

One Laptop Per Child

- Mission Statement: To create educational opportunities for the world's poorest children by providing each child with a rugged, low-cost, low-power, connected laptop with content and software designed for collaborative, joyful, self-empowered learning.
- OLPC was founded by Nicholas Negroponte with a core of Media Lab veterans, but quickly expanded to include a wide range of exceptionally talented and dedicated people from academia, industry, the arts, business, and the open-source community
- The laptops are sold to governments, [40] to be distributed through the ministries of education with the goal of distributing "one laptop per child". The operating system and software is localized to the languages of the participating countries.
- The Internet and the web have a role in building and maintaining minority communities
- There is always the challenge of providing greater access to digital media for disadvantaged groups in cyberspace.
- The gap in computer skills can result in result in the creation of an inferior or formidable avatar, and consequent viability or elimination online.

This is further complicated by the fact that real money can be made in MMORPGs. Morbidity and mortality have been reported related to prolonged playing periods, with real deaths in China and South Korea attributed to dehydration, exhaustion, with possible drug abuse and deep vein thrombosis; convulsions have been reported, as well as violence: suicide, murder, and child neglect.

Internet addiction is a common disorder that is proposed to be classified as an obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorder with its own DSM-V code (diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders).

Other issues to be explored:

- How does religious tourism manifest itself?
- When race is detached from the body, what is the utility of race as a category?
- How does cyber-racism manifest itself in Asia?
- What is the effectiveness of community activism on the internet?
- How is the Internet policed differently in Asia?

Reflections of Contemporary Chinese Society: Representations of Chinese Identity in Cyberspace

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This paper looks into Chinese identity representations in cyberspace, focusing on those found in Internet games—representations that are reflections of contemporary Chinese economic, social and political conditions. Despite extreme state control over the media, the Internet has become a medium of self-expression, and a way of realizing the dreams of those who engage in these cyber games.

According to the iResearch Consulting Group, the first professional market research company in China, the latest release of the "2008 Second-Quarter Chinese Internet Game Market Monitoring Report"¹ indicates that the second quarter of 2008 Chinese Internet game market size grew 66.6% over the same quarter last year, a 9.2% growth over the previous quarter breaking for the first time the 5 billion Yuan current earnings. The report indicates a rapid growth in comparison to the same period last year. The report further predicts that the Chinese Internet Game market size will reach 20 billion Yuan in the third quarter of 2008.

These astonishing figures are attributed to China's unique economic, social and political climate. Economically, the needs of China's huge population are increasing

demand and prices for energy and food around the world. The value of its currency is now again raising the value of the US dollar. Its embrace of capitalism has sent economic ripples across the country. One of the things one sees presently in the streets of China is that everyone seems to be engaged in some form of economic activity. This phenomenon is everywhere in major metropolitan areas in China. Teachers, artists, factory workers, officials, policemen, and students practically all have a second career in addition to their first occupation, or, as extensions to their first careers.

This phenomenal profit-based activity drives the exploration of all aspects of economic enterprise. The Internet Game business is no exception. My first case study is the work of Ms. Anshe Chung in Second Life (SL). Second Life® is a 3-D virtual world created by its Residents. Since opening to the public in 2003, it has grown explosively and today it is inhabited by millions of Residents from around the globe. Currency used in Second life is called Linden dollar. Today, 1 US dollar is approximately 166 Linden dollars.²

Anshe Chung was born on March 26, 2004 in virtual China. Her salary is 2 million Linden dollars in 30 months. She is the first “Virtual Millionaire.” She operates in SL in real estate development, virtual currency exchange, and commodity production. Anshe is now one of the largest property developers in SL. She started from a modest business, operating a personal escort service. She then moved to the production and the selling of avatar animation files. She then used her earnings to start a real estate business and eventually owned hundreds of Sim-lands. Because of her success in SL, Anshe has been featured in mainstream media and in magazines such as *Fortune*, *Wired* and *Business 2.0*.

Anshe’s real world first name is Ailin. Ailin Chung was born in Hubei, China in 1973. Anshe Chung Studios recently opened a new office in real world Wuhan, China, where it employs 50 people full-time at, what she says, better-than local average wages. These 50 real world employees power her virtual exchange. At age 18, she was chosen to perform Communist party speeches.³ Today, Anshe Chung Studios expresses the following mission: “Above all, Anshe stresses the importance of community in her vision of the virtual worlds and work spaces that she and others are pioneering together. Her goal is not merely to build a corporation, but to foster the development and growth of online communities, and to help make the entry of real world corporations into Second Life and other regions of the metaverse as frictionless as possible. It is her philosophy that Second Life is above all a social space, and that corporate entrants that respect the community will be the most successful.”⁴

Not in his wildest dreams would Mao have envisioned China’s economic freedom found in recent years as vividly real as those in stories such as Ailin’s. Mao’s single-minded struggle to transform China has been achieved at a terrible cost. It is unknown how many people died in the aftermath of the Communist conquest in 1949, or during the oppressive Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. Intellectuals, along with landlords and bourgeoisie survivors have been the chief victims of these purges. In the 35 years following the end of the Cultural Revolution, under Mao dictatorship, China has enforced a simple dogma on its people: a great nation can survive without intellectual freedom.

There are terrible consequences in so bold an effort to create a “perfect,” homogeneous society; one of which is described by none better than Karl Marx—alienation—which he believed to be a systematic result of capitalism. There are signs of such alienation in Chinese society—in the form of finding surcease not in doctrine but in alcohol, crime, and today in Internet Games. China has relaxed and loosened its control over its people after the passing of its recent leaders, but the process of doing so has proven traumatic to the Chinese people who have been exposed to other ways of life, other modes of liberty.

Online gaming in China represents one of the largest and fastest growing Internet business sectors in the country. With 220 million Internet users currently active in the PRC, the country now has the largest online user base in the world.⁵ According to statistics provided by the China Internet Network Information Center, as of January 2007, 31 million Chinese Internet users engage in some form of online game play. The average online gamer in China is relatively young—18 to 30 years old, male, and has at least completed a secondary level of education.

The compulsive use of computer and video games is considered as a psychological addiction. Sometimes the addiction will manifest itself as part of excessive Internet use. Most notable is the use of Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs), which are one of the most prevalent forms of game playing in China. Instances have been reported in which users play compulsively, isolating themselves from society and focusing almost entirely on online-game achievements rather than on life events.

In Jinzhou, China, Xu Yan died after playing online games for over 15 days during the Lunar New Year holiday. An unnamed 30 year-old died in Guangzhou, China after playing for three days straight. During China's week-long National Day holiday last month, a young girl died after playing World of Warcraft for several consecutive days. Her nickname was "Snowy" and her passing was acknowledged in an online funeral service by fellow WoW gamers.⁶

The rising tide of Internet-addicted youth has prompted the government to install anti-addiction game systems and to ban new Internet cafes in 2007, which are seen as breeding grounds for social delinquency. According to the eight Chinese ministries including the General Administration of Press and Publication, these are measures taken to force teenagers to go offline to rest or study. But China's Internet addiction is not merely a product of an imperfect regulatory system.

2500 years of Confucius influence focusing on human morality places education as the most important method to reach a higher state of being. Chinese parents' expectations of their children are traditionally very high, sometimes too high. With education perceived by many parents as the only means of advancement in an ultra-competitive society of 1.3 billion people, some lock their children up to force them to study and ask teachers to assign their children extra homework. The pressure can be too much for some children, particularly if they fail. "They escape to the virtual world to seek achievements, importance, satisfaction, and a sense of belonging."⁷

With the recent economic boom in China, a complex psychology of "sense of belonging" coupled with "the long-awaited moment for redemption" has contributed to the recent social phenomena of *hai gui pai*—the phenomenon of foreign educated and naturalized citizens moving back to China to reside. Other than being able to claim "a piece of the pie," signs of patriotism are showing a strong comeback in Chinese society. This is in direct contrast to the post Cultural Revolution era of the late 1970s to the early 1990s. Confronted with politically controversial international issues, many Chinese citizens choose to side with the government and believe in its propaganda. The Internet has become a new vehicle to express their support.

The Senkaku islands are known in Japanese as the Senkaku islands and by China and Taiwan as the Diaoyu islands. These five tiny uninhabited islands, which lie between Taiwan and the southern Japanese islands of Okinawa, in the East China Sea, are claimed by all three countries and are believed to be rich in oil resources. On June 26th, 2007, a Second Life player "TGbus" published an article in Chinese Second Life titled "Diaoyu Island in Chinese Second Life." Here is a translated excerpt:

I purchased a private island in SL, I named it the Diaoyu Islands. I am not a narrow-minded democratic SARS patient. I only hope that through SL, I want to publicize the fact that the Diaoyu Islands belongs to the Chinese people. On Diaoyu Islands every inch of land will not be sold... Diaoyu Islands welcome the visit of Japanese friends. Japanese flag in any shape or form is forbidden on the islands.

We welcome your visit or use of the land on the Diaoyu Islands. We also hope that every member of the Chinese SL community would care and support the islands. Because she will always belong to the country of China, and will forever belong to the Chinese descendants."

It is said that Second Life was created while Philip Linden was soaking in the bathtub. He imagined a massive virtual landscape linked by computer servers. Chinese identity represented in Second Life, and in many other Internet games is not just an imaginary to the Chinese. It is a real way to freely express and actualize a self.

1. iResearch Consulting Group, 2008-7-14.

2. 2008 Linden Research, Inc.

3. The Herald Profile: Anshe Chung by Walker Spaight SLHerald on January 25, 2005.

4. www.anshechung.com/include/press/press_release251106.html

5. Statistics is according to Beijing-based research firm BDA, China.

6. Articles published by vnunet.com

7. www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-03/12/content_825231.htm

Kenkanryu (The Hate Korean Wave): Images of Hatred and Racism in Japanese Manga

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The popularity of Sharin Yamano's hatred manga series known as *Kenkanryu* (The Hate Korea Wave) reifies racism that exists in neighbouring Asian nations and gives affirmation to the dissemination of hatred images in cyberspace. The theoretical contemplation of racism is nothing new nor are the manifestations of images of hatred generated in Asia, but more deconstructive work can be done in considering the context of the production of such images. While there is a cultural assumption that Asia is of one race (which in itself is also a stereotype), racism in Asia exists within rivalry nations such as Japan, Korea, China, and Taiwan, while superiority complex spills over to other power relations such as sex, class, and national heritage within and beyond each country. Racial prejudice is expressed in cultural anecdotes, jokes, and popular images that is unique to each nation. Moreover, stereotypes regarding the history and culture of other nations are assigned the notion of truth that separates the virtuous self from the demonic Other.

Kirk W. Fuoss's text "Lynching Performances, Theatres of Violence"¹ documents the history of lynching mobs in the United States while theorizing the idea of "lynching as performance phenomena."² Fuoss writes about lynching in relation to American history

and how people and places have been marked off and framed as a part of a rigged lynching drama. All theatrics are certainly influenced by media of that time; newspapers and postcards are used as advertisement strategies to help create the hyperbolic image of the blackman. Today, mass media continues to present the black face, Arab face, yellow face as images of hatred and furthers the rhetoric of the enemy. And the Internet is no exception; it has become a forum of uncensored playground for generating more stereotypes, racist outlets, and fantasy about the other. Just as Fuoss writes about how "there is no before-racism in US history. Nor, unfortunately, is there an after-racism,"³ the same can be said about Asia. Certainly, techno-Orientalism, which is Orientalism that is intensified through technological means, only exacerbates existing problems that have to do with race and culture.

Since its conception as a Web-comic, Yamano's *Kenkanryu* series has stirred up much grievance and controversy in both Japanese and Korean blogs and Internet forums such as *2channel* of Japan and *Joins* and *Naver* blogs of Korea. Korean daily newspaper covered the story about the popularity of the comic books extensively. *Kenkanryu* literally translates as "The Hate Korea Wave" or "Hating the Korean Wave." The comic series was originally created as a response to the co-hosting of the 2002 World Cup by Japan and Korea where soccer fans of both countries were

in heated rivalry. The narrative begins with Korean players depicted as cheaters and get away with it. The story is told by teenagers in high school since the manga targets this age group. Further, the interactions depicting racial conflicts always take place in a high school setting in Japan.



Us and them in *Kenkanryu*. Retrieved from <http://londonkoreanlinks.net/2007/12/02/us-and-them-in-kenkanryu/>

The manga series depicts the Japanese frustration with Korea and the competition between the two countries in sports and in economic and technological developments of each country. The comic series is mostly readily available via Japanese Amazon.com, and there are three *Kenkanryu* series to this date—a manual on how to read them systematically; another is a racist edition about China entitled *Introduction to China*, and two Korean versions of *The Hate Japan Wave* in response to *The Hate Korea Wave* which obviously refers to the proliferation of Korean pop culture known as “The Korean Wave”—the current wave of Korean films, music, and soap operas that have hit the international market and ignited the attention of Japanese fans. As an example, the 2002 KBS TV drama *Winter Sonata* was a sensational hit when aired on NHK, the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation network.

In 2005, when *Kenkanryu* was published as a book by Shinyusha Co., Ltd, Norimitsu Onishi wrote an article entitled “Ugly Images of Asian Rivals Become Best Sellers in Japan” for *The New York Times*.⁴ Here, Onishi refers to Yukichi Fukuzawa’s 1885 text “Leaving Asia”⁵ as a way to comment on Japanese cultural supremacy which has its roots in Japan’s national propaganda towards modernity. The main ideology presented in “Leaving Asia” is a declaration that Japan must become Westernized to get ahead thus the necessity to “leave” the rest of Asia behind. While also commenting on how the Westerners are not fully equipped with the Japanese mentality, Fukuzawa insists that Japan’s supremacy is unlike that of any other Asian nation, hence it is the nation most capable of outdoing the West. Fukuzawa writes:

recent movement of westerner’s global rapid action is remarkable. Japan, as a national mind, despite the fact that the country is located in Asia, accepted the modern civilization of the West. However, an unfortunate thing for Japan is that it has the two neighbouring countries. One is Sino [China], another is Chosun [Korea]. It might possibly because we are just racially different from the beginning or the educational level is different. The difference of the national mind between Japan and the two countries is just tremendous... In this actively progressive era of the modern civilization, the education [there] is limited to Confucianism where they learn superficial knowledge, and in practice, their attitudes seem not only disregarding the scientific principles, but also morally collapsing while they have no self-examinations ut arrogance.

One can suppose that the ideas presented in “Leaving Asia” encouraged some of the violence during the Japanese colonization of Korea between 1910-1945 and cultural prejudice in Japan against Koreans or Chinese people remains to this day. Fukuzawa, who is currently revered as the intellectual father responsible for making Modern Japan is a household name in Japan; his face is imprinted in the 10,000 Yen bill. While there are extreme nationalists in both countries, there is also the other effect—people denying the conflict and simply problem all together. The case of Dokdo (an Island made of smaller Islands and also known as Takeshima in Japanese) is a good example of how national agenda is used to further the hatred between the two countries. The summer of 2008 was a time when Korean news and media coverage was all over Dokdo, which happened after the Koreans signalled their discontent over American beef imports and over the opening of FTA with the US. With over three months of non-stop demonstrations in Seoul, there was an overnight shift of focus with Koreans earlier expressing anti-American sentiments and now to anti-Japanese sentiments. The reasons for the demonstrations were many; from the beef problem to, the Koreans remembering the 2002 incident when US tanks accidentally ran over Korean civilians, all rekindling the old frustrations over Dokdo.

Furthermore, with the patronage of a Korean pop singer Kim Jang-hoon who sponsored a freelance Korean public relations expert Seo Kyong-duck, Dokdo campaigns appeared in The New York Times advertisement pages. The first advertisement published on July 9, 2008 headlines “Do You Know?” and continues with “For the last 2,000 years, the

body of water between Korean and Japan has been called the 'East Sea.' Dokdo located in the East Sea is a part of Korean territory. The Japanese government must acknowledge this fact." Part of the controversy is that Korea calls the body of water East Sea while the rest of the world knows it as the Sea of Japan.

Dokdo, covered by all the Korean broadcasting news is also the topic of TV special features that tell stories of occupancy and travel as a way to campaign for nationalism in relation to the issue of territorial rights. The Internet provides a virtual tour of the island and Korean flags are planted in Metaverse of Second Life. With such explosive media coverage, the patriarchal and masculine conservatism that exists in Korea is perpetuated by origin theory, rediscovery, and the taking of ownership of Dokdo. The types of media produced reflect Korea's imperialistic and colonizing interests.

Further, ever since Seoul's local slogan has been "The World to Seoul and Seoul to the World" the national campaigning for increasing its international profile has been done through sporting events which is another way of outdoing other nations. Hence, Korean nationalism with the thrust to be international stimulates imperialistic national sentiments and project which is often done through sporting, technological, and economic competitions.

Edward Said writes in his book *Culture and Imperialism*⁶ on America's world dominance. He describes how America is founded on imperialistic principles and that its recent intervention in other nations was undertaken for the sake democracy and freedom. Said writes: "American 'greatness,' to hierarchies of race, to the perils of other revolutions...have remained constant, have dictated, have obscured, the realities of empire, while apologies for overseas American interests have insisted on American innocence, doing good, fighting for freedom.

Likewise, Japanese racism towards Koreans fuels nationalistic pride not only in Japan but also in Korea. The relationship between the countries in conflict is echoed and reifies racial hierarchies that keep Japan, Korea, China, and Taiwan apart, not to mention the racial tensions between the northern and southern regions of Asia. But when we consider cyber culture and the Internet, we assume that everyone is connected transcending all kinds boundaries. Lisa Nakamura writes in her book *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet*⁷ about cyberculture as being marked as normatively white.⁸ And, the essentialist global-villager rant that cyber technology has brought about multi-cultural unity and democracy giving license to what Nakamura points out as "false sense of racial equality—or post-racial cybermeritocracy—*cosmetic multiculturalism*."⁹

The new culture of flexibility via technology and virtual travelling heightens the tourist gaze, which is the male gaze of voyeurism as well as the colonizer's gaze. While the Internet expands virtual exotica, racial and sexual stereotypes on the Internet keep the phallogocentric master narrative active and alive. Even prior to the Internet, Rolf Olsen's 1974 *Shocking Asia* documentary film epitomized the voyeurism of exotic Asia. The film is narrated by a man with a deep voice and walks the viewer through the far East showing places of wonder and people engaged in sexual perversion. While gratifying the viewer's desire to know the unknown, the film reifies hegemonic European culture as being civilized in comparison to the "Orient's" culture which shocks the viewer. Footages of sex change operations, S&M, primitive rituals and sacrifice are all pronounce as being things that happen over *there* (the Orient.) Today's image of pan-Asia has been taken over by rhetoric of Asian culture in relation to Zen-preciseness and gangster criminality as represented in techno-futuristic sci-fi and cyber films such as *Blade Runner*, *Black Rain*, and the *Matrix*, and even in the recently released animation film *Kungfu Panda*. Whether or not the past or present imaging of Asian culture is produced in the East or in the West, at the moment, they are being consumed and exploited globally.

1. Kirk W. Fuoss, "Lyching Performances, Theatres of Violence" in *Text and Performance Quarterly*, Volume 19, Number 1 (Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association, January 1999), 1-37.

2. *Ibid.*, 201.

3. *Ibid.*, 200.

4. Norimitsu Onishi, "Ugly Images of Asian Rivals Become Best Sellers in Japan" in *The New York Times* (Nov 19, 2005). <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/19/international/asia/19comics.html>

5. Yukichi Fukuzawa, "Leaving Asia," in Yukichi Fukuzawa: Datsu-a Ron, Sparking Korea. <http://koreasparkling.wordpress.com/datsu-a-ron/an-argument-for-leaving-asia-or-datsu-a-ron-translation-attempt-part-1/>

6. Edward w. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1993), 8-9.

7. Lisa Nakamura, *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (New York; London: Routledge, 2002).

8. Nakamura writes about how on the Internet the dismissal of race is an assumption of whiteness as the norm. She writes that Internet games and role playing that "the decision to leave race out of self-description does in fact constitute a choice: in the absence of racial description all players are summed to be white," in *ibid.*, 38.

9. *Ibid.*, 21.