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Panel I. Ethnographies of Care and Extraction

Rethinking Care: From Peripheral Labor to Scientific Expertise

Yeonwha Kim | Seoul National University

This study seeks to reimagine the laboratory as a space of care. Laboratories have long been understood as sites where humans and nonhumans are arranged to produce scientific knowledge (Latour and Woolgar 1986; Knorr-Cetina 1999; Lynch 1985). In this process, scientific practice is imagined not only as an epistemological endeavor but as one that forms particular ontologies through its associations with materials. Yet, relatively little attention has been paid to how these materials come to exist and persist within the laboratory. This study, therefore, investigates sociomaterial entanglements that enact and sustain collectives of actors in the production of scientific knowledge.

Based on one year of participant observation in an analytical chemistry laboratory at a science and engineering university in South Korea, this study follows the daily routines of graduate students as they learn to become scientists. Unlike early laboratory studies that positioned care work as the domain of technicians (Barley & Bechky 1994; Suzuki 2015), this study focuses on graduate students' maintenance and repair work—what I refer to as care practice. Instrumental conditions were frequently raised in discussions of experimental results, and students developed embodied skills to detect subtle shifts in the performance of machines and materials.

This sensory attunement—what I call the “art of noticing”, borrowing a term from Tsing (2015)—emerged as a central mode of care. It was not peripheral but integral to scientific expertise. By tracing how graduate students cultivate this form of noticing through repeated bodily interactions with instruments, this study argues that care is not ancillary but foundational to knowledge production. Attending to care thus opens new ways of understanding how scientific knowledge is deeply entangled with embodied practices.

Doing Science as a Feminist: Young Women Scientists in Korea's Post 2015 Feminist Activism

Doyeon Kim | Seoul National University

Since 2015, feminist activism in South Korea has taken on distinct cultural character compared to earlier movements. There are three key features: self-identification as feminists, recognition of misogyny as a structural problem, and activism grounded in lived realities. These features are particularly salient

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subjects. Based on the view that these cultural developments have also shaped their scientific perspectives and practices.

Building on our previous conceptualization of feminist science as “doing science as a feminist”, we regard them as agents of feminist science—an alternative approach that is not only free from gender bias but also grounded in new epistemological perspectives and contextual values. We conducted focus group interviews with four Korean graduate students to explore how this is enacted in practice. These participants are young women scientists of the post-2015 generation who self-identify as feminists. The interviews revealed that, compared to earlier generations of women scientists, they expressed a commitment to addressing gendered structural inequalities while maintaining their feminist identity. They also had a critical awareness of gender bias in science and adopted a strategy of “opposing from within” navigating their positions as both insiders and outsiders of science-as scientists and feminists. This included efforts to ask different questions, ensure diversity in data collection, and challenge conventional scientific norms.

These findings highlight why we must take young feminist scientists seriously. Recognizing themselves as agents capable of reshaping scientific knowledge from a feminist standpoint, they demonstrate the potential to enact feminist science by “doing science as feminists”. This suggests that they may represent the first generation of scientists actively working to transform science from within through a feminist lens.

Women Who Make AI See: An Ethnography of Data-Labeling Labor

Yeeun Kim | Seoul National University

In this presentation, I present artificial intelligence not as a self-sufficient, autonomous agent but as a hybrid artifact whose very operation depends on the continuous reliance on people’s cognitive and manual labor. As a case in point, this study focuses on data annotators (data labelers in Korean) who prepare the image and video datasets used to train deep-learning models. Data labelers collect, preprocess, verify, and deliver images, videos, and textual cues for developing algorithms that do not yet exist. In doing so, they construct from scratch the visual–spatial information an AI eventually should be able to perceive. Yet, in local media, data labeling work has been systematically undervalued, often compared to the low-paid, repetitive “doll-eye sticking” once carried out by housewives in the domestic sphere during the 1960s and 1970s.

In today’s AI industries, the “dolls” they construct are AI’s perceptible field, and the “doll-eyes” are the tags they attach to data so that AI systems can literally sense and interpret the world. While developing large datasets necessitates extensive input by the data labelers, their roles have largely remained under-recognized in public discourse about AI. To address the gap, I document how trainees collectively learn to “see” like machines and to calibrate their vision to algorithmic rules through a fieldwork at Women’s Resources Development Centers in Seoul and interviews with 11 data labelers. Based on these findings, this study conceptualizes these workers as mediators and co-performers of machine vision, whose undervalued cognitive labor is foundational to the operation of contemporary artificial intelligence. These layered observations and interviews reveal the tacit cognitive labor behind



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dataset production, and at the same time, illuminate how gendered workforce programs channel particular social groups into the invisible backstage of AI construction.

Listening to the Trees: Vernacular Science and Gendered Expertise in the Citrus Farming of Jeju

June Hee Kwon | California State University, Sacramento

This paper examines how vernacular science and gendered expertise emerge through women farmers' everyday labor, ecological attunement, and continuous experimentation, based on two years of ethnographic research conducted in close collaboration with citrus growers in Jeju, alongside archival investigation into the social life of citrus trees. Once positioned as a Cold War frontier of South Korea's developmental ambitions, Jeju Island became a testing ground for agrarian modernization, where citrus farming was promoted as both a symbol and instrument of national progress. Infrastructure such as greenhouses, irrigation systems, and citrus cultivars—often introduced through diasporic and transnational exchanges—were embedded in a geopolitical project to transform Jeju into a productive and securitized space. Yet the success of this transformation has relied not on large-scale agribusiness, but on family farming systems that require the full-year cooperation of couples.

Within this framework, women farmers often manage the annual farming calendar and oversee every corner of the orchard—grafting, pruning, regulating greenhouses, preventing disease, and coordinating harvests. Their knowledge is not confined to formal training, but develops through embodied experience, local extension programs, self-study, and iterative trial and error. In this context, the greenhouse and orchard function as living laboratories, where women farmers refine techniques in response to weather variability, pest outbreaks, and market volatility. They do not merely apply standardized methods but “listen to the trees”—reading subtle shifts in leaf, fruit, and air to make time-sensitive decisions grounded in care and co-presence. While men often engage with transportation, marketing, and external relations through farming cooperatives, women farmers' labor remains deeply tied to the land. This gendered division of labor shapes not only farming practices but also distinct modes of knowledge production.

Grounded in feminist political ecology and the anthropology of science, this paper argues that agricultural innovation in Jeju is co-produced through collaborative, gendered labor and multispecies relationality. Women farmers generate not just crop but knowledge—and in doing so, nurture both science and futurity within a landscape historically shaped by Cold War frontier logics. These affective and vernacular agricultural practices—operating outside formal scientific institutions—play a vital role in shaping cultivar development and expanding the very horizons of agricultural science.

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Panel II. Entangled Practices: Citizen Science, AI Storytelling, and Sci-Art

Knowing through Feeling: South Korean Citizen Science and the Gendered Politics of Knowing

Juwon Lee | University of California, Irvine

Referring to scientific knowledge practices conducted by non-expert citizens, citizen science in South Korea (hereafter, Korea) has taken various forms throughout modern history. Since the 2000s, Korean citizen science has been particularly prominent in the fields of biodiversity monitoring and environmental science, where non-expert citizens participate in documenting data on species populations and educating the public about the nonhuman life in their local regions.

Stream activists in Seoul also identify themselves as citizen scientists, collaborating with municipal governments, research institutions, and local schools to ensure the protection of endangered species and their habitats in their local streams. Predominantly led by middle-aged women, the stream activists hold certifications as forest interpreters and forest educators, accredited by national institutions that require extensive education and training spanning several months. This expertise—although still not considered sufficient to be an expert by traditional science—acquired through these certifications allows them to provide scientific education about nonhuman lives. Stream activists distinguish between knowing through affective experiences and knowing through knowledge represented by names, taxonomies, and traits provided by traditional science, arguing that knowing nonhuman lives requires both kinds of knowing. They assert that both forms of knowledge are co-constitutive, as one cannot experience affective responses when engaging with nonhuman lives without knowing who they are, and vice versa.

This paper examines how urban stream activists practice knowing of nonhuman lives through both knowledge and affect, simultaneously. Through a gendered analysis of the ethnographic interviews about their waged and reproductive labor, it highlights how such practices of knowing emerge from their situatedness as middle-aged women in Korea. In doing so, this paper considers knowing about nonhuman species as a more-than-human practice through a feminist anthropological lens and argues that knowledge about urban nature generated through citizen science offers alternative ways of knowing to traditional science.

The Commercial Rise of Character AI Chatbots and the Genre Performance of Romance Fantasy AI: A Feminist Reading

Namkyu Kang | Sungkyunkwan University

After ChatGPT appeared, interest in the commercial use of AI chatbots exploded. Interactive AI chatbots understand human language based on natural language processing technology and provide natural responses like humans. Recently, companies are attempting to anthropomorphize AI chatbots that induce users to immerse themselves by imitating virtual personalities, beyond simply imitating human conversation methods, to maximize the profitability of AI chatbots.

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One notable example is “Rohan AI,” frequently advertised on platforms like Twitter (now X), which constructs a specific genre-based fictional universe to deliver personalized and anthropomorphized interactions. It is not an AI assistant of a conversation-oriented interface like ChatGPT, but a non-human being personified through distinct persona. Other commercial platforms offering similar services include Zeta, Lutton, Tingle, Cave Duck, and Mochs, indicating a relatively stable and growing user base for character-driven AI chatbots.

“Rohan AI” composes world views and characters according to the style of the “romance fantasy” genre—a category associated with female audiences. Since the feminist cultural reboot, this genre has been interpreted as a chapter where women’s desires and political expressions are behaved. The rise of character AI chatbots enable users to perform genre-based interaction, offering new opportunities for “becoming-writer.”

This paper examines how genre is performed through the character AI chatbot, how this performance compares to traditional reading of genre novel, and whether it offers a novel experience of reading and writing. This could reveal new possibilities for performing, imitating, and destabilizing masculinity and femininity, as well as deconstructing existing notions of authorship and readership.

Medical Images and Anatomical Gazes in Contemporary Films by Korean Female Artists

Yubeen Lim | Duke University

This paper examines contemporary films by Korean female artists that incorporate medical images through X-rays, endoscopy, and CT/MRI/PET. The works of artists such as Lee Jooyeon and Cho Heesoo connect internal bodily phenomena or the operation of organs with the quality of the medium, resonating with early cinematic experiments in projection and movement based on the optic apparatus as a mass invention. These images have appeared at particular historical junctures such as epidemics and digitalization, and both the post-pandemic condition and the technical conditions of computational image production and distribution have contributed to their increased frequency and intensity. The reorganization of bodily perception and the pathological symptoms of production conditions have made the malfunctioning of the orders detectable to the masses.

In these contexts, the appropriation of medical images in the films can be read as an attempt to construct an alternative epistemology of the body. By rendering bodies that are surveilled, neglected, or silenced in modern medical systems, these works disrupt normative narratives of health and illness and suggest the potential to reconstruct the body. In contrast to the way medical images have been interpreted in dominant structures rooted in male-centered knowledge, these films decode body image in ways that recognize illnesses or complex bodily elements that cannot be interpreted within existing diagnostic systems. To support this, I first investigate the intersection of early cinema and medical images, and their appearance at certain moments. I then analyze specific contemporary works by Korean female artists to explore how films engage with medical images in relation to gender, illness, and the question of media. Ultimately, I propose that these images constitute an inquiry into new modes of perception and an effort to sense otherness from the self and the self from the other, to reconfigure the boundaries of the body and to explore possibilities for resistance to the privileged image.

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Panel III. Queer Feminist Science Fiction: Technosymbiosis, Gender, and Liberation

From Railway to Space Elevator: Technoscience, Gender, and South Korea's Geopolitical Transformation

Eunkyo Kang | Stanford University

This study analyzes South Korean science fiction writer DJUNA's short story "Trans-Pacific Express" (2000) and novel Counterweight (2021, originally published as a short story in 2009) as key texts charting Korea's transformation from colonial periphery to technological powerhouse. Lim (2023)'s notion of "geopolitical SF" reveals how Korea's precarious geopolitical position under the Cold War system created an "imaginative threshold," constraining the creative possibilities available to both writers and readers. This analysis examines how DJUNA's SF represents a pivotal shift enabled by post-Cold War globalization and post-IMF neoliberalization.

The analysis reveals three interconnected insights. First, these works use railway and space elevator iconography to map Korea's changing geopolitical position. Korea undergoes a dramatic reversal: from representing the subordinated local in "Trans-Pacific Express" to embodying the global center as home to a space elevator corporation in Counterweight, while revealing Korea's emerging subimperial relationship with Southeast Asia. Second, both works feature ruthlessly calculating female protagonists who reject traditional gender roles in favor of strategic calculation. These characters embody a distinctly gendered relationship to technoscience, characterized by emotional detachment and mechanical perfectionism. Third, these female characters embody DJUNA's distinctive vision of posthuman transformation, where late capitalism's alienation paradoxically enables liberation through transhuman existence freed from human affect and limitation.

Through this analysis, the study positions DJUNA as a pioneering figure who reimagined Korean SF's relationship to both gender and technology. Their somewhat technologically deterministic yet distinctly gendered vision represents a crucial intervention: by centering female protagonists who navigate technoscience through strategic calculation rather than humanistic values, DJUNA challenges the male-dominated nationalist, developmentalist narratives that previously defined Korean SF. DJUNA's work thus establishes a critical foundation for today's women-led SF renaissance by demonstrating how science fiction can interrogate Korea's global positioning while imagining alternative forms of agency and subjectivity.

Inhuman Motherhood: Femininity and Caregiving in Djuna's Science Fiction

Sue Hyon Bae | Arizona State University

In this paper, I examine nonhuman mothers in the science fiction of Djuna. In Bari (2024), robots in the future long after human extinction are tasked with recreating and raising humanity. Et in Arcadia Ego (2020) presents both childcare and eldercare; in Arcadia, a virtual-reality hospice, a young girl is cared for by an AI programmed to be her caregiver, while her dying human grandmother is absorbed

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into virtual reality. In these technologically advanced worlds, humans have abdicated the responsibility of caregiving, but instead of assigning the work to emotionless drones, the new caregivers look and behave like human women, including having complex feelings about their roles. Rada Moon resents being assigned caregiving when her true calling is being a private detective, and Bari feels she has lost her reason for existence when the new human beings are destroyed. Drawing on social reproduction theory, I show how these stories use nonhuman mothers to illuminate a contemporary reality. South Korea might be said, as Chang Kyung-Sup argues, to be in a crisis of social reproduction, especially in childbearing and rearing. While Djuna's vision of femininity might seem pessimistic, suggesting social reproduction is impossible without feminized labor, the stories also present humans as less feeling and caring than the nonhuman mothers, questioning if humans even have the right to exist or be called humans if we are not practicing an ethics of care. This is further explored in Djuna's "Pentagon" (2013), in which the consciousness of a ruthless male killer is transplanted into a pregnant woman's body and suddenly acquires new ethics and purpose. These "mothers" suggest that femininity is not only essential for social reproduction but also for what we recognize as human ethics.

Nonbinary Narratives: Trans Intelligibility and the Fiction of Cisness in Contemporary South Korean Science Fiction

Christina Jang | University of California, Los Angeles

This paper brings recent scholarship theorizing nonbinariness into dialogue with two contemporary South Korean speculative short stories featuring trans characters. Through a comparative reading of Kim Cho'yöp's "The double-sided seashell" and Kim Söngjung's "Eddie or Ashley," the paper argues that the tension between making trans experience legible to a cis/non-trans readership and revealing the fiction of cisness itself functions as a nonbinary narrative strategy. Drawing on Kadji Amin's polemical essay "We Are All Nonbinary: A Brief History of Accidents" and related discourses on nonbinary as a political and theoretical category, I explore the fine line between trans literary narratives that seek intelligibility and those that destabilize the normative borderlines of cisness. While "The double-sided seashell" employs an interplanetary setting and alien species to narrate trans masculine experience through a reframing of the "wrong body" trope, "Eddie or Ashley" centers a trans woman and her intimate bond with an android in a futuristic world where the suspension of biological aging creates a temporal stasis that blurs queer identity boundaries. Although both stories may be read as foregrounding the legitimacy of trans experience, they ultimately refuse the cis/trans binary by illustrating how trans embodiment emerges through contingent conditions in speculative worlds and by tracing the affective shift of a cis-coded character as they grapple with the bodily dysphoria of their trans counterpart. Focusing on how dysphoria and transition are narrated in these speculative settings, the paper argues that science fiction offers not only a means to deconstruct the fantasy of normative cisness but also an apparatus for imagining trans and nonbinary liberation beyond liberal identitarian frameworks. In a literary landscape with few trans-identified authors, this paper expands both the conceptual boundaries of trans science fiction and the narrative potentialities of the genre beyond mere representations of gender fluidity and trans intelligibility.

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South Korean Space Activism and Feminist Care for Outer Space

Hae Seo Kim | University of California, Irvine

This paper explores how feminist forms of care are mobilized in contemporary South Korean resistance to the state-led militarized development of outer space. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with space activists, I examine how ritual, mourning, and relational ethics constitute a form of feminist care for space—one that challenges the masculinist, extractive, and techno-nationalist logics that underwrite dominant visions of space exploration.

I approach feminist care of space as a historically situated, embodied political practice. Through protest rituals, activism, and cosmological storytelling, the actors I engage imagine outer space not as a geopolitical frontier to be conquered and colonized, but as a relational terrain shaped by ancestral presence, ecological vulnerability, and multispecies entanglement. These practices unsettle dominant narratives that depict space travel as the epitome of techno-scientific prowess and modern state power, offering instead alternative narratives grounded in collective care and relational responsibility. South Korean space activism also raises important questions about public engagement with technoscience—particularly how to raise awareness of the militarized and environmentally destructive dimensions of outer space, and how to inspire public concern and action.

In addition to drawing on theorization of care as political labor by Joan Tronto and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa and other feminist theorists of care, the paper turns to South Korean feminist speculative works of authors such as Kim Bo-Young, Jeong So-Yeon, and Yun E-Hyung, whose writing explores cyborg embodiment, gendered labor, and care in outer space. Their stories function as theoretical provocations, offering insight into the affective, political, and cosmological dimensions of care in the face of terrestrial abandonment, extractivism in outer space, and planetary crisis. Ultimately, this paper argues that feminist care for space opens new horizons for rethinking politics beyond conquest and militarization. By weaving ethnography with speculative literature, it contributes to discussions on how alternative imaginaries of care can reshape planetary futures.

Panel IV. Challenging the Anthropocene through Speculative Feminism

Technofeminism and Sympoietic Worlding in Kim Boyoung's SF

Namkyung Yeon | Ewha Womans University

According to Rosi Braidotti, a new materialist feminist who emphasized the importance of embodiment and embedded sexual differences, the current posthuman phenomenon of 'zoe/geo/technobodies', i.e. complex relational elements as heterogenous assemblages, deals with the problems of the Anthropocene while traversing difference and diversity, and showing an ethics of interconnected positive relations. This is also related to Donna Haraway's inter-connected world of 'becoming together' and 'sympoiesis'. This presentation will demonstrate the resonance between Braidotti and Haraway's thinking and the

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thought experiments in Kim Bo-young's recent SF, in addition to analyzing Kim's novels dealing with ecological crisis as a result of high-tech developments through virtual reality, artificial intelligence, deep sea organisms, and space fungus. Set at a future Incheon airport where human cloning and teleportation are commercialized, the short story "Loosely the Same You" (「느슨하게 동일한 그대」, 2023) deals acutely with the ethical problem of human teleportation and the legal problem of teleportation errors. Here technoscience is involved in the disappearance of refugees, while being ambivalent towards making a posthuman community of care comprised of beings connected through a new strengthening possible. In the short story "The Forest of Ghosts Falls" (「귀신숲이 내리다」, 2024) about the orbiting abandoned space convalescent hospital 'Sancheon(Forest)', the AI narrator predicts that a powerful ecosystem formed in space will come down to Earth, which has become an undecomposable trash planet, and save the Earth. 'Sancheon' is a sympoietic world in which AI, water, sunlight, mushrooms, insects, and humans are entangled with one another. The making of this tentacular world shows the possibility of not giving up on the plastic waste-covered Earth and achieving a partial recovery. In this way, Kim Bo-young's SF attempts to expand the scope of SF with non-human stories, as well as earthly topics, in addition to combining refugees, artificial intelligence, ecological material, sympoietic feminist thinking, such as care, connection, and suggesting the power to surmount the problems of the Anthropocene.

Cyborg Feminism in 2020s Korean SF Visual Media

Yujin Pyo | Ewha Womans University

In early 2020's Korean SF movies and dramas, the female cyborg narrative set in a background of climate disaster and a technocapitalist future has emerged. Since the end of the Korean War, Korean scientific discourse has put forward a modern image of the 'science boy' who dreams of the future, and in 20th century Korean film the myth of motherhood, along with paternal love and innocent girls' sacrifice were the representative images of serving in the ideology of a modern democratic nation. However, *Space Sweepers* (2021) and *The Silent Sea* (2021)'s 'cyborgification of sick girls', and Jung E (2023)'s 'cyborgification of the myth of maternity' place female-posthuman figures at the center of the narrative and raise the issues of ecological destruction and technocapitalism which have been overlooked in androcentric SF narratives. Donna Haraway's cyborg is based on relationality through interconnectedness and network epistemology. Cyborg network heterogeneity deconstructs the relationship between human and animal, organism and machine, material and immaterial, and creates new connections. *Space Sweepers* and *The Silent Sea*'s female cyborgs appear as 'cyborg Gaia', carrying both sympathetic ability which connects life, technology, and environment at the universal level, and the power of regeneration. As Bruno Latour and Timothy Lenton assert in "Gaia 2.0," this is an ecological insight in which humans must act for the recovery of the interactive life-environment system, and a fusion of cyborg imaginative power. In addition, Jung E turns the relationship between the young female scientist and the cyborg mother into the relationship between the mother of a scientist and the



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daughter of a cyborg, while deconstructing technocapitalism and making a new female mythology possible. Within the collapse of modernity, Korean SF attempts to find creative power that connects women and cyborgs, and defies climate crisis and technocapitalism. By taking a different approach from the existing imperialistic and androcentric SF, Korean SF bears the potential to offer an alternative imagination about the future.

The (Im)possibility of Human-Machine Translation and Symbiosis: Bora Chung's 'Goodbye, My Love' and 'One More Kiss, Dear.'

Laura Heys | Ewha Womans University

This paper examines the relationship between artificial intelligence and human beings in Bora Chung's short stories "Goodbye, My Love" and "One More Kiss, Dear." These stories tell how relationships and power structures are formed between humans and AI, and how each may influence one another both positively and negatively.

Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory argues that all things, human or otherwise exist within a network and can interact with one another as actors. Through the process of translation, actors can convey action or meaning to one another and influence outcomes. Similarly, Donna Haraway tells us that humans and machines are already intertwined with one another as a hybrid machine-human network, i.e. cyborg. Because humans and machines are already connected, they have a responsibility towards one another and towards symbiosis, one that requires response-ability – the ability to respond and adapt to crises in a responsible manner.

In the above stories, AI and humans already exist within a network, however due to a mistranslation between actors, they fail to understand each other and struggle to achieve symbiosis. One of the main causes of the mistranslation is that the human characters fail to think of the AI characters as conscious and autonomous beings, therefore they do not expect or understand when AI does not comply with the humans' orders or expectations. However, the translation failure does not mean that symbiosis is impossible, only that it is more difficult to achieve. To bring about symbiosis, all characters, but particularly those with greater power than the others, must develop response-ability and take responsibility for one another. If there is no response-ability and the characters give up on their relationship because the mistranslation is too difficult to overcome, symbiosis will not be achieved. However, if there is response-ability and the characters continue to be responsible and take care of one another, it is possible to live symbiotically and save the relationship.

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Panel V. Technofeminist Critiques of Algorithmic and Media Cultures

Streaming Media and the Logistics of the Korean Wave

Yeonjin Choi | Sungkyunkwan University

Recently, the overwhelming dominance of U.S.-based platforms, including Netflix, is increasingly being examined through the lens of platform imperialism. While existing critical discourse highlights how Netflix deepens local dependence through aggressive investment, exercises control over algorithms and user data, and tends to evade regulation, it often overlooks the physical infrastructures the company exploits for capital accumulation. These infrastructures, which consist of submarine cables, public cloud data centers, and content delivery networks, function as the physical logistics systems that enable Netflix to deliver its media products “on demand,” as expected. The unmatched market share that Netflix has achieved, with the help of Korean content, translates into a substantial cost of exclusion, allowing the company to pressure local governments and firms to invest in logistical networks that ultimately serve Netflix’s own interests, as seen in the Netflix–SK Broadband dispute over network usage fees.

The way Netflix incorporates Korean local productions into its own supply chain closely resembles how Silicon Valley transformed its military dominance into economic hegemony in the postwar world by designating East Asia as a key manufacturing base for semiconductors. Widespread concern in South Korea over its limited share of the profits from *K-Pop Demon Hunters* reflects a familiar sense of dependency, echoing the semiconductor sector where the nation remains a subcontractor(foundry) reliant on U.S. chip IP and design software. By examining Netflix’s digital logistics network, this paper demonstrates how Silicon Valley’s profit model, built on the control of entire supply chains through intangible technological assets while outsourcing the production and maintenance of costly physical infrastructures to peripheral nations, has been reproduced within Korea’s cultural content industry.

Girls and Phones: The Feminization, and Feminist Appropriation, of Technological Anxiety

Hyejoo Lee | University of Southern California

This paper examines two seemingly disparate works of early-2000s South Korean cinema, *Take Care of My Cat* (2000, dir. Chŏng Chae-eŭn) and *Phone* (2002, dir. An Pyŏng-ki). The former is a woman-directed indie film about four female and recent high school graduates navigating societal and patriarchal pressures, praised in retrospect as a feminist cult classic. The latter is a popular horror flick centered around the vengeful ghost of a murdered female high school student, peppered with salacious themes. An unnoticed motif between these two films apart, however, is their portrayals of young women as existentially tied to their mobile phones and other personal technological devices. In *Take Care of My Cat*, the female protagonists are consistently represented by their cellphones, text messaging, and computers; in *Phone*, the female ghost haunts, like a virus, through mobile phones, phone numbers, and even laptops. This common conflation of femininity and new digital technology found across these films

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and others beckon us to consider not only that Korean films have registered, all along, overlooked impacts of digital and networked media, but also how technological developments and discourses have formed newly gendered subjects and relations in contemporary Korea. Studying films like *Chöng and An's* alongside budding scholarship on state-led informatization in turn-of-the-millennium Korea—a recent (and ongoing) history wherein the government, conglomerates, and mass media alike envisioned the ideal neoliberal subject as technology-savvy—this paper argues for an uneasy duality to a uniquely contemporary understanding of feminine subjectivity as media technology. Phone posits femininity itself as uncontrollable and monstrous by feminizing anxiety around new technology. Yet, *Take Care of My Cat* gestures to a possible feminist strategy in a self-conscious rendering of oneself as media—a subject position that confirms the gendered legacy of technologization in conjunction with neoliberal logics, but is a strategy of navigating a ubiquitously computerized, late capitalist world.

Deepfakes and Gender: Critical Evaluation of Its Regulation in Chile and Korea

Bernardita González Lustig | Universidad Central de Chile

Technology poses challenges that question the exercise of basic fundamental rights, particularly considering its impact on personal freedoms. This has become evident as debates have opened regarding its impact on privacy and personal data protection, considering the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools (Lee, J., 2022; Tzimas, T., 2021). We argue that it is worth evaluating measures that are being taken to regulate the use of AI in countries outside the European Community to protect the fundamental rights of vulnerable people from a gendered perspective.

Starting from the recent public debate regarding the use of deepfakes involving women and minors in both Chile and Korea, this research aims, first, to compare the regulation of AI in both countries. On December 13, 2024, the new law No 21.719 was published in Chile. Although AI is not regulated directly, it makes it possible to guarantee, in practice, the fundamental right to protect personal data (Contreras, P., Drago, M. and Voilier, P., 2024). For its part, in South Korea, the Artificial Intelligence Basic Act was passed in December 2024. This act introduces two new institutions to guarantee the safe use of AI. Second, we address how these recent legal efforts protect the fundamental rights of vulnerable people and whether this is done from a gendered perspective.

We follow a qualitative and case study methodology, using a descriptive and analytical approach. This methodology will allow us to examine legislation from a comparative but situated perspective, taking into account the respective historical, political, and social contexts.

This research is significant to comparative and gender studies since it aims to illustrate the level of protection of the fundamental rights of vulnerable people in two different social and historical contexts (Chile and Korea). It is also relevant to international law since it looks to determine points of encounter and disagreement with international standards on AI regulation on this matter.

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Panel VI. Feminist Historiographies of Health and Labor

Mothers as Primary Implementers of Childhood Vaccination: Maternal Roles in South Korean Immunization Programs, 1950s-1990s

Heesoo Cho | Seoul National University

This study examines the evolving role of mothers in South Korea's childhood vaccination programs from the 1950s to the 1990s. While health authorities laid legal foundations for mass immunization, implementation was hindered by limited infrastructure and uneven access. Public discourse increasingly emphasized mothers' responsibility for childhood immunization, but their ability to fulfill this role was shaped by their social, economic, and medical conditions.

Drawing on media sources, pediatrician commentaries, and public health records, this study argues that mothers were neither passive recipients of policy nor uniformly empowered actors. Rather, they were selective participants, navigating institutional gaps and structural constraints. In the late 1970s, the Mother and Child Health (MCH) program introduced a handbook to encourage maternal education and documentation of vaccinations. Yet many mothers prioritized immunization while neglecting record-keeping, prompting a later policy shift toward a centralized immunization registry in the 2000s. What fundamentally transformed maternal participation was not policy alone, but the broader medicalization of reproductive life. As pregnancy and child-rearing became increasingly tied to medical institutions from the late 1980s, routine childhood vaccination gained traction as part of everyday clinical practice. This shift brought children and mothers more fully under administrative and medical surveillance.

By tracing how maternal practices, state policy, and reproductive environments interacted, this study reveals the contingent but constitutive role of maternal labor in building public health infrastructure. It contributes to feminist historiography and the social history of medicine by showing how the boundaries between public and private, policy and practice, were actively negotiated and reconfigured in the making of modern immunization programs.

The 1970 Nationwide Nurses' Collective Action in Korea: The Process and Social Significance of the "Injection Strike"

Sunmee Hwang | Korea University

This study investigates the strikes conducted by nurses in Korea during the 1960s and 1970s. Following the opening of Korean ports, the influx of Western medical systems and knowledge led to the establishment of nursing as a new profession in Korean society. While nursing granted professional recognition to women's previously unacknowledged caregiving labor, nurses faced persistent challenges including low wages high-intensity working conditions, and gender discrimination. These issues persisted after Korea's liberation in 1945, and despite nurses' continuous advocacy for improved recognition and working conditions through newspapers and magazines, significant improvements remained elusive. The accumulated grievances among nurses eventually culminated in the strikes of the

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ABSTRACTS

1960s and 1970s.

Beginning with the strike in December 1968, subsequent strikes occurred in March 1970, September 1970, and October 1970. The 1968 strike was triggered by nurses' protest against physical assault by a medical intern. The March 1970 strike arose from nurses' opposition to the application of negligent homicide charges against a nurse whose patient died following an injection administered under a doctor's orders. The September and October strikes were related to demands for improved working conditions and subsequent follow-up measures.

These nursing strikes emerged from the intersection of femininity, professionalism, and worker identity. Through this lens, these strikes not only illuminate the poor working conditions that nurses endured at the time but also reveal nurses' identity formation and the pervasive gender discrimination within the medical field and broader society. By examining the medical historical implications of these nursing strikes, we can gain insight into another significant dimension of Korean nursing history.

Sharing Knowledge, Making Beauty: Women's Labor and Consumers in the 1970s-1980s Cosmetic Industry in South Korea

ByeongWoong Min | Seoul National University

This research examines how cosmetic door-to-door saleswomen and women consumers mediated health and beauty knowledge in 1970s-1980s South Korea. By tracing how cosmetic saleswomen acquired and applied dermatological knowledge, this research shows that the marketing activity of cosmetic saleswomen was a crucial channel through which consumer-patients accessed medical information and practices. During the 1970s-1980s, routine access to formal healthcare was limited due to insufficient clinics and national health insurance. Cosmetic saleswomen and employees, known as beauty workers (*miyongsawŏn*), disseminated proper skincare methods through face-to-face interactions with consumers. The cosmetic company, such as Pacific Chemicals, now known as AmorePacific, trained beauty workers not only in basic dermatology, cosmetic ingredients, and medical information, but also in customer service, business etiquette, and even emotional labor, such as caring for other male colleagues in the workplace. Cosmetic products, however, often caused skin problems or safety concerns. Cosmetic consumers individually and collectively demanded safer and high-quality products. Consumers not just directly sent letters to the cosmetic company detailing their skin experience and complaining about the cosmetics and services, but also engaged in collective actions accusing the cosmetic company of distributing low-quality and unhygienic items. Some even voluntarily participated in patch testing, collaborating with dermatologists in order to investigate unknown ingredients of cosmetics circulated in the market. By drawing on the historical sources from newspapers, company magazines, training manuals, consumer letters, YWCA materials, and saleswomen's memoirs, this study argues that tension and communication between saleswomen and consumers shaped how women constructed ideas of beauty and healthy skin in everyday life. By revealing how people cared for and cured their bodies in the market sector, this research urges historians to focus on gender politics of the market area to capture the different discourses and practices from the nation-building agenda.

Panel VII. Technoscience and Gender Across Borders: A Roundtable Conversation