy those [trousers]?

- Speaker 34: I think it's called Flipp, on North Bridge.

JH: Do they sell the real military uniforms?

- Speaker 34: Those are not the real military uniforms. They are just produced as some sort of *fashion*.

JH: When was the last time you went to Korea? The last time when you visited Namdaemun?

- Speaker 34: It was this summer.

JH: Do you have a particular shop you go to at Namdaemun?

- Speaker 34: There is an alley, only one alley.

JH: Do they sell the military uniforms only?

- Speaker 34: Not only the military uniforms, but the US Army articles.

JH: Only the American ones?

- Speaker 34: Well, the things which are from the US Army base in Korea.

JH: Are they not officially imported goods?

- Speaker 34: No, they are not imported.

JH: From the US Army base?

- Speaker 34: It is so-called PX, you know; things are taken from there.

JH: So, they sell taken things!

- Speaker 34: Yes, I don't know their *route* well, but probably, they somehow manage to pick out things which are used in the US Army base, from blankets, *go-stop* [a Korean gambling card game] blankets to others.

JH: Do people call a military blanket a *go-stop* blanket because it is actually used for the *go-stop* game, or is it just a name?

- Speaker 34: It is called like that just between Koreans.

JH: What does your family say about your wearing of the military uniform even after discharge? Or do they not care much about what you wear?

- Speaker 34: No, they don't, at least my mother and father.

JH: People who wear ripped jeans often receive some sort of comments at home.

- Speaker 34: Right!

JH: Like being asked to dress neat and tidily?

- Speaker 34: Yes, but military uniforms are not that untidy.

JH: But you said earlier that men tend to wear the [military] trousers loosely after discharge, didn't you?

- Speaker 34: Ah (.) I don't wear them like that at home [laughs]. Ah, by the way, my mother really dislikes those trousers.

JH: Why is that?

- Speaker 34: They are not untidy, but how should I say? It seems that she just thinks I dress like a ‘beggar’ to put in an expression from my mother’s generation.

JH: But she doesn’t think about the *jacket* in the same way?

- Speaker 34: No, with a *jacket*, she doesn’t bother me wearing it if I really want to, as it is cold anyway. With trousers, when you are in the military, you wear them in a tight fit to your body and a short length, while you wear them baggy and comfortably when returning to the real society. So, as I wear them with a really wide leg and loose hip style by dragging on the ground, she wouldn’t like them. I used to dress like this when I worked for a company in Korea.

JH: Sorry, what?

- Speaker 34: I dressed like this when I worked for a company.

JH: Ah (.) Can you do that?

- Speaker 34: Yes!

JH: What kind of work did you do at that company? They say that some companies have their own dress code. There is a kind of mutual convention, even if they don’t strictly prescribe what to wear. Even wearing a distinctive necktie can be little odd.

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes.

JH: Some said that they changed from using foreign cars to Korean ones as they felt they stood out too much. Well, each company or organisation has its own character.

- Speaker 34: Yes, they are all different, but I didn’t feel a big refusal. For example, our dress code was formal suits, but it was fine wearing this kind of *military yasaeng* even if it wasn’t really a formal outfit.

JH: Over your suit?

- Speaker 34: Yes, as it was cold.

JH: Could you wear the [military] trousers?

- Speaker 34: [Laughs]. I could never wear those trousers. How would I dare wear those trousers at work [laughs].

JH: So, after you wore a proper suit, did you put it [*yasaeng*] on over as it was cold?

- Speaker 34: That’s right. But still, people gave me an odd look when I dressed like that at first because I matched it [*yasaeng*] with the formal suit and shoes.

JH: Did you feel uncomfortable receiving an odd look here and there?

- Speaker 34: I didn’t feel uncomfortable ‘at all.’

JH: With gaze like this?

- Speaker 34: No, I could just laugh them away.

JH: Without having any conversation?

- Speaker 34: When they said, ‘What is this?’ then, I just replied ‘Good, isn’t it?’ That was an end of it.

JH: It seems that the dress code at your workplace wasn’t that strict, was it?

- Speaker 34: No, as it was an advertising agency, it wasn’t too strict.

JH: If it was an advertising agency, did others dress more freely than employees in the usual major companies, or were you the only person dressing like that?

- Speaker 34: You shouldn't dress like that in major companies. Mine was an affiliated company with one of the major conglomerates, so it also depends on the nature of your business field. In advertising, there is little suppression against such things, comparatively.

JH: By the way, did you choose to work in advertising because you prefer being loose and free? Or, did you end up working for advertisement by chance and therefore, were you able to wear whatever you wanted?

- Speaker 34: I didn't choose my occupation by thinking about my clothes.

JH: That is so. Then, did you consider more about your propensity than your wardrobe itself?

- Speaker 34: That's right; my propensity was a top priority.

JH: Did you think about working for a stricter place like a major company or a public enterprise even with the same conditions?

- Speaker 34: I've not thought about working for a public enterprise at all and neither being a salaried employee as I didn't like being one in the past. But, I started working at that company by chance and felt confused and stressed a lot, as a half of colleague were very free and the other half showed a tendency of working in a similar way to a stereotypical major company. It was very difficult for me *switching* between. So, I thought about resigning, but then felt comfortable with certain aspects; I had a very decent salary with a comparatively comfortable job. It's not to say that the work was easy, but my mind was at ease as I didn't need to bother much with the morning rush hour, and no one gave me dirty looks or scolded me for anything. The same goes for clothes; there was no obligation to wear a formal suit, and people rarely wore it, in fact. But, I just wore it whenever I felt like it.

JH: Maybe, would it be an *advantage* to have a distinctive *style* in an advertising agency?

- Speaker 34: Yes.

JH: Is the stereotypical *system* or *structure* of a major company similar to that of the military?

- Speaker 34: They are similar. But the difference is that you can quit a company when you feel lousy while you have to fulfil a fixed period at the military no matter what.

JH: But you seem that you weren't quite happy working under the *system* of a company in a society whereas you enjoyed your military life, didn't you?

- Speaker 34: No, I didn't like it much because it [working life in a company] made people feel shackled to money.

JH: Did you like the military service as there was nothing connected to money?

- Speaker 34: Ah, that's right. Most of all, we all received the same salary as long as we were on the same *level*. And there is nowhere to spend money; we ate at the unit and went back home to sleep or at most, to a *PC-bang* [a place full of paying computer terminals with high-speed Internet connection] after work. Or, we went fishing some weekends. So, there is

nothing special to spend money on. But a company makes people really shameless with money. There was no issue as far as money was concerned in the military.

JH: Even if they were both being *strict* and things like that?

- Speaker 34: That's right. I was scolded for not doing something or not finishing the work on time, there were things like that. But a company is a real society. Suppose if I hit my superior because he is mean to me, I can quit, but then, there is nothing to do for a living from the day after. That really means conceptually something different.

JH: Yes. But how can you take an example of hitting someone as you study here abroad, and it is a big deal here hitting a person or even an animal?

- Speaker 34: It often happened in the company, hitting. It was not like being bruised by a blow, but more like tapping or hurting one's feeling terribly. Haven't you worked before? There are many awful things that happen in a company.

JH: Between men?

- Speaker 34: Well, between men and also between men and women.

JH: Do women behave the same?

- Speaker 34: There were much worse women. There are lots of weird women, even married women.

JH: Even if they work for a respectable major company with high-earning salary and a good educational background?

- Speaker 34: That doesn't matter at all.

JH: So, it [a company or social life] is no better than the military, is it?

- Speaker 34: The military is much better, the military. In the military, it doesn't matter even if your superiors are women. Whatever a female superior asks like 'hey, what are you doing?' I simply obey by saying 'yes, ma'am,' and that's it.

JH: Have you done two undergraduates for eight years, not a double major, in Korea?

- Speaker 34: I first did it for four years and then, transferred into the third year of the second undergraduate.

JH: You have two bachelor's degrees from Korea and continue another one here by changing subjects variously=

- Speaker 34: =You sound like my mum, suddenly [laugh]. Frankly, I've been to five different colleges, in different places.

JH: Do you think you are extremely free compared to others in that respect?

- Speaker 34: If I think about it now, I am very free.

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 34: There was also a very difficult time in mediating between my mind and my parents at the time.

JH: It seems there are military uniform fanatics. Apart from that, do you have any other interests?

- Speaker 34: I have many.

JH: Well (.) it might not be the case, but military uniform or *military look* lovers often tend to wear *guje* jeans as well=

- Speaker 34: =I don't. I don't like used clothes.

JH: Then, do you wear *guje* style jeans?

- Speaker 34: Not particularly, yeah. I don't like them much.

JH: Only military uniforms?

- Speaker 34: Yes. That can be your belief, too. *Guje* gives an impression of being old whoever wears it, you know. So, as far as I'm concerned, it is a wrong to perceive military uniforms in that way [in connection to *guje*].

JH: Lots of people wear them matching together=

- Speaker 34: =So

JH: I found during my research that they overlap each other.

- Speaker 34: Yes, yes.

JH: People, who wear this, also wear that as well; it has become a kind of *style* among *guje* jean lovers.

- Speaker 34: Yes, I know what you mean, but I still think that is the stereotype. They are guys who do not know the real profundities of the *military*.

JH: Profundities?

- Speaker 34: Profundities.

JH: The profundities of the *military*?

- Speaker 34: That's right. How would they possibly know the profundities of the *military* after only two years of military service!

JH: Then, do you still share interests with others who were professional soldiers with you?

- Speaker 34: They are still in the military. [Laughs.] There's nothing particular to share between us as only I was discharged [laughs].

JH: Do you still keep in touch?

- Speaker 34: Sure.

JH: While you don't have many of the college alumni, do you have constant contact with your military colleague?

- Speaker 34: Of course, because we did live next to each other, cry together and went through terrible hardship together.

JH: You didn't live together though as you commuted?

- Speaker 34: As it was a small town, there was nothing much else to do except getting together all the time for a drink or something after work.

JH: More than you did when you worked in the company?

- Speaker 34: Yes, I am deeply attached to the military as it was an intimate society for me. Socially, you didn't need to see a person if you didn't feel like it. Even if they invited you over for a drink, I could just take off home saying 'I am busy' or 'I am tired', but, in the military, that is not=

JH: =What if you don't want to?

- Speaker 34: You still have to go out together in the military; it is not because of the hierarchical relationship, but the palpable nature of the

JH: Were they imported from abroad later?

- Speaker 35: That's it! So, they are really old. The history of the Korean War is only 50 years back, isn't it?

JH: True. By the way, you must also have many things from that period, especially foreign things which were brought into Korea at the time?

- Speaker 35: I don't collect Korean stuff.

JH: What about military gear which was brought in from the U.S. or somewhere else at the time?

- Speaker 35: I have many kinds of *jumpers*, field *jumpers* from that period.

JH: I see, like these?

- Speaker 35: These are all from that period, like this *parka* which originates from 1951. Occasionally, you can find things from pre-1950.

JH: Is that a *parka*, not a *kkalkkalye* [a padded inner layer]? Or, is that a *parka* with a *kkalkkalye* attached inside?

- Speaker 35: A *parka* is from 1951, and a *kkalkkalye* is from 1953. This is a so-called *kkalkkalye*, and that is a *parka* there; you can wear them together.

JH: Does it cost 220,000 won for two of these together?

- Speaker 35: Yes, you know, these are over fifty years old.

JH: Someone said that they bought a *yasahng* for over 500,000 won here.

- Speaker 35: No idea, I don't have such expensive ones here. But if you look over here, this is the clothing from the 6.25 [Korean War] period. Around 1950? It is 57 years old.

JH: Very charming!

- Speaker 35: Not that pretty!

JH: Young people wear this type of clothes a lot with jeans.

- Speaker 35: This is not to wear in that way.

JH: Then, how can you wear?

- Speaker 35: How to (.) This is expensive to wear like that. Usually, collectors buy that!

JH: Well, somehow it's become very popular among young people.

- Speaker 35: This *design* over here is rather cheap as it is only a few decades old and sells for 90,000 won. That one there sells for 200,000 -300,000 won.

JH: It seems that your pricing is really reasonable.

- Speaker 35: Well, it is because my regular customers here are mostly [military] enthusiasts.

JH: Well, does the older generation come here as well as young people?

- Speaker 35: Ah, some customers are nearly eighty-years old.

JH: Wow! What does their everyday outfit look like?

- Speaker 35: What I am wearing at the moment is also a military uniform from the 1960s, the American. And this is a bulletproof vest from the Vietnam War.

JH: What a good fit for your size!

- Speaker 35: Ah, it's because I found one in my size.

JH: Some men complain a lot about the sizing of Korean military uniforms as they are not such a good fit.

- Speaker 35: It is because American military uniforms come out in various sizes and models. I like American ones anyway. I, I'm wearing old combat fatigues as it was.

JH: Have you been in the military forces?

- Speaker 35: Who hasn't? I was in the Baekgol unit.

JH: Ah (.) And how come you started collecting military gear?

- Speaker 35: Well, military uniforms are really durable, so it's because of durability and functionality!

JH: I see, many people say that. Some says that they are particularly good to wear in winter.

- Speaker 35: Regardless of the season, they are really superior in their functionality to other clothing.

JH: What is the concept of a military enthusiast here, or your own?

- Speaker 35: Well, for me, I wear these clothes for 12 months a year.

JH: I see.

- Speaker 35: That's in my case, but anyway, the clothing itself has nothing uncomfortable and is good. And, you know, this *style* itself is great and comfortable.

JH: Do you dress like this when you go out? I mean, outside your shop after work?

- Speaker 35: I am always like this. I wear the same as today even on memorial ceremonies of my family.

JH: On memorial ceremonies? Don't your family, especially elder family members scold you for wearing such an outfit?

- Speaker 35: They say just once, not twice. They also became sick and tired of me [laughs].

JH: If you go out dressed like this, then do many people mistake you for a real soldier?

- Speaker 35: There are loads! My car is also like that. See? I painted my car by myself. I did paint it all by myself.

JH: What was the original colour, white?

- Speaker 35: Navy blue!

JH: Ah! Wasn't it difficult to repaint completely over a darker colour?

- Speaker 35: I scraped the entire colour off by using sandpaper.

JH: Ah (.) Scraping the original paint of your car off with sandpaper?

- Speaker 35: Yes.

JH: So, you removed the original colour completely!

- Speaker 35: I repainted after peeling the colour off, I did it personally, personally.

JH: I can see that the colour's really vivid now. It doesn't seem to be painted over navy blue.

- Speaker 35: That is Army Green colour, a typical American Army Green colour.

JH: Yes, it would have looked drab if you painted that colour over navy blue. It looks clear.

- Speaker 35: Ah (.) This is the correct colour.

JH: Certainly, because you scraped the actual colour off first.

- Speaker 35: That's right. Also the new colour doesn't come off easily when you sandpaper a car. It was reported in a newspaper, the Dong-A Daily News; this is a scrap of the newspaper article, there.

JH: Awesome!

- Speaker 35: I also appeared in broadcasting (.) celebrities all come to my shop!

JH: A singer like Youngnam Cho?

- Speaker 35: Hoon-A Nah.

JH: Does he wear the military uniform, too? I've never thought about that as he often wears traditional Korean costumes on TV.

- Speaker 35: It's for his personal use. Such a famous person wouldn't wear the military uniform every time on TV.

JH: Youngnam Cho always wears them.

- Speaker 35: In his case, he just wore a field jacket in the past. He is anyway not that=

JH: =So, indeed, Hoon-A Nah normally likes wearing this kind of clothing! What does he buy?

- Speaker 35: Well, he's mainly bought military uniforms.

JH: Something like jackets?

- Speaker 35: Yes, things like that. And he also bought bags, knives and mountain-climbing equipment. I chose things for young celebrities like Rain.

JH: Did Rain come here personally or send his stylists instead?

- Speaker 35: They came here all together. And Minsoo Choi frequently comes here, people like Minsoo Choi, Joonyup Ku and Seungwon Cha.

JH: Because you have loads of special collectable items?

- Speaker 35: The displayed things are only the tip of the iceberg. My real pieces are all held hidden inside, you know.

JH: Do you take them out only for your special customers for sale?

- Speaker 35: Yes, I sell them. But there are many things for military use which are contrary to laws and regulations.

JH: It seems so. I found that people often avoid being interviewed and dislike having their photographs taken, very seriously.

- Speaker 35: This is a two-way radio. Things like this are all being confiscated, so I cannot display them in the shop.

JH: Are the real military uniforms not for confiscation?

- Speaker 35: With clothing, Korean ones are a little tricky, but American ones, like most American clothes, are no problem. Things like these, equipment and bulletproof jackets are not.

JH: I don't know well as I live abroad.

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- Speaker 35: There is a control squad around for inspection in our country.
JH: Right, the law seems too unpractical.

- Speaker 35: So, there are many things I can't take out and display.
JH: Is that one of the reasons why there are more and more people attracted to those goods, because they are hard to come by?

- Speaker 35: Well, enthusiasts of military gear use them regardless of the control.
JH: That's right. Is the law a little inefficient, perhaps?

- Speaker 35: That's right, so far in our country. Well, it is like this as there is a confrontation due to the relationship between South and North Korea, so=

JH: =I saw some German military uniforms earlier, but do people not buy or sell Japanese military gear at all?

- Speaker 35: They don't like it because (.) Japanese ones were neither brought in, nor looked for by people.

JH: What was that German stuff which you showed me a while ago?

- Speaker 35: That originates from the Nazi era and is a famous piece of clothing which has the renowned quality from the past war. And most of all, Germany is famed for their fashion of military uniform, especially the old ones. At present, the American ones are great; but for the old goods, German ones are in a league of their own in its *design* and everything else.

JH: Then, do some people take an epaulette off, especially the German epaulette?

- Speaker 35: Those are for kids; older generations of their fifties and sixties don't feel comfortable wearing it with a German *mark* on, so they remove it.

JH: Why is that so? Does it look less elegant or something?

- Speaker 35: Well, it might be a little weird having a *mark*. If there is no *mark*, no one knows what those clothes are. It is a world of difference between having a *mark* on and off. Older generations of their fifties dislike a messy attachment on their clothes, you know. I myself wear clothes in a solid Army Green colour, never in a mottled style.

JH: Indeed, you don't have anything attached on even now. Well, some people purposely attach things. And some young people sell things made with lots of attachment details.

- Speaker 35: Ah. We are not young any longer. We try to wear military uniforms more charmingly and gracefully.

JH: *Original?*

- Speaker 35: That's right! It is so tacky to make messy and tattered attachments. The genuine enthusiasts of military uniforms are not like that. We don't dress up in that way. Look at my car! It appears like a real military car, look, look! The only attachment I did was to put a military *mark* on the front *bonnet*, like this. So, whoever looks at it, there are no messy things going on.

JH: Yes. It seems that you can't even change your car for yourself.

- Speaker 35: Why? [Laughs.]

JH: It looks impossible to make another car like this.

Appendix

- Speaker 35: That's difficult!

JH: It is really unique.

- Speaker 35: It'll probably be broadcasted on SBS.

JH: Yes. Do you import all these things personally, or select them from importers?

- Speaker 35: These articles are not simply imported because of various models and large quantities. So, they are brought in here from a single source.

JH: You've got lots of unique pieces, indeed!

- Speaker 35: Well, I've been broadcasted 5 times on TV.

JH: Any *know-how*?

- Speaker 35: It's not *know-how*. You need to have a discerning eye for goods and then (.) You need to be excellent as these articles are not usual sale items on the market. You might find only one or two articles after rummaging through one hundred shops. So, you need to work hard in the field of collecting.

JH: Since when have you been running this business?

- Speaker 35: It's been roughly over 30 years in Itaewon.

JH: At the same spot?

- Speaker 35: It's been over twenty years in this building. As I came in here in 1983, it's been approximately 24 years now.

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 35: But it's been over a decade since I dealt with military uniforms. With military uniforms, you don't need to work for 30 or 50 years to be a specialist. For example, someone receives their doctorate in their twenties, but others might not finish it for 50 years. You can be recognised as much as you work with enthusiasm.

JH: But when you started twenty years ago,=

- Speaker 35: Twelve years ago.

JH: So, twelve years ago you started dealing with military uniforms, had you personally collected military gear before that already?

- Speaker 35: It was only after I started handling military gear. I've got into the swing of military uniforms as I've realised their durability, practicality and things. For enthusiasts, there are not reasons, but they like it in any case, unconditionally.

JH: So, previously, you must have been a consumer of military uniforms buying them here and there before you traded them like now?

- Speaker 35: I didn't wear military uniforms much at the time, you know. But as I handle this, I've come to like it more and more.

JH: Thank you.=

- Speaker 35: It is because we like the real *styles*, not (.) When TV staff take photographs of my shop and me=

JH: Yes, here is the picture.

- Speaker 35: If I wear a cap now, I immediately look like a real soldier.

JH: You look like a real soldier now.

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- Speaker 35: There was a crackdown on drunk driving, when I drove my car looking like this, a squad thought that I was on active service and let me pass an inspection, saying 'please, go' [laughs].

JH: Thinking that you were an active-duty soldier? But is it contrary to laws and regulations if you looked like a real soldier?

- Speaker 35: It doesn't matter as long as I didn't wear the real military uniforms of the active duty. The active-duty originally wears camouflage patterns.

JH: Camouflage patterns?

- Speaker 35: That's right, so I don't wear the camouflage ones, and therefore, a control squad should be able to tell the difference.

JH: Why does the Korean Army use camouflage patterns a lot?

- Speaker 35: It is not that there are a lot of camouflage patterns, but camouflage patterns themselves are typical military uniforms. The old American ones are camouflage pattern, but they've changed all now to so-called ACU.

JH: Why hasn't the Korean military changed it yet?

- Speaker 35: It costs a lot of money to change it. So, why would they change? It's not a matter of a penny or two. It'll cost a tremendous amount of money. So, it's not like they won't change it, but don't have the budget.

JH: Thank you.

- Speaker 35: This (.) When seeing this photograph, Real=

JH: =How long was the broadcast? Ten minutes?

- Speaker 35: They film for a minimum eight to twelve hours for a five, ten minute broadcast.

JH: While the shop is open for business?

- Speaker 35: Yes, nothing particular in business. They film outside and inside, wow, don't even ask. They were filming for about three days. After such long filming, only five, ten minutes was shown on TV. Everything got edited.

JH: Then, can it be broadcast in a way you didn't want?

- Speaker 35: Like what?

JH: Something you didn't want to show might be on air; and others you wanted to show might not have been shown on the TV=

- Speaker 35: That's right. There are many things like that, especially if you consider the amount of time that they filmed. It's not a drama or something, but it takes a long time because TV staff need to film it according to their script which is already written before they come here. You know, there is a plot which assigns what to do in every way. There are all sorts of things. They first film everything, then, take things away later by editing and use only the necessary parts. Even if they filmed all, they couldn't broadcast everything, could they? It's to be on-air only for a short while.

JH: Did people dye military uniforms as it was prohibited wearing them in the past, in the 1960s?

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- Speaker 35: Military uniforms were strictly forbidden during that period as it was the time of anticommunism and counter-intelligence that we used to catch North Korean spies. There was a severe confrontation at the Park, Jung Hee era, so the socio-political air was very brutal. Ah, it is different nowadays; people can visit North Korea as there is an industrial complex set up by a South Korean company and the Special Tourist Zone for South Korean visitors. So, it's become much more enriched than before. Gee, in the past, there was a strong wariness against commies and rallies, and spies were shot. But, it's all been changed now. Young people consider North Korea as an ally, not as a hostile country as once it used to be.

JH: Was the regulation against wearing military uniforms more harsh for that reason?

- Speaker 35: It was bloody severe.

JH: So, in the past, things like these couldn't possibly?=

- Speaker 35: =You weren't able to wear Army Green colour in the past, especially because Army Green colour was used for military uniforms which has now changed to camouflage patterns. Now, wearing camouflage patterned military uniforms are tolerated as they are seen on broadcasting and other media, even things like these. In the past, they were simply banned with no reason. It was unconditional. But, all those regulations are nearly lifted, and yet, there are still many things which are subject to conditions.

JH: Then, what about people who wear them on the street?

- Speaker 35: Well, the clothing is not so big a problem.

JH: Then, what about insignias and things like that?

- Speaker 35: Those are fine, too. The thing is mostly with the equipment.

JH: Even if you don't use it personally?

- Speaker 35: Yes.

JH: Are bags okay?

- Speaker 35: Of course, bags don't matter. But, Korean ones can be a problem; whatever it is, Korean ones might always cause a problem, while most American stuff is not. The only exception is the equipment. I have special equipment here, too. For example, this nightscope which enables you to see through everything at nighttime costs around 12,000,000 won.

JH: Yes.

- Speaker 35: It is a really expensive one, a very high price. That's why it can be seized *100 percent*. And an airplane helmet which I also wear personally is another example of unlawful stuff. There are lots of two-way radios which are subject to be seized, as well. So, things which are displayed here outside are mostly safe for the inspection as I can't present all unlawful things in my shop now. We know what is banned and what is not.

JH: Do your friends also dress similar to you?

- Speaker 35: Gee! Who would dress like this?!

JH: If you share the similar taste, hobbies and things like that with your friends, then perhaps=

- Speaker 35: =With my friends (.) Military enthusiasts and my friends are different.

JH: Ah.

- Speaker 35: Would my friends ever wear these only because I do? No way that's going to happen.

JH: What did your friends tell you when you first started wearing these?

- Speaker 35: Ah, I didn't bother at all. They were saying, 'When in hell were you discharged?' or 'Haven't you been discharged yet?' You can only do this if you really love it. It took me seven hours to paint my car like this, painting for seven hours. I did paint it with *spray*, an American *spray*. It is highly elaborate work.

Interview 24 (2007, South Korea)

Speaker 36 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: You were looking for a *guje* T-shirt a while ago, weren't you? What do you mean by *guje* T-shirts?

- Speaker 36: Well, just shabby and worn-out things.

JH: Were you looking for the actual second-hand clothes?

- Speaker 36: Yes, an actual second-hand piece of clothing.

JH: Why do you prefer second-hand clothes to brand-new ones?

- Speaker 36: Ah, I need them for (.) as a costume, but it's more like (.) I just love the feeling of worn-out clothes than the feel of new things on my skin (.) I prefer the feeling of patina which was left from aging.

JH: Do you like that kind for yourself, too?

- Speaker 36: No, I don't.

JH: So, apart from making costumes, do you? =

- Speaker 36: =I like new clothes [laughs]. I don't wear clothes like this.

JH: May I ask what is the costume for?

- Speaker 36: It is for a show.

JH: For a show (.) you intend to dress in worn-out clothes on purpose.

- Speaker 36: Yes. Every show's different, but this time, I need that kind of feel a lot, so I am preparing now.

JH: So, do you call this kind of second-hand clothes *guje* T-shirts?

- Speaker 36: It is called *guje*, second-hand.

JH: Where else do you go to buy them apart from here?

- Speaker 36: There are many second-hand clothing shops at Preya in Dongdaemun.

JH: Ah, by the way, about what time do you go there?

- Speaker 36: Well, whenever I have time.

JH: I've been here before (.) what are you looking for in this shop?

- Speaker 36: I'd like to see sleeveless T-shirts.

Interview 25 (2007, South Korea)

Speaker 37 = male consumer

JH = interviewer

JH: What is your name?

- Speaker 37: Dongmin Chung.

JH: How old are you?

- Speaker 37: I am twenty-six years old.

JH: What is your occupation? Are you a student?

- Speaker 37: I am just running a shop.

JH: Is that a clothing business?

- Speaker 37: Yes, it is.

JH: Are you wearing an actual military uniform or just a *military look*?

- Speaker 37: It is an actual military uniform.

JH: Do you know which country it is from?

- Speaker 37: Yes, it is from the U.S. Navy.

JH: Do you know its model name?

- Speaker 37: Its model name is (.) it's just called Navy *Jumper* and U.S. Army *walker* [combat boots].

JH: What about your trousers?

- Speaker 37: My trousers are not *military*, not military uniforms.

JH: Are they not the genuine military uniform?

- Speaker 37: No, they aren't.

JH: And your *coat* is a U.S. Navy uniform?!

- Speaker 37: Yes.

JH: Where did you buy it?

- Speaker 37: It was just a shop, a place where they import a lot of things [laughs].

JH: Is that shop selling these kinds of military uniforms?

- Speaker 37: It sells military uniforms and also *vintage guje*.

JH: *Guje vintage*?

- Speaker 37: Yes.

JH: How did you start wearing military uniforms in the first place? As what you're wearing now are all from *coat* to *walkers*.

- Speaker 37: It just happened like this.

JH: What age were you when you started?

- Speaker 37: Around twenty-three.

JH: And your reason being?

- Speaker 37: They were just pretty.

JH: Were you a student at the time, or something else?

- Speaker 37: I was running a shop at that time as well.

JH: Have you become interested in this while you've been running a shop?

- Speaker 37: Yes.

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JH: I am asking because some people have been interested in it since they were in high school.

- Speaker 37: I became more interested while running my business.

JH: Have you perhaps finished your military service?

- Speaker 37: No, I haven't.

JH: Do you like the actual military culture, or only like to wear the military gear?

- Speaker 37: I only like the outfit like I'm wearing now.

JH: What do you think about the actual military culture and things like that?

- Speaker 37: Well, I am not particularly interested in that.

JH: Is it like you've got no interest in it, or you don't like it?

- Speaker 37: I am not interested.

JH: Then what makes you wear this type of clothing as you do now? What aspects have attracted you in particular?

- Speaker 37: They are just comfortable, and I like the *style*.

JH: What did you first wear?

- Speaker 37: I just wore a *yasahng*, *yasahng*.

JH: From which country?

- Speaker 37: It was from the U.S.

JH: I see. Was it something like an M65?

- Speaker 37: Yes, yes, from the U.S.

JH: How much did you pay for it approximately?

- Speaker 37: It was about 50,000 won at the time.

JH: Are they second-hand or brand-new clothes that you have been wearing?

- Speaker 37: They are all second-hand, well mostly.

JH: Did you used to wear second-hand clothing before you started wearing military uniforms?

- Speaker 37: Yes, I did.

JH: Did you have any aversion against second-hand clothing for being dirty, or any prejudice against the clothes which have been previously worn by others?

- Speaker 37: No, I haven't, as long as I can wash them.

JH: Since when have you been wearing second-hand clothes? And did you wear school uniform at high school?

- Speaker 37: I've been wearing them ever since I graduated.

JH: Didn't you wear them when you were at high school?

- Speaker 37: Yes. I think I wore *guje* trousers at high school.

JH: So, you wore second-hand trousers=

- Speaker 37: =Yes, I did.

JH: Where did you buy them at the time?

- Speaker 37: Around Ewha Women's University or Dongdaemun.

JH: Did you go there to buy trousers in particular?

- Speaker 37: Yes.

JH: How did your interest start at the time?

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- Speaker 37: Well, just by flipping through foreign magazines.

JH: Can you tell me which magazines they were, a few, for example?

- Speaker 37: Just things like (.) there are Japanese magazines like Men's NonNo, Samurai and things.

JH: Since when did you start reading them, from junior high or high school?

- Speaker 37: It was since high school.

JH: Where do you buy those magazines from? Do you buy them in your neighbourhood?

- Speaker 37: There is a place that sells foreign magazines around Ewha Women's University.

JH: So, do you go there to shop with your friends?

- Speaker 37: Yes, with my friends.

JH: Are you especially interested in Japanese magazines, or do you also read other Western magazines as well?

- Speaker 37: I read other Western magazines, too.

JH: What kinds?

- Speaker 37: I read Western magazines on the Internet.

JH: Then, do you join the [Internet] Cafés or something?

- Speaker 37: I don't join them, but like to visit them, just to browse.

JH: Don't you read Korean men's magazines?

- Speaker 37: I rarely read them.

JH: Do you have any reason? Or, are you just not interested in them?

- Speaker 37: I have no interest.

JH: Well, you can find out whether they are worth it or not after reading them first, but do you have a reason for your indifference? And is there any reason why you prefer foreign magazines to Korean ones?

- Speaker 37: It's just happened like this by reading the things I used to [laughs].

JH: Are your friends wearing similar things to you, like wearing second-hand clothes and military styles?

- Speaker 37: No, my friends do not dress like me.

JH: What kinds of responses do you get from your friends and family, when you wear second-hand clothes and military gear?

- Speaker 37: I've had no special responses.

JH: Are you running a clothing business because you originally liked this field? Or, have you become more interested in fashion because you run a shop?

- Speaker 37: I have found it more and more interesting since running this business.

JH: Do you only sell clothes, or make them as well?

- Speaker 37: I make and sell.

JH: When you produce clothes, do you also make them in a similar style to what you're wearing now, like second-hand styles?

- Speaker 37: I make them different from my own style when I produce them.

Appendix

JH: Do you deal exclusively with men's clothing?

- Speaker 37: Yes.

JH: Only men's clothing?

- Speaker 37: Yes.

JH: Do you normally dress like what you're wearing today?

- Speaker 37: I mostly dress like this these days.

JH: What about other times?

- Speaker 37: Well, I wear different thing at different times.

JH: Does it depend on the season?

- Speaker 37: Well, it depends on the day.

JH: I see. Thank you.

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