Hello, Readers!

Whilst putting the pieces together for this issue, we delved into some of our older volumes for some inspiration. Fingers flipping through volume 19 printed in 2009 and volume 38 in 2012… A couple of “ooh”s and “aah”s escaped here and there, while a number of realizations resonated in my mind.

Above all, it became evident that each volume of The SNU Quill has always presented to readers not only relevant news and reports but also, a collection of stories. Stories that gave a little peek into the values, voices and distinctive personalities of the very team that crafted its pages.

I’m proud to say that we won’t be breaking that tradition.

This issue, The SNU Quill has completely redesigned and rebranded our content. Of course, the process certainly had its ups and downs. Moments of all-consuming cheers, to soon being swallowed by uncertainty and doubt.

Whether it be through our words, our designs, or our photography, The SNU Quill believes we can challenge and inspire. And through the help of our talented group of designers and photographers, fearlessly led by Creative Director Minju Kim, the thought and deliberation poured into this issue reflects that belief more than ever.

With distinct character and personality riddled throughout the pages, The SNU Quill can now not only be read, but experienced.

We hope that with each issue we print, a better story is told about who we are here at The SNU Quill, and a better reflection is portrayed of what it is we stand for.

Welcome to our 59th volume. We’ve come a long way. Enjoy.

– Frances Seowon Jin
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When I browsed a cosmetics shop the other day one product caught my attention: self-tanning wipes. Although not easily sighted, it was indeed there, in sharp contrast to the light skin advertisements around the store offering products that do the exact opposite of these self-tanning wipes. From a Western perspective, the array of products carrying terms like «whitening» and «brightening» comes across as rather peculiar, just as self-tanning wipes are peculiar to Koreans. Indeed, when the Korean skincare brand Elisha Coy had an advertisement in New York that asked «do you wanna be white?», it quickly sparked controversy among Western media outlets.

In Western countries the trend seems to lean more towards achieving tanned skin as seen in various self-tanning products and desperate tanning attempts at the beach, methods that all too often lead to either orange or red skin. Long gone are the days when pale skin indicated higher social class; now, a healthy tan shows that one has the money to go to a luxurious island and spend time relaxing at a picturesque beach. So why is it so different in other parts of the world? The cosmetic industry promoting skin-whitening products in Asia is thriving. Just looking at the role pale skin has in Bollywood’s $2.28 billion industry shows the power of this ideal. Most people in Asian countries have a habit of avoiding a tan, rather than seeking it.

In the past, pale skin was linked to higher social class in Korea. Has this ideal simply remained, unlike in Western countries? While this might be part of the reason considering the strong perseverance of cultural traditions, a deeper look into the global role of pale skin tells a more complex story. Although Korea has never been directly colonized by Western countries, it has been under strong influence and pressure from the West, both through colonial modernity and through its security alliance with the US after the Korean War. While Korea was colonized by Japan, the pressure to modernize was ultimately coming from Western colonialism. Ever since the West became the benchmark for modernization, its influence has been very prominent globally and thus being «Western» and «white» has become necessarily associated with power.

Returning to Bollywood, history shows the presence of lighter skin preferences in the caste system, but this was further entrenched and promoted to become associated with power during British colonialism. But if Western ideals have changed, can we still attribute this ideal to the influence of Eurocentric beauty standards? Despite tanned skin having become an appealing trait to people, looking more into what fair skin signifies reveals that its superior position still prevails globally. Light skin privilege is very much present in today’s society. Especially for women, where beauty acts as a resource in the labor market, the light skin beauty ideal has social and economic implications.
The frequent controversy about digital whitewashing of celebrities such as Rihanna and Beyoncé when appearing in advertisements or magazines further shows the issues of skin preference. Furthermore, there is not only a bias towards white skin in terms of whitewashing in media, but also makeup products like foundations have a serious lack of selection for darker skin tones. Even supermodels like Jordan Dunn, Iman and Leomie Anderson have complained they frequently encounter professional makeup artists who neither have the products nor skills to properly apply their makeup.

There is also the issue of the contexts in which lighter skin is preferred. Despite the tanning-trend, certain advertisements continue to prefer pale skin, whereas tanned skin tones tend to appear in more sexual contexts. This exoticization of darker skin can be linked to Western colonialism and its objectification of the Orient. Scholars like bell hooks have showed the hypersexualized image black bodies have come to embody in white society. Fair skin on the other hand is often associated with purity and youthfulness. Describing this tendency in regards to black women’s representation in media she states:

“...it follows that when flesh is exposed in attire that is meant to evoke sexual desirability it is worn by a non-white model. As sexist/racist sexual mythology would have it, she is the embodiment of the best of the black female savage tempered by those elements of whiteness that soften this image, giving it an aura of virtue and innocence”

This shows the problematic representations of black skin in contrast to white skin. While this sounds less problematic when considering someone who can choose whether or not to be tan, it has more serious implications for the numerous people in the world who naturally have darker skin. Actress Lupita Nyong'o revealed in a speech at the Essence Black Women how she would pray for lighter skin as a child with the constant portrayal of pale skin as beautiful in media. The numerous cases like this reveals the appeal of the industry that promises you whiter skin, sometimes by the means of harmful chemicals.

This is not to say the preference for paler skin in various cultures is only due to Eurocentric beauty standards, as these cultures have independent histories from that of the Western world. However acknowledging its role in reinforcing and upholding this standard globally is important. Indeed, questioning the root of such beauty ideals is necessary when there are several places in the world where lighter skin makes it easier for you to succeed in life. And it is not about proving that everyone wants to be Caucasian, because I believe people have little desire for this. It is rather about deconstructing a system of skin preferences that is linked to power structures, and the implications of the continued perpetuation of these skin preferences. Even if the ideal has existed for hundreds of years in various parts of the world, the consequences of perpetuating it changed after Western colonialism when lighter skin became linked to power. Thus what may in the past have been simply a beauty ideal is now assisting a racist power structure we all would be better off without. While this is not an easily solved issue, wider acknowledgement of this reinforcing dynamic is perhaps the most important step of the process. //
The internet has become a medium of activism, taking over the traditional means of spreading words, raising money and educating people. Farm to Fridge, a 12 minute documentary that went viral as soon as it hit the web last 2011, has been able to raise more than 16 million dollars and convert countless to a no meat diet. Amnesty International’s video pleading to stop the death penalty in the United States' went viral within hours. As a multitude of content goes viral on the internet, the emotional appeal of the online campaign has captured millions. Through such a channel, it is now possible to reach their viewers through the ever-growing power of social media--often just through Facebook walls or Twitter timelines. An endless number of posts go viral and reach their viewers through the ever-growing power of clicktivism.

"Clicktivism"?

First commercialized in the 1980’s, the internet saw rapid growth and advancement within 30 years. It reached its first billion users in 2005 and has since grown threefold. With the integration of smartphones and personal computers to our daily lives, exposure has become easier than it has ever been. A click of a button can tweet, share, like and send our favorite pictures, stories, and thoughts to the whole world, exposing them to the eyes of billions. The internet is now available to the majority of the public, with more than 40% of the world’s population having access to it. Not surprisingly, people have been taking advantage of its full potential, from education, to marketing, to much more.

"Clicktivism" comes from the two words, "click" and "activism", implying a form of activism that is dependent on online clicks. It is a word used to describe activists who use social media to protest, educate and advocate. Different organizations have been able to successfully utilize the internet to spread their cause. The average person has 328 friends on Facebook and thus, a single press of a “share” button can mean exposure to a powerful network. As everyday people frequently join in to support by sharing trending statements and advertisements to the rest of the world, several groups have seen huge boosts in numbers just within hours. As a multitude of content goes viral on the internet, the emotional appeal of the online campaign has captured millions. Through such a channel, it has become easier to raise funds for different projects. Furthermore, donors are no longer limited to people in one area, but rather have access to the whole world.

Easy Come, Easy Go

Online activism is starting to become a trend – a fashion fad – for it has become fashionable to vocalize and be part of an activist organization. The ease of supporting a cause has created an illusion of a huge community when actual supporters are small in number. With charity groups, extreme advocates and emotional statements becoming commonplace in the everyday timeline, people have been desensitized to words and pictures that once conveyed a strong message. According to the Journal of Sociological Science, the majority of people who click “like” for a cause on Facebook fail to follow up on their actions with donation, creating a base that looks big but in reality is doing poorly. A study by the Journal of Consumer Research showed that online invitations and pages are only one-tenth as successful as their traditional counterparts such as solicitation letters in gathering donations.

Due to the sheer number of online activist, a large portion of the activist populations are also poorly educated regarding their cause. With no restriction on which information goes online, the dispersal of wrong information and opinions sometimes causes irreversible damage to the reputation of the organization as poor stereotypes are formed, such as the third wave feminism. Though the latest movement of feminism did not change its goal of gender equality, a stereotype of man-hating female chauvinism formed over the years. It is a common misunderstanding of the ill informed, leading to the creation of mock accounts and movements such as ‘Meninism’. Furthermore, society’s aggressive response also creates an air of forced conformity, making it hard for people to voice what they truly believe in. With anonymity as one of the cyber world’s strongest qualities, it has become physically, emotionally and psychologically dangerous to stand up for what you believe in due to cyberbullying, harassments and death threats.

Working through a screen can seriously hinder the commitment one feels to the movement as concluded by a study published in the Ohio Communication Journal stating that, “online movements are ineffective because they involve no face-to-face interaction.” In some instances the online movement can do more harm to the actual cause, as seen in the case of Kendall Jones. Kendall Jones is a hunter of exotic animals who became the target of online activism to shut her Facebook page down. But due to the movement, instead of losing followers, Jones gained a boost of roughly 940% of the likes she had in the previous week. The movement backfired as it gave her free publicity, making her fan base even stronger.
Relying on the success of the iPhone 6, Apple managed to hit its highest cap in the Spring of 2015, but it’s been falling ever since. This comes as a shock because although Apple’s stock prices have fallen before, it always regained its worth after a new product was released. But now, even with the release of the iPhone 6s and the iPad Pro in September 2015, Apple’s market cap fell by 23% in one year without any sign of bouncing back. So what happened? What made this company that seemed to do no wrong, do wrong?

Apple’s greatest strength in business was in its power to innovate. From the very beginning, Apple revolutionized the personal computer industry with the Apple II. And since then, with Steve Jobs as CEO, Apple introduced the iPod, iTunes, the iPhone, the MacBook, and perfected. Apple is even losing its dominance in the markets it created. iPhones once were famous for the amazing resolution of their photos, but now review sites have rated it under the Samsung’s Galaxy series. And the tablet market Apple created is steadily shrinking, being sandwiched by ultrabooks and phablets - Smartphones sized about the same as a tablet.

Another aspect that defined Apple was its ability to select and concentrate. When Steve Jobs was reinstated as CEO of Apple in 1997, one of the first things that he did was to reduce the variety of Apple products and focus on a select few. The company had been selling multiple versions of the same products, making tiny changes to the same product and selling it to different retailers. And Apple kept selling products that didn’t sell such as Apple’s Newton PDA. Maintaining this wide array of products as other companies have instead been impressing the world with new and innovative technology. The Apple Watch came after the Samsung and Motorola revealed their smart watches. And although the Apple Watch came after the other products, it still had the same limitations as other smart watches so it failed to “revolutionize” the smart watch industry. Additionally, the iPad Pro was introduced years after Microsoft first introduced the Microsoft Surface. Apple didn’t awe the consumers with its product, but rather it tried to go into a market that Microsoft first created and perfected. Apple is even losing its dominance in the markets it wants things that they did not ever think they needed. This innovative energy always kept Apple ahead of the game, and ahead of its competitors.

For the past few years Apple has been lagging behind. Other companies have instead been impressing the world with new and innovative technology. The Apple Watch was certainly new for Apple, but it came ages after companies like Samsung and Motorola revealed their smart watches. And although the Apple Watch came after the other products, it still had the same limitations as other smart watches so it failed to “revolutionize” the smart watch industry. Additionally, the iPad Pro was introduced years after Microsoft first introduced the Microsoft Surface. Apple didn’t awe the consumers with its product, but rather it tried to go into a market that Microsoft first created and perfected. Apple is even losing its dominance in the markets it created. iPhones once were famous for the amazing resolution of their photos, but now review sites have rated it under the Samsung’s Galaxy series. And the tablet market Apple created is steadily shrinking, being sandwiched by ultrabooks and phablets - Smartphones sized about the same as a tablet.

Not only does this strategy enable Apple to focus its energy; it made it easier for consumers to choose. In the book “The Art of Choosing”, it shows a study that indicates that the less choices you have to offer consumers, the easier it becomes for consumers to choose. Thus, for example, a jam store selling fewer jam flavors, would see more success than a jam store with more options. Unlike other companies that chose to sell every kind of product imaginable, Apple focused on a few products which made it easier for the customers to choose.

Apple has now lost this magic of selection and concentration. After Steve Jobs passed away, Apple began to create varying versions of its products. It began when Apple unveiled the iPhone 5c, a slightly cheaper version of the iPhone. The iPhone 5c failed to succeed in the market but the idea of selling different versions of products never left Apple’s mind. Instead, Apple keeps selling different versions of iPhones. If you classify the different memory sizes of iPhones as different products (8GB, 16GB, 32GB, 64GB, 128GB), then in 2011 Apple only sold 3 different iPhones, now Apple sells a whopping 12 different iPhones. This phenomenon is not limited to just iPhones. If you access Apple.com right now and look for lightweight laptops, you would find a MacBook AND a MacBook Air. If you look for iPads, you would find 2 different iPad Pros, an iPad Air, and 2 iPad minis. Truly, Jobs’ strategy is no longer visible in Apple. The target market of their products are overlapping everywhere and Apple is wasting resources managing the increased number of products when it could reduce the number of product it is selling and focus on innovating and investing in products that consumers really need. Apple used to be the icon of innovation and simplicity, but it’s being outshined by Google, Tesla, and other companies that are daring to “Think Different”. Apple needs to get back into the game. It needs to focus on what it can do and drop what it can’t do. It needs to astound the world with new products before any other company does. It needs to learn from itself, and become the Apple that it once was.
Imagine running late and having to wait another thirty minutes for the SNU shuttle. When the bus finally arrives, you are already annoyed that it did not come earlier. Yet what we may be unaware of is that there has been a shortage of drivers. With grueling schedules from seven A.M. to two A.M., bus drivers try to safely transport students from the subway station to the campus. While students mutter ‘thank you’ on their way out, bus drivers, as well as numerous other staff members of the school that students are less aware of, are often not fully compensated or justly treated at work. This is where Bitsori comes in to form a bond between the workers and the students.

The working conditions of temporary, or non-regular workers remain adverse, and SNU is no exception. Temporary workers such as janitors, bus drivers, mechanics, or part-time lecturers are frequently exposed to poor, unhygienic working environments, fears of an uncertain future, and gahpyil, the bossy and overarching attitude of the contract giver. Efforts to improve their reality have been in vain, falling on deaf ears. Taking notice of these problems, a group of students came together to shed light on this issue. This February, Yunhyae Kim (Dept. of Philosophy ‘13) founded the student-led organization Bitsori, which is currently co-led by herself and Jae Yeon Myung (Dept. of Economics ‘13), to enlighten the student body.

Bitsori is an organization consisting of around twenty undergraduate SNU students that strives to raise awareness about the harsh treatments of non-regular workers. The word Bitsori translates to raindrops in Korean, accounting for their symbol of a yellow umbrella. Specifically, it signifies the sounds (sori in Korean) of temporary workers.

Bitsori’s foundation is serendipitous. It all began when Kim wrote an anonymous post on the school’s online community, SNUlife, drawing attention to the chronic problems of temporary employment on campus after the tragedy of a charter bus company employee. When she first proposed a petition, fellow students commented to join the movement. Then, Kim wrote another post that became the catalyst to congregate similar-minded people who wanted to raise awareness. In an interview with the SNU Quill, Kim explained the process of starting the organization. She stated that they “analyzed newspaper articles, contacted experts and spent hours deciding which direction we should go forward.” After much discussion, the group decided to focus on enlightening the student body instead of aiming to solve the problems. “We thought it was more important to create a public opinion than to start a petition,” remarked Kim. As such, Bitsori identifies itself as a “bridge” between the students and the employees to find effective ways to share the stories of these employees. Their main goal is to cultivate the student body’s long-lasting attention and awareness of this reality.

Moreover, the organization does not focus on one specific occupation or issue, but aims to encompass all issues to create an open, unbiased platform where students can approach this issue. In order to share the workers’ stories, Bitsori uses social media, especially Facebook, for increased accessibility. They interview
“We thought it was more important to create a public opinion than to start a petition.”

Collecting the Raindrops

As the first student-led organization addressing the problems of non-regular employment on campus, Bitsori has been on an original journey with hardships throughout. In particular, the members agreed that staying motivated is a challenge. “We have an overarching long term goal to raise awareness, rather than focusing on numerous short term goals. Also, it is difficult to determine our success because we are not necessarily finding answers and solving problems. Hence, self-motivation is one of the greatest hardships,” the two co-founders emphasized. In particular, Kim remarked that “it is hard to find workers who are willing to do an interview. Some of them prefer to be anonymous and fear revealing their identities.” Myung added, “Even if anonymity is guaranteed, workers are hesitant as it is rather easy to identify the speaker once they start telling their stories in detail.” Hence, Bitsori is still searching for ways to overcome their obstacles.

On the other hand, while reflecting on their most memorable moments, they mentioned their first open session held on March 28th. While the students were initially worried about the turnout of the event, Kim recounted the success of the first meeting. “Around eighty people came and filled up the entire room. Normally, these types of events do not have a huge turnout, but ours turned out well. Since then, people ask us when our second open session will be,” said Kim.

In an interview with the SNU Quill, Siwon Hwang (Dept. of Design ’16), who attended the meeting, briefly explained the agenda of sessions. She recounted that “There were five non-regular workers as panels from various occupations. The first half of the meeting was comprised of workers answering questions prepared by Bitsori. The second half was comprised of students asking the panel questions. The atmosphere was not as heavy as I thought it would be.” When asked about any areas for improvement, Hwang added “I would have even preferred to see fewer workers at the meeting so that each speaker could have had more time to tell their stories in detail.” Bitsori is now only in the starting phase, yet the event epitomized their core purpose and was received positively by the students who had attended the meeting.

Splashing the Raindrops

As of now, Bitsori is planning their next step. “We have looked over the feedback from the first session. The issues we are tackling cannot be solved in a problem-cause-solution format because they are issues that have existed for years. Therefore, it is hard to continuously raise awareness and to be engaging. Students have voiced their wishes to hear more detailed stories, so we are keeping such feedback in mind while planning for our next project,” explained Myung. For instance, in May, Bitsori hosted an informative open booth to spread their message to a wider audience. “We want to remind fellow students that there are workers whose existences are rather veiled to us and that while their efforts are vital for us, they have to work in dire conditions. We want people to approach this issue with ease and to realize that these issues are actually occurring so close to us,” added Kim.

In reality, our lives are already reliant on these workers such that interdependence is inevitable. However, to those first learning about the problem, pity is a common initial response, after having unconsciously distanced oneself from the ugly truth. By bridging that gap between the student society and the lesser known staff members, Bitsori hopes to create a strengthened form of communal spirit: evolving from pity to sympathy to empathy. In order to help join the cause, the easiest way is to follow Bitsori’s Facebook page and get updated on their posts. Now is the time to listen to the raindrops. //
Awakening of the Crane?

Whereas SNU is ranked as the best university in South Korea according to THE World University Ranking, if one was to rank Korean universities based on school spirit, it would not be an exaggeration to place SNU in the lower quartile. This seems to be the general consensus in SNU as illustrated by the results of a survey The SNU Quill conducted on 100 students about school spirit. In this survey, 78% of students thought that SNU lacks school spirit due to reasons such as the ambience of the school and the insufficient support from the university. In the midst of varying opinions on low school spirit, some students are actively searching for ways to promote it.

School spirit is a vague term, open to various interpretations. Some may believe that purchasing SNU souvenirs is a form of school spirit, while others may think that joining clubs is engaging in school spirit. One way in which to define school spirit is to view it as the willingness of students and faculty members to gather at venues as a whole and unite under the name of SNU. A vast majority of the aforementioned survey responded that our school lacks spirit, and a surprising 96% of students believed that school spirit is valuable, with 82% claiming that it should be promoted further on campus. Hence, one question that arises is: if students do care about school spirit, then why does it still lack in SNU?

One possible reason for this spiritually “crippled” state lies in the ambience of the school. More than half of the survey respondents pointed out that SNU students lack a collective mindset because they are focused on searching for ways to proceed with life. This phenomenon generally leads to the view that fellow students are rivals to “compete against” for a more desirable career. One of the respondents even believed that the individualistic characteristic often witnessed in SNU students is directly influenced by the way in which they studied during their adolescence. The anonymous respondent commented that SNU students “isolate themselves from others because they are accustomed to being hard on themselves to excel in academics.” On top of this, respondents also mentioned that because the SNU student body is often too focused on academics, as are faculty members who prioritize studying, it is only natural for some students to become nonchalant with so much already at hand. In essence, the inherent competition within the school has made students individualistic to the extent that they have become reluctant to the idea of “unity as a whole.”

The second most frequent reason students attributed to SNU’s lack of school vibe is the inadequate support from the university. Based on the survey by The SNU Quill, 80% of students thought that it was the university’s job to lay the foundation for school spirit. They believed that the school should cooperate with other universities and create official venues where students can unite as a community and cheer for a common objective. Others also voiced out that the university should invest more time and money in school festivals. To better understand the vitality of school spirit, a student from Yonsei University, a university renowned for its extraordinary school vibe, was interviewed. The student explained that school spirit enabled her to “feel a true sense of belonging in such a large community.” She further commented that this sense of belonging helped her overcome problems she faced in the university, because she felt she had a community that she could rely on. As such, perhaps this sense of connection, that students are on the same boat to overcome mutual obstacles, is what SNU needs.

Meanwhile, efforts to combat the lack of school spirit are slowly being made on campus. The SNU Bamboo Grove page on Facebook that was created in 2013 allows the student body to voice their opinions about issues happening on campus. Although in small numbers, people from different majors gather together every semester as SNU festival organizers and supporters, creating a sense of unity. Additionally, the recently established SNU cheerleading team may become the key to raising school spirit. In December 2015, several students formed the SNU cheerleading team in an attempt to bring positivity and enthusiasm around the campus. Today, the associates aim to “bridge the gap within the university and allow the society to become one under the name of SNU through cheering.”

Despite the cheerleading team’s outlook, however, 60% of those who took part in The SNU Quill survey raised concerns about the lack of venues that the team can perform in. Many emphasized that SNU does not host events in which extensive cheering is required. The cheerleading team was well aware of this fact, yet did not perceive it as a disadvantage. Rather, according to one of the founders of the cheerleading team Joon Boh Shin (College of Business Administration, ’15), the team has a somewhat different goal in mind: “unike the cheerleading teams found in other universities, we put less emphasis on competition among universities, and more on common concerns that we feel all SNU students can relate to. As such, we believe that cheering does not necessarily have to occur during specific competitive events.” For instance, the team hopes to spread positive spirit through one of the cheerleading songs, “Runaway Baby,” where messages about temporarily leaving aside the everyday struggles of relationships and academics, and instead, enjoying time with peers are conveyed.

By overcoming the current limitations and radiating school spirit in small steps, the student body and faculty members will feel an elevated sense of belonging, which could bring about positive results such as greater self-esteem. At a time where uncertainty about the future rules over the joys of being university students, perhaps psychological unity is now most needed on campus. After a prolonged sleep, the crane seems to want to awake, and it is now up to us whether to help it take flight. //
One of the pressures that many Korean freshmen face at their first orientation is the tradition of freshman shows, in which freshmen are expected to introduce themselves to the seniors by showing off their talents, usually by singing or dancing. For the class of 2016, the College of Humanities replaced their Saenaegi Madang, or the “freshman show,” with a new program in hopes of alleviating stress for students. According to Su Hee Kang (Dept. of Philosophy, ’14), the head of the organizing committee of the College of Humanities freshman orientation, replacing the Saenaegi Madang was a decision made after several years of contemplation. While aware of the fact that the show pressured freshmen, they were unsure which program could replace such a long tradition. In the end, the organizing committee came up with the “Freshman Film Festival,” in which freshmen were to create videos with given topics and later presented them at the auditorium in front of other classmates. For example, one class was given the Korean word baram, which can be defined as both wind and infidelity. From the prompt, the class made a video about a love affair.

To gain insight into student reactions to this replacement, The SNU Quill conversed with 18 anonymous Humanities students who participated in this year’s orientation. First, students were asked to describe their views toward the traditional freshman show. To this, 14 students responded that they would have participated in a freshman show if necessary, due to the unavoidable pressure of the situation. Moreover, 7 students revealed that they would have felt a stress level of 5 on a scale of 5 if they actually had to perform. Such results suggest why until 2015, the Saenaegi Madang, among other programs offered at the orientation, received the lowest ratings every year at evaluations.

Nevertheless, despite the positive intentions of the orientation committee, students still had mixed views about the replacement. Whereas some students commented on the effectiveness of the change, that it provided opportunities for students who feared performing in front of others to participate as staff during filming, others pointed out some limitations. One student, for instance, said, “It was not fun because we did not know the students that starred in the films,” and another complained that it was “too boring.” Yet overall, 11 respondents felt positive about the replacement and commented that the film festival should be implemented in the following orientations as well.

One problem that remained, however, was that some classes still encouraged freshman shows during their individual free time. One anonymous senior, whose class did so, explained, “It is awkward to drink with people who are not that close, and it creates an atmosphere that torments all. Even though the performances can be painful, it is through them that people can break the ice, open up to others, and get to know each other.” Although some classes encouraged freshman shows, one change was that when a freshman could not perform anything in front of the seniors, seniors and freshmen shouted Eoullim, or ‘get together’ in Korean, and danced the Shin-Chan dance, which symbolizes harmonization. On the other hand, one anonymous first-year student who had to perform within the class unit remarked on the extreme level of stress that it imposed: “After having experienced both the film festival and the freshman show, I agree with replacing the Saenaegi Madang. I realized how much pressure the film festival relieved me from.”

While it is difficult to fully replace a tradition and though there are certainly areas for improvement, the changes the College of Humanities instigated were seemingly successful in relieving students from unnecessary pressures and worries. The replacement conveys that ensuing traditions may not always be the best option and if so, the appropriate steps should be taken to instigate change. In the forthcoming years, organizing committees will need to address limitations of the new program and search for ways to host an orientation that participants will enjoy even more. As the first program of the school year, freshman orientation is usually one of the first memories freshman students have when beginning their college university lives. Thus, efforts to find ways to accommodate the needs and concerns of the freshmen themselves, as well as the seniors organizing the event, should be both sincere and ongoing in order to preserve a more memorable experience for all. //

Orienting a Fresh Change

by Hanbyeol Song
The illusion of squinty eyes. Yellowface. Kung fu jokes. Whitewashing. These are all common occurrences within U.S. mass media and entertainment studios (i.e., Hollywood). Misrepresentation is nothing new in the entertainment industry; the Asian-American community has never been able to rely on American mass media for realistic portrayals. Is it too much to ask that the diversity and uniqueness of Asian culture be represented and respected inclusively? Until very recently, the answer has been yes.

On February 24th, 2015, the entertainment industry reached an important milestone when it began airing Fresh Off the Boat, a new ABC comedy television series based off of Eddie Huang’s book, Fresh Off the Boat: A Memoir. Starring Hudson Yang, Randall Park, and Constance Wu, the show is the first American comedy television to focus on Asian-Americans since Margaret Cho’s All American Girl, from all the way back in 1994. FOTB has attracted the attention of many viewers who are hopeful that a major television network will finally include interesting accounts of the experiences of Asian Americans. Unlike previous attempts that took advantage of offensive stereotypes, the show is memorable because it is both entertaining whilst breaking away from racist traditions.

The show is funny and engaging because it stems from honest source material: the struggles of a Taiwanese-American immigrant family that moves from the Chinatown in Washington, D.C., to suburban Orlando. The show is packed with funny remarks about the family’s experience that really, really succeeded in making me laugh. The comedic appeal comes from the relatability of the Huang family’s story, as well as the vividness and uniqueness of its characters. But the show has much more to offer than just humor. It emphasizes the experiences of a highly neglected community in entertainment. It also highlights insensitive questions and comments, and the disrespectful attitudes Asians experience while adapting to their new environments in the U.S.

The series emphasizes the derogatory slurs used to make Asians feel inferior, the generalization of all Asian cultures into one, and the privilege that white Americans have over other immigrants, among other important topics. As an Asian that lived in a Western culture, I can relate to many of the struggles and

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Until when will we consider misrepresentation in media and the supposed humor that comes from it more valuable than respect and inclusion for a culture and its community?

Until when are we going to deem distorted perceptions and unfair stereotypes acceptable?
cultural clashes the Huang family experiences while trying to fit in. This show, while not flawless, truly marks progress in the initiative it takes as it introduces engaging Asian characters with a relatable story to a large audience.

My only concern about the show is that certain Asian stereotypes, such as the stinginess of mothers and the unattainable academic standard of “good” for parents were exaggerated and fleshed out excessively for the sake of humor. Because of this, the show is not completely free of Asian stereotypes although I do appreciate that it places those stereotypes within a reasonable and honest cultural context; there is for once no intention of ridicule.

Thankfully, Fresh Off the Boat is not as racist as many of the shows or movies that have come before it. The creators actually cast Asian actors to play Asian characters, which is noteworthy because this decision, which seems distinctly un-noteworthy, has been flouted many times before. One blatantly racist example is Mickey Rooney’s role as Mr. Yunioshi in Breakfast at Tiffany’s. Rather than casting an Asian man to play an Asian character, the creators of the film decided to cast a white man to play the role of a Japanese man by means of yellowface. This awkward, weird Asian character provides comic relief to the audience as he acts according to the offensive stereotypes of the era. And strangely enough, when people point out this outrageous portrayal, others quickly defend the film; they mock those who object to racism, calling them overly sensitive or unappreciative of comedy.

I appreciate jokes just as much as anyone else, but how long will we consider misrepresentation in media and the supposed humor that comes from it to be more valuable than respect and inclusion? How long are we going to accept distorted perceptions and unfair stereotypes? Comedy is too often excused as a different class of entertainment that readily embraces, and therefore thrives on offensive remarks. But any comments that make a community feel attacked in some way should not be accepted, and that also applies to people commenting about their own race.

If a comment made by someone from another race is considered offensive, it should not be accepted when coming from a person of the same race, who should understand the crudeness behind such disrespectful misconceptions. I understand that race-jokes, within certain limits, can be funny, and are often made light-heartedly. But many end up not filtering themselves at all because they believe comedy gives them a free pass to make racist remarks. Jokes can be made in a respectful manner, and if this is violated, the comedians’ impudence should not be pardoned or excused.

Fresh Off the Boat shows that it is time to start re-thinking how the entertainment industry has represented Asians. It brings Asian characters, actors, and representation to a stage where such a presence was very much lacking. And just like any other show, it will definitely not appeal to everyone. However, while you might not particularly like it, you must acknowledge how important this show, especially when considering the racist context from which it arises. Every Asian family has a different experience as an immigrant, but the greatest takeaway from this show is that having more Asian representation is crucial. It is just as important as the fair representation of any other race so that we can foster acceptance, unity, and appreciation for these people and their community. I can only hope that Fresh Off the Boat marks the definitive start of an era where people of various races all play important roles in mainstream media and entertainment. //
The minute I step into the D-Museum, something catches my eye. An assortment of random letters? Or are they…? I try to decipher the meaning of it all, by instinctively perceiving through the eye, and decoding with the brain. The softly lit letters metamorphose into names and concepts that I would soon put a personality to.

The Spatial Illumination: 9 Lights in 9 Rooms exhibition consists of nine rooms, which contain nine different works of art. Each deals with light, and each is created by a different artist. The rooms are also filled with people like me: artists, art lovers, designers, incognito philosophers, and memory collectors.

One of the nine works is Cruz-Diez’s Chromosaturation (1965), an artificial environment made of three color chambers—one red, one green, and one blue, creating a multitude of feelings and thoughts via miniscule light-manipulations, resulting in disturbances in our retinas. Another is Studio Roso’s Mirror Branch, a room containing a large branch-like structure, which carries small, circular, mirror-leaves. The most mind-blowing realization is that the nine rooms equate to one experience, in which light transforms from simple physical stimulus to a whole-body experience. I was so completely engrossed in my own thoughts that I forgot that I was not alone in the room. As the museum promotional description accurately puts it, I was "lost in the time of light".

Looking back, I feel as though my time in the D-Museum was an incredibly unique experience that cannot be recreated. And so, wanting to share this feeling with others, I decided to return once more with my friends, to the same exhibition in Hannam-dong, a couple months later in May, when the air was warm and no longer required me to sprint through the doors of the D-Museum.

The museum, unlike in December, was now crowded with visitors of various age groups. Clusters of heads hid the pieces from view—I could only catch a glimpse of the softly lit letters. All I could see was the explicit view of visitors taking hundreds of photos with their phones by the wall. It was no longer an independent experience that emphasized the importance of enjoying art in the moment. In fact, I too found myself whipping out my phone from my purse—taking selfies and photos with my friends to capture the moment so that I could look back on it and experience it later on.

My two distinct experiences at the exact same location, of the exact same exhibition, call to attention an interesting question on the matter of spectatorship and art appreciation. The problem is that when we do this, we ultimately fail to do what the artist originally intended: stop and appreciate the experience that exists within the here and now, and realize how that unique experience itself is not something that can be recreated or captured on a camera. Before technology advanced and smartphones were common, people visited art exhibitions simply for the experience. This, in effect, allowed people to try and fully appreciate every minute of their visit because they could not recreate the moment again. However, with the development of technology and social media, we now attempt to preserve the unique experience through the lens of a camera, which cannot ever recreate the actual, first-hand experience.

This new means of experiencing art is helpful when it comes to preserving the moment for the indefinite future. The problem is that when we do this, we ultimately fail to do what the artist originally intended: stop and appreciate the experience that exists within the here and now, and realize how that unique experience itself is not something that can be recreated or captured on a camera. Before technology advanced and smartphones were common, people visited art exhibitions simply for the experience. This, in effect, allowed people to try and fully appreciate every minute of their visit because they could not recreate the moment again. However, with the development of technology and social media, we now attempt to preserve the unique experience through the lens of a camera, which cannot ever recreate the actual, first-hand experience. This ultimately forces us to realize how we should put the camera down and re-embrace the pictures in our minds, because sometimes, it’s better to live in the moment than to capture it.
Most people today remember David Foster Wallace¹ (or, as I call him, Wallaby D) as a tragic figure, blessed with beautiful moral wisdom but doomed to the flames of existential depression. That, or as another shadow in an endless procession of depressed white artists, who happened to write a hyper-postmodern², 1079-page book³ that nobody can read because it doesn’t make any sense.

He grew up in Champaign, Illinois, where as a teenager he competed as a nationally ranked junior tennis player. Later, at Amherst College, he spent most of his time holed up in the library, working on his two degrees: English and philosophy. Which paid off, because both of his senior theses are still being sold today. He later told journalist David Lipsky⁴, however, that “Writing [Broom], I felt like I was using 97 percent of me, whereas philosophy was using 50 percent.”

Throughout his life, Wallaby D fought the twin demons of addiction and depression. There were others, but those were the biggest and the baddest. He fell into a writer’s block-induced slump after the success of some of his early work, and that slump eventually degenerated into a total psychic meltdown⁵. His misery fueled his alcoholism, which in turn drove him deeper and deeper into self-contained pain and frustration. This might explain why at one point in his life he advocated pornography as the most effective way to live a good life, or why he tried to push a woman he was obsessed with out of a car, then later considered buying a gun to shoot her boyfriend⁶. It’s why he lashed out at the people who loved him, and hated himself meticulously, and lived in constant, paralyzing self-doubt. It’s also probably why he decided to hang himself in his garage, so that his wife would see him hanging there, and why he believed that nobody was beyond saving.

David Foster Wallace is important to me because he helped put words to a feeling that I didn’t know how to identify before I found him. In his endless, breathless sentences, in the footnotes within footnotes within footnotes, and in the sometimes terrible contempt he has for his readers⁷ there is a terrible maze of self-consciousness which emerges, horribly, as loneliness. Loneliness of the soul, which grows and mutates by sucking on the protean distractions that shout from walls and pockets, drowning everything else out with pure noise.

I think this kind of loneliness is what makes people crazy and sad: in their intolerable loneliness, people who are predisposed to be crazy and sad become even more crazy and sad because they think that nobody will understand them. They feel in some dying, windswept corner of their souls that nobody will reach into the void that separates person from person, sift through the deluge of extra-textual bullshit that’s placed self-consciously and irrationally at the bottom of the page and just, like, connect.

I think Wallaby D would try, though.

¹ David Foster Wallace was a writer. A very weird writer, but one who is important to me, which is why I’m writing about him.
² I mentioned postmodernism, do I get my master’s now?
³ Infinite Jest, don’tcha know.
⁴ Who is also the subject of the very good but also very simplistic biopic The End of the Tour, which is about a five day interview Lipsky did with Wallace.
⁵ Which, by the way, existed independently of his clinical depression.
⁶ ‘This’ being depression. Or, as he called it, ‘It’.
⁷ He didn’t do it.
⁸ A man can only put up with an average word length of nine for so long.
Every generation has lived in a world shaped by those who came before them, but in recent times, we, the youth, have been increasing our ability to shape the future of our environment – both ecologically and socially. We are becoming more knowledgeable of the consequences of our decisions, while at the same time, getting more empowered and motivated to improve the world we live in. While it all seems so inspiring, there are still many among us who do not believe that an individual can make a difference; those among us who desire for the betterment of society but don’t know where to start; those among us that want to do more for the world but have not found a platform to showcase their skills and talent.

This is where AIESEC SNU can help.

WORDS BY: JUSTIN TAN
AIESEC is the world's largest youth-run organization present in over 125 countries and 2400 universities. With currently 70,000+ active members worldwide, it serves as a platform for leadership development and youth empowerment. We believe that activating the youth’s leadership potential is vital to the success of achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). These SDGs have a deadline at around 2030. What this means is that it will be us, the youth, who will be working towards and sustaining these goals over the next 14 years which is why it is important to be aware of these issues now so we can not only discuss these goals, but also start working on solutions towards achieving them.

With the idea of SDGs in mind, it’s important now to focus on how the students of SNU can help and where AIESEC SNU comes in. To push forward the technology-related SDGs, AIESEC SNU hosts Innovasia, an annual conference that aims to discuss and develop the concept of appropriate and sustainable technology. AIESEC members and exchange participants from around the world gather at SNU for five to six days to not only work with these technologies but also to share and learn about each other’s cultures. Innovasia has been hosted by AIESEC SNU since 2008 to work towards environmental sustainability as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals (SDG’s predecessor) and continues to do so because of its success and high approval among participants.

Aside hosting international conferences, AIESEC SNU’s main tool for leadership development is our overseas exchange program, or OGX, as we call it. Through the OGX program, students from SNU can go to any of the 126 member countries to participate in either a volunteering opportunity or an internship position. Our volunteering program, aptly named as Global Citizen, gives participants an opportunity to educate and assist individuals and communities in less fortunate places. Participants of the Global Citizen program are given a chance to observe and improve the situation of those currently disenchanted from their basic rights to education. Alternatively, OGX also offers a professional pathway while still maintaining the core goal of improving the world they live in. Global Talent is AIESEC’s term for internships abroad. Through this program, alumni or graduating students are exposed to non-government or non-profit organizations to display their talent and freshly learned expertise in an environment that may be vastly different to the one they live in. Global Talent focuses on IT, marketing, and education for social enterprises. These programs all seek to improve the world and society we live in through whatever strengths any individual may have. We’ve got the platform, now all we need is you.

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SNU International Students Association (SISA) officially represents all the foreign students at Seoul National University.