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Publication Date

2018

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

"This is for all my bad girls around the world": Globalization and the linguistic construction of gender and sexuality in K-pop

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Linguistics

by

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June 2019

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The thesis of Joyhanna Yoo Garza is approved.

June 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all my colleagues and friends at UCSB who provided helpful feedback and expressed enthusiasm for this project. I also thank my family for their unrelenting support of me and my wellbeing during my graduate studies. I would also like to sincerely thank my formidable committee members and their invaluable help throughout this process. From term paper to my first international conference, Mary, you encouraged this work from the beginning. Thank you, Lal, for your profound and unique insights and unwavering kindness as an advisor. Without your help, this thesis would have taken much, much longer to complete.

ABSTRACT

"This is for all my bad girls around the world": Globalization and the linguistic construction of gender and sexuality in K-pop

by

Joyhanna Yoo Garza

This paper explores the relationship between language, gender, and globalization and, specifically, how gendered identities and sexualities are constructed through the language in popular music lyrics. In particular, I analyze the ways one popular Korean artist named CL, performs, constructs, and negotiates different identities through linguistic and embodied performance. I argue that the rapper-singer uses hybrid linguistic practices and specific embodied choices (e.g. the Bad Bitch, b-girl style, chola aesthetics) to project a distinctively cosmopolitan femininity. In the process, CL challenges longstanding social values vis-à-vis women's place in Korean society and promotes instead a globalized version of femininity. This study highlights what K-pop as a globalized genre can reveal about circulations of language and discourses surrounding femininity. It also exposes the kinds of gendered and sexual identities that are being articulated through global flows of music and language and contributes to recent discussions in language, gender, and sexuality that take a globalization framework to mediatized contexts.

I. Introduction: Globalization, gender, and K-Pop

In February of 2018, during a press conference preceding her Olympic Games debut, American snowboarder Chloe Kim disclosed on Korean media that she was a fan of K-pop, much to the delight of her Korean fans (SBS News 2017, Soh 2017). She revealed that there was one artist in particular that she listened to in preparation for a competition: K-pop rapper and singer, CL. The frenzied way that both Korean and American media were quick to highlight Chloe Kim's multicultural and multilingual upbringing and her love for K-pop - and CL in particular - represents globalization at its finest: a colliding of worlds that results in transnational exchange and interdependence.

I use the term globalization here to refer to the expedited and intensified transnational movements of people and of various types of capital (e.g. technologies, media, finance) and their resulting interconnectedness. Some scholars have argued that globalization is not simply a unidirectional and homogenizing phenomenon (much like the notions of so-called 'Americanization'), but instead involve complex, disjunctive processes of constant movement and mixture that can lead to local refashionings and understandings of 'foreign' products, including language (Appadurai 1996; Gupta & Ferguson 1997; Inda & Rosaldo 2002; Jacquemet 2005). Within these global flows, cultures clash and converge, and commodities move almost effortlessly from one locale to another, circulating with them ideologies and novel ways of conceptualizing the world.

This paper explores the relationship between language, gender, and globalization, and specifically, how gendered identities and sexualities are constructed through the language in popular music lyrics. In particular, I analyze the ways one popular Korean artist, who goes by

the stage name CL¹, performs, constructs, and negotiates different identities through linguistic and embodied performance. This study highlights what a globalized genre like K-pop can reveal about circulations of language and discourses surrounding femininity. It also exposes the kinds of gendered and sexual identities that are being articulated through global flows of music and language. Finally, this study contributes to recent discussions in the field of language, gender, and sexuality that take a globalization framework to mediatized contexts. I begin with a brief introduction of the K-pop genre and its more recent global visibility followed by an overview of discussions in studies of language, gender, and sexuality as it relates to global media circulations. I will then discuss CL's appropriation of the Bad Bitch figure of hip hop resignify a pejorative Korean term and to negotiate globalizing images of womanhood. Next, I analyze how the rapper uses hybrid linguistic practices and specific embodied choices linked to street style (e.g. b-girl style, chola aesthetics) to project a distinctively cosmopolitan femininity. In the process, CL challenges longstanding social values vis-à-vis women's place in Korean society. Finally, I end with a discussion of the song's hegemonic undertones that are furthered by the materiality in the music video, especially through the bivalent use of language.

II. Background and literature review

The Korean Wave and K-pop

In recent years, K-pop (from Korean popular music) has become a globalized musical genre that borrows from many other genres including hip hop, Euro-pop, R&B, dance music, and dubstep. Part of K-pop's more recent mass appeal is due to the wide range of music that is encompassed under this umbrella term, as well as the ways the Korean entertainment industry

¹ This is a Romanized acronym of *i chaylin* (이 채 린)

markets to patterns of global consumerism. Since at least the early nineties, K-pop has swept across Asia and many other parts of the world and is widely considered to be the most palpable component of the so-called Korean Wave. Also known as *hallyu*, the Korean Wave refers to the visibility of South Korean culture around the world. The Korean government initially promoted *hallyu* as an official policy to revive the country's economy. Scholars of Korean popular culture argue that *hallyu* exercises a sort of "soft power" working to convince other Asian countries at the societal level that Korea is effectively set apart from many of them by projecting an image of exceptionally advanced modernity (Kuwahara 2014; Shin 2000; Walsh 2014). This soft power is also said to further national interests globally, and K-pop artists and other celebrities are often considered cultural ambassadors.

The transnational moves by Korean and Korean American artists since the early 2000s, coupled with the global circulation of music via the Internet, has increased the visibility of K-pop. Indeed, most scholars agree that Korean popular culture owes much of its success to the coming of the digital age (Jin 2017; Kuwahara 2014; Song 2014). Facilitated by the Internet, artists can access a greater fan base through social media like Instagram and Twitter, further solidifying their role as cultural mediators. The role of user-based media such as Youtube has been particularly formidable. Sun Lee, the head of music partnerships for Korea and Greater China at YouTube, asserts, "It might have been impossible for K-pop to have worldwide popularity without YouTube's global platform" (cited in Ahn 2017). Since around 2007, the South Korean government has become more directly invested in the management and exportation of popular cultural products. This newer, more aggressive version of the Korean Wave has been dubbed Hallyu 2.0 and is characterized by greater government intervention,

increased access and consumerism through user-based media, and greater visibility in areas previously undetected, namely the American continent (Jin 2016; Lee & Nornes 2015).

Media circulations of language, gender, and sexuality

Scholars of globalization have called attention to the ways that media help to bring together multiple languages, cultures, and social positions in various contexts, but also the power to disseminate accompanying discourses and ideologies (Appadurai 1996; Fairclough 2007; Jacquemet 2005; Hiramoto & Kang 2017). Jacquemet (2005: 263) identifies a mediatized linguistic hybridity resulting from the intersection of mobile people and mobile texts and produces what he calls "recombinant identities". K-pop offers a unique glimpse into how social identities emerge given the confluence of cultures and languages that are made accessible through social and user-based media. Scholars of language, gender, and sexuality have recently begun considering the subjective dimensions of globalization (Choi 2017; Hall 2014; Hiramoto and Park 2010; Kang and Chen 2017, Hiramoto and Kang 2017), precisely by examining how media work to circulate local understandings of gender and sexuality. While much sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological research has been dedicated to studies of globalization, gender, and sexuality in recent decades, only recently have scholars directed their attention to East Asian contexts (Hiramoto and Kang 2017).

The Bad Bitch

The global circulation of hip hop and its incorporation into Korean popular music is abundantly evident in the K-pop industry's steady commodification of the genre and its conventions. For example, even the most conventional K-pop groups will feature at least one rapping member.

Feminist hip hop scholars have discussed the undermining, deletion, and derogatory stereotyping of women in hip hop, including sometimes by female rappers themselves (Guevara 1996; Oware 2009; Rose 2001; Yeagle 2013). Globally, hip hop continues to be a male-dominated enterprise in many local contexts (Condry 2006; Lee 2010; Song 2014), and K-pop is no exception. Despite the celebrated success of female idol rappers in both Korean and global media, the K-pop industry had tended to reinforce patriarchal representations of women. Willoughby (2006) argues that the presentation of female bodies in K-pop has tended to cater to heterosexual male desire, and Epstein et al. (2014) highlight the lack of popstars' agency as exemplified by inequitable contract conditions and corporate control of much of their personal lives including their daily schedules, 'appropriate' body image, and dating. Furthermore, female stars are constrained by societal norms that privilege male heterosexuality.

Despite the constraints placed on female performers, the hip hop genre allows for Kpop rappers like CL to transgress normative conventions surrounding how women are expected
to behave. Female participation in hip hop and in male-dominated spaces more broadly is
perceived to threaten male hegemony in the sphere of cultural production including the
transmission of sociocultural discourses (Guevara 1996). Studies of female artists' engagement
with the language and discursive practices of hip hop reveal how they negotiate their
participation and exercise agency in an often-hostile environment. These artists construct their
own subjectivities, which are oftentimes counter-hegemonic and alternative femininities, as
opposed to the identities and roles constructed for them in male-oriented raps and videos.
Geneva Smitherman (1997: 14) asserts that "...female rappers respond to rap's sexism by
coming hard themselves." Sustained misogyny in hip hop has resulted in women's taking
charge of their own representations, including challenging notions of respectability.

The representation of women in hip hop and the representation of hip hop by women are both personified by the Bad Bitch, a fiercely contested figure in hip hop. Some scholars maintain that she does little to challenge patriarchal norms. However, others have argued that women can take traditionally pejorative terms such as bitch from circulating discourses and redefine them by inserting their own subjective understandings (Sutton 1995). Cheryl Keyes (2000: 263) asserts that female MC's have reclaimed bitch to refer to "an aggressive or otherwise assertive female who subverts patriarchal rule". For example, rappers like Missy Elliot have used the term to make a self-statement about being agentive both on and off stage in a male-dominated industry (Keyes 2000). Haugen (2003) and Yeagle (2013) argue that rappers Lil' Kim and Nicki Minaj appropriate bitch to subvert the word's negative connotations. This agentive recontextualization is an indication of a kind of power: the ability to accept or reject labels for oneself, as well as projecting them onto others. Bad Bitches' embodied practices and lyrical prowess are marked precisely because of their "feminine" presentations, which further challenge the hegemony of masculinity in the sphere of popular musical production as well as dominant cultural norms vis-a-vis ways of behaving for women. As I will show, by invoking the persona of the Bad Bitch, CL takes a pejorative gendered term in Korean - gijibe - and recasts it as a positive one. The Bad Bitch, including its indexical qualities, gets mapped onto gijibe.

Global Englishes, language mixing, and, cosmopolitanism

In multilingual contexts, English allows hip hop artists to circumvent some of the sociolinguistic limitations of a single linguistic code, resulting in linguistic and cultural hybridization (Alim et al 2009; Condry 2006; Lee 2007, 2010; Terkourafi 2010). Pennycook

(2007) discusses how the English language – and with it, hip hop culture – is spreading across the world. Both are being altered, developed, reinterpreted, and reclaimed in the process. He characterizes English as "a translocal language" and "a language of imagined communities and refashioning identities" (Pennycook 2007: 6). Similarly, Jacquemet (2005) asserts that linguists must account for the progressive globalization of communicative practices and social formations that result from the increasing mobility of people, languages, and texts. This reconsideration is only possible by taking into account such phenomena as language mixing and hybridization. He argues that speakers achieve power and increase social power by learning how to interact in an increasingly "deterritorialized world" (Jacquemet 2005: 261). The presence of multiple linguistic codes in the song analyzed here allows CL to project a transnational image and cosmopolitan femininity marked linguistically by hybridity.

Lee (2004) argues that English-mixing in Korean popular music not only represents the colliding of local and global dialogues in South Korea, but also a linguistic mechanism that youth engage in to articulate identities that resist mainstream norms and values. Elsewhere, Lee (2011) discusses how Korean hip hop artists have adopted some of the features of African American English (AAE) to express subcultural identities and styles. The globalization of AAE has been particularly important for non-American artists to authenticate their performances. AAE is key to invoking and constructing the persona of the Bad Bitch in both CL's song and hip hop more broadly. In the song, there are numerous instances of code-switching and language mixing as well as shifts in rhyme, or flow. CL's skillful handling of multiple flows and language varieties privileges a version of femininity that is in control, modern, multilingual, transnational: in other words, a cosmopolitan femininity.

Embodied sociocultural linguistics and globalization frameworks

In the song and video, language and embodied practices – the physical movement of the body as well as stylistic choices – work to create multiple semiotic layers. The distinctive audiovisual format of K-pop necessitates an attendance to the body and its semiotic production in performance contexts. Bucholtz and Hall (2016: 173) argue that linguists have too often ignored "the crucial role of embodiment in producing social meaning through language and vice versa". Especially in the Korean context, where everything from debuts to guest appearances are meticulously timed and planned by the recording company, it is no coincidence that singles and music video releases often occur on the same day. Furthermore, dances and lyrics often come to have an iconic relationship, invoking one another. When discussing embodiment in the music video, I attend not only to the body, including movements such as gestures and dance, but also to bodily adornment and nonlinguistic stylistic choices. I will argue that CL's lyrical performance alongside the embodied practices in the video work in tandem to create a new semiotic understanding of womanhood, starting with the key gendered term found in the song *kicipay*.

Sociocultural linguistic work that operates through a globalization framework can elucidate who how language works transculturally and transnationally to diffuse notions of femininity and modernity. I argue that through her globalized/globalizing performance, CL rebels against traditionally held sociocultural ideas about proper ways of speaking and acting for Korean women, proposing instead that women can - and will - have it all. Importantly, her performance is not totally unproblematic, as she promotes a cosmopolitan understanding of womanhood that privileges access to certain kinds of capital, both symbolic and real. As global flows of capital can facilitate discursive and ideological dissemination of cultural

nationalism and superiority, I argue that this kind of cosmopolitanism represents a relatively new form of East Asian hegemony in the world.

III. Methods

For the analysis of the lyrics, I transcribed, transliterated², and translated the lyrics of "Nappun Kicipay" with occasional references to popular lyric sites to aid me in my translations (see Appendix for the entire set of lyrics).³ As the embodied practices create multiple semiotic layers which work in conjunction with the lyrics, I considered gestures, dance movement, and corporeal adornment in the music video. The video was first accessed on Youtube and then analyzed offline. Each frame was examined individually with both the audio on and later the frames themselves without audio.

IV. Focus of study

CL, the Nappun Kicipay

CL is the rapping member of 2NE1, one of the most successful K-pop acts of recent years. The group was formed and managed by YG Entertainment, which is also responsible for Big Bang, arguably the most successful K-pop act in history (Benjamin and Oak 2015). YG is known for its investment in hip hop trends and aesthetics. 2NE1 is no exception; branded to be the female counterpart to Big Bang, the group is a tough, hip hop-oriented girlband characterized by edgy lyrics and an unconventional, eclectic style. It debuted in 2009 with four members: CL, Minzy, Dara, and Park Bom (Russell 2104). Since then, their music has been widely acclaimed at

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² All Korean words including lyrics were transcribed according to Yale romanization.

³ KpopMusic and a Wordpress blog entry: For lyrics, see http://www.kpoplyrics.net/cl-the-baddest-female-lyrics-english-romanized.html and https://ukbaddestfemale.wordpress.com/2013/05/28/cl-the-baddest-female-%EB%82%98%EC%81%9C-%EA%B8%B0%EC%A7%91%EC%95%A0-lyrics/

home and abroad; in fact, *The New York Times* named their act one of "the best concerts of 2012" (Pareles et al. 2012). 2NE1 took a brief break as a band in 2015, and the group ultimately disbanded in 2017. All four members have embarked on various solo ventures even as they continued to be a band. Since her own debut as a solo artist in 2013, CL has collaborated with numerous highly visible American and British recording artists, DJs, and producers that span the genres of hip hop, pop, and electronic music. CL has experienced tremendous success as a popstar in Korea and has gathered fans from all over the globe. She has also been called a fashion icon with a vast social media presence.

The focus of the present study is CL's first song as a solo artist, "Nappun Kicipay" ("The Baddest Female"), which was released in May 2013. This song sets the tone for her trajectory as an artist and cultural icon and presents a number of stylistic features that align her more with the toughness of the hip hop genre rather than the bubbly image of many female K-pop groups. Given the corporeal visuality of K-pop, the music video is crucial to understanding how the song lyrics and embodied practices work together to challenge notions of "ideal" femininity while also positioning CL, and those she represents, at the top of a global hierarchy.

Kicipay as property

The title of the song, "Napun Kicipay" (/ˈnapun ˈgidʒibɛ/) includes the lexical item *kicipay* 'young female' preceded by the qualifier *nappun*, 'bad' to yield something like 'bad young female' or 'bad young bitch'. *Kicipay* is the nonstandard form of *kyeycipay*, the latter of which is used with much less frequency than the former. The online Korean dictionary *Daum* defines both the standard and nonstandard forms as 'a term that depreciates a young woman' (*kicipay*,

n.d.)⁴. The first syllable *kyey*- comes from the locative verb *kyeyta* (계다) 'to be (somewhere)', fused with cip (집) 'house, home'. The literal meaning would have rendered something like 'to be at home'. The third morpheme of *kyeycipay*, -ay, is a contraction of ai 'child' (아이). *Kyeycipay*, then, translates to 'a (female) child at home' and was used referentially to signal a young woman's age - younger than twenty years of age - and their status as unmarried. Thus, this term unambiguously located a woman both physically - as inhabiting a particular home - as well as socially belonging to a specific patriarch and family.

While the literal-physical locative meaning has been lost, *kicipay* in modern Korean continues to be a gendered term with depreciative and belittling connotation. For example, parents often use the term to scold misbehaving daughters, and a male protagonist in a Korean drama may call a woman a *nappun kicipay* if she breaks his heart. While varying degrees of pejorative connotation tend to accompany the word's usage, it can index in-group status for young South Korean women, much like the positive affiliative terms *güey* in Mexican Spanish (Bucholtz 2009) and *dude* (Kiesling 2004), *girl* (Scott 2000), or *bitch* in English (Sutton 1995). However, even in these in-group uses, the term tends to mark non-normative social behavior. Given the longstanding social index of the term as that of a woman's place in Korean society, the popular and pervasive usage of *kicipay* with a depreciative connotation demonstrates that much of the social delineations that the word signifies have remained intact.

V. Discussion

Resignification of nappun kicipay to the Bad Bitch

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⁴ My translation

Alongside "Nappun Kicipay", the producers of the song further provide an English title, "The Baddest Female", which is not a direct translation since there is no superlative descriptor in the Korean version. The use of "baddest" in this English title indexes its hip hop meaning, both lexically and through its nonstandard grammatical formulation. While the Korean term literally translates to 'bad girl', I argue that a *nappun kicipay* is semiotically closer to the Bad Bitch persona of hip hop in the context of this song. This semantic connection is unsurprising, given the influence of American hip hop in Korea since the eighties and the glocalization of American hip hop everywhere it appears. Furthermore, the song's producer, Teddy Park, had a transnational upbringing including exposure to American rap at an early age. The inclusion of the translation "The Baddest Female" speaks to a broad, multilingual, and even multidialectal crowd, while avoiding the risqué, polemical title of "The Bad Bitch". The song begins with the lyrics in excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1: Chorus

- 1 난 나쁜 기집에 나난 나쁜 기집에 nan nappun kicipay na nan nappun kicipay I'm a bad girl/bitch I'm a bad girl/bitch
- 2 난 나쁜 기집에 nan nappun kicipay I'm a bad girl/bitch
- Where all my bad girls at?
- 4 난 나쁜 기집에 나난 나쁜 기집에 nan nappun kicipay na nan nappun kicipay I'm a bad girl/bitch, I'm a bad girl/bitch
- 5 난 나쁜 기집애 nan nappun kicipay I'm a bad girl/bitch
- 6 Where all my bad girls at?

The chorus and the rest of lyrics of the song effectively provide a set of qualifications that establish CL as a *nappun kicipay*, 'a bad bitch'. The song features a slow and bass-heavy beat, which lends an air of tenacity to complement the lyrics. This slowed-down tempo is reminiscent of trap music, a typically male-dominated genre of hip hop. In the common calland-response fashion of many hip hop performances (Smitherman 1977), the song begins with a muffled autotuned voice that commands, "Stand up right now", assuming an authoritative stance and encouraging audience participation. Immediately after the beat drops, CL's voice can be heard rapping the chorus (lines 1-6 above). She commences the song with a show of braggadocio, typical of male and female rappers alike, where artists may boast about themes including physicality, fighting ability, financial wealth, sexual prowess, or emotional detachment. The song presents a stylistic closeness to the linguistic practices and strategies of American hip hop artists. There is a pronounced diphthongization of kicipay (i.e. /gid̄ʒibēɪ/), a stylistic feature of many Korean rappers who seem to be adopting the prosody of African American English (Lee 2004, 2011). 'Bae' (/bei/), is the now-popularized reduced form of 'babe' or 'baby', a term of endearment. This is an example of what Smitherman (1977: 100) calls "tonal semantics", whereby the rapper achieves "rhetorical mileage", or extensive meaning by triggering a familiar sound. The creative use of rhyme, voice rhythm, and repetition of sounds is key for tonal semantics. The repeated line "Where all my bad girls at?" (lines 3, 6), rapped completely in English, has zero copula and a monophthongized my (/ma/), both features of African American English (Rickford 1999), and it represents yet again a typical call-and-response tactic used in hip hop (Alim 2004); here CL invites other girls to align with her "badness".

The chorus features the informal singular first person pronoun na as opposed to the honorific je, which is reserved for speaking to someone older or of high social status. This sets the tone for the entire song as one of familiarity, kinship, and at times even irreverence, as the speaker-addressee relationship takes different forms throughout. Nan is a contraction of na with the postposition nun, a topic marker after noun phrases ending in a vowel. All these na's and nan's together with the first syllable of nappun 'bad', give the chorus a taunting quality. In the chorus alone she confidently declares she is a nappun kicipay, a 'bad bitch', no fewer than six times. Given the numerous ways to structure a chorus, the repetitive structure here is marked and has been identified as one of the key features of the newer wave of K-pop (Jin 2017).

Embodied contrasts: Ice queen meets b-girl style

The video commences with CL steadily walking down a red carpet, past a cheering crowd, and towards a black vehicle. She wears a white outfit which makes her stand out in the dark blur of photographers and fans. She moves her hips seductively as she keeps walking away from the camera as though the viewer is invited to follow her; she looks over her right shoulder, and pulls her sunglasses down to give the camera a coy smile. In the next shot, she is seated in the back seat of her chauffeured luxury car, a safe reprieve from the bevy of paparazzi, at once signaling her exclusivity, wealth, and status.

When CL starts rapping the chorus, we see a completely different version of her, who now sports a more casual, head-to-toe black outfit and appears on a stage, interspersed with footage of her inside the limousine (see Figure 1). She is wearing baggy Adidas track pants and sneakers coupled with a cropped leather top, a gold tooth grill, a black and gold snapback

cap, and knuckle rings. This feminized posh spin on the more tombovish, baggy b-girl⁵ outfits of the 1990s (Guevara 1996; Gupta-Carlson 2010) indexes street credibility and a kind of authenticity. B-girl style indexes authentic hip hop, as breakdancing is widely accepted to be one of the four key components of American hip hop (Chang 2005; Perry 2004; Rose 1994). Moreover, Adidas is widely accepted to be a key brand for hip hop artists, popularized in the eighties by the rap group Run DMC (Perry 2004). It is while wearing this remixed b-girl outfit that CL raps and dances. By contrast with the first cool and composed image, she gestures aggressively and dances, generally taking up much more space. Her dance performance along with the stylistic elements present a version of femininity that is at once aggressive and sexy, candid and controversial. Some of the gesticulations here are threatening displays of braggadocio. Importantly, in order to engage in braggadocio, rappers must qualify their positionality and ability to do so. CL validates her boasts linguistically in the song and with excessive displays of wealth including gaudy jewelry and heavy makeup, which contrast with a purist rendition of b-girl style. The b-girl contrasts with the cool and composed celebrity walking the red carpet seen in the beginning of the video and allows her to put forth a slightly more accessible persona that can rap and dance. This visual style-shifting culminates in her coming face to face with a drag version of herself, which she uses to have a conversation about how men and women refer to her (lines 30-31). These shifts in her embodied style including the black-white contrast suggest her own ability to navigate different worlds as well as a transition from her public social image to a more performative one. She also hints at times that she is relatable while at other times she shows that she is an inaccessible celebrity. By vacillating from one persona to another, she hints early on in the song that she refuses to

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⁵ B-girl stands for breakdancing girl. Breakdancing refers to a style of hip hop dance.

⁶ The four key elements are (in no particular order): breakdancing, graffiti, DJ-ing, and rapping (or MCing)

categorically be one thing and will not be restricted to just the hyperfeminine public persona she presents in the opening frame.

The street as an index of authenticity

The appropriation of various styles in the video demonstrates a transnational awareness of and access to common hip hop tropes and other now-mainstream styles. Particularly salient is the presence of the street, which is key for the construction and credibility of the b-girl persona as well as the overall cosmopolitan image that CL constructs throughout the song. The street is an important locus of cultural activity, certainly for many American hip hop artists (Alim 2004, Keyes 2004) as well as in glocalized hip hop contexts (Condry 2006). It represents an antiinstitutional space that can also serve as a locale for black market economic activities. The street in hip hop songs indexes authenticity through intimate familiarity with activities and communities affiliated with these non-mainstream spaces. affinity to these anti-institutional spaces. Notably in the video, however, the literal street is absent but is invoked in other ways. Most of the backgrounds are decontextualized with only black or white backgrounds. Elsewhere the streets are non-specific yet decidedly non-Westernized contexts. CL stakes a claim in authenticity by performing the b-girl persona and by demonstrating her skills in dancing and rapping. Her street credit is defined by commercial fame and financial independence, and the viewer is constantly reminded of indexes of excess such as gold and diamond-encrusted jewelry and the pervasive presence of fashion brands such as Adidas and Jeremy Scott. Importantly, the loci of street credibility in this video is not one street, but multiple sites that are both symbolic and material, concrete and imagined.

The street is also invoked in the video by way of stylistic choices borrowed from Chicanx street culture (Vigil 2013). For example, CL dons gold hoop earrings and wears her eyeliner thick and long, both practices popularized by chola women (Mendoza-Denton 1996). The Old English lettering and graffiti fonts pervasive throughout the video derive from cholo tattoo culture (Berrios 2006; Chastanet and Gribble 2009). She raps in a deserted backstreet, where, instead of elevated on a stage, she is rapping in front of a worn-down concrete wall featuring a graffiti mural of a faded flag which includes her own logo and stylized Old English font. The used tires, weeds, loose rocks, and overall dilapidated environment surrounding her are stark contrasts to her shiny leather outfit and bright blue stylized bicycle (see Figure 2). The bike here is similar to lowriders, which refer to vehicles with lowered frames (e.g. bicycles, motorcycles, cars) that are principally associated with urban, working-class Mexican Americans (Chappell 2010; Tatum 2011). CL's body and her shiny lowrider place urban aesthetics in the center of an otherwise unmodern environment. As cholo aesthetics index working class backgrounds and associations with the street, CL appropriates this style to demonstrate her own comfort with non-mainstream spaces. The salient stylistic elements here (e.g. lowriders, chains, gold hoops) are a mélange of masculine and feminine, again indirectly signaling an unwillingness to be easily classified.

In a later scene, CL is joined by her dancers and a number of male artists who all belong to the same label company, YG Entertainment, including two members of Big Bang, as well as the song's producer Teddy Park. This scene is the apex of cholo cultural aesthetic appropriation in the video and indexes her (real or imagined) connection to the streets as a transnational locale. Even though the background is simply white, the scene is decidedly urban, as exemplified by their garments and the presence of lowriders (see Figure 3). All the men

stand behind CL, gesturing and looking menacingly into the camera, presenting an image of her gang. She is wearing a modified version of the prototypical cholo uniform: a red flannel with just the first button fastened, baggy jeans, and a paisley print bandana (Chappell 2010; Mendoza-Denton 1996; Tatum 2011). In her version, CL wears a sports bra exposed underneath, and adds gold jewelry. The bandana is worn as a stylish headband and instead of a longsleeve flannel, she wears a sleeveless version. In its place, she has the paisley print of the bandana drawn on her arms, which are supposed to simulate tattoos. At the outset of this scene, CL again performs the repetitive chorus and iconic dance with her female dancers behind her in ski masks. These women are performing, not for male voyeuristic consumerism, but show the women as capable performers who are on equal footing with the men. Indeed, their matching colors and prints depict them as part of the same crew; they belong to the same label and are all facing the camera/the viewer. CL alone stands out in her vibrant red. There are numerous close-up frames of CL with a few of the more well-known YG members rapping along to her song. The men's bodies and the colors used in these scenes remind the viewer of CL's equal standing with these highly successful and visible men.

This series of outfits from the b-girl to the chola coupled with the absence of an identifiable location, function to show the viewer that CL is perfectly at home in any environment. Her street credit provides credibility for her to stand among the greatest Bad Bitches because of her already-established reputation and accrued wealth. Notwithstanding the highly appropriative nature of some of her performance, the borrowing of particular elements allows CL to decontextualize particular locales into a globalized arena and to locate herself in different physical and metaphorical spaces. Here, she legitimizes herself as a hip hop artist

while reminding viewers and listeners of her various selves and multiple successes, authenticating both in the process.

"Get right": Elusiveness and female sexuality expressed through embodied masculinity

Immediately following the chorus, the first verse beings with an assertive display of braggadocio. During this verse, CL is mostly performing as a b-girl, as described above. The lyrics are essentially a list of qualifications that justify CL's claims to be a *nappun kicipay* in the chorus.

Excerpt 2: Get right

- 7 그래 나는 쎄 아주 사납게 (yao) kulay nanun ssey acwu sanapkey (yao) yeah, I'm strong/hard very fierce (yao)
- 8 너 정도론 날 절대 감당 못해 ne cengtolon nal celtay kamtang moshay someone like you can't ever handle me
- 9 질투 따윈 눈 꼽 만큼도 모르죠 cilthwu ttawin nwun kkop mankhumto molucyo *I don't have an ounce of jealousy in me*
- 10 점쟁이도 내 맘속은 못 맞추죠 (a-ha) cemcayngito nay mamsokun mos macchwucyo (a-ha) even psychics can't figure out my heart (a-ha)
- 11 난 여왕벌 난 주인공 nan yewangpel nan cwuinkong I'm the queen bee the protagonist
- 12 당장 어디로 튈지 몰라 rugby 공 tangcang etilo thwilci molla rugby kong it's unknown where I'll go next rugby ball
- 13 목에 걸린 gold chain swingin' left right mokey kellin gold chain swingin' left right on my neck gold chain swingin' left right

14 외롭지 않아 매일 밤마다 get right oylopci anha mayil pammata get right *I'm not lonely, every night I* get right

During these verses, she is wearing the b-girl outfit described above. She characterizes herself as a fiercely strong woman (line 7) and pounds her fist aggressively as though she is ready to fight. She performs these lines while wearing a gold grill, which includes a set of fangs, and appears to be snarling while performing these lines (see Figure 4). Both the chain and the grill are common tropes in commercialized hip hop that index financial prosperity and status. Moreover, she makes reference to stereotypically-masculine objects including a sporty rugby ball (line 12, 'rugby gong') and a "heavy gold chain, swingin' left right" (line 13). In one frame, CL is holding a gun loosely with her thumb and index finger and drops it. These lyrics and images function in tandem to invoke masculinity semiotically in order to assert her dominance over it. For example, in one frame, she holds up a phallic rugby ball from the bottom in a suggestive way and looks directly at the camera with an amused look on her face. In the next frame, CL holds a riding crop, which is an instrument common in BDSM sexual practices. She slaps it across her other hand and then bites it while winking erotically at the camera indicating her sexual dominance and prowess. She exudes an overtly powerful sexuality that is not commonly associated with women in the Korean context but is a defining characteristic of the Bad Bitch.

In an unexpected metaphor, she takes a male-dominated sport, rugby, and equates herself to the rugby ball to highlight her own unpredictable character. This elusiveness is evidenced in line 12, *etilo thwilci molla* 'it's unknown where I'll bounce to', which highlights her refusal to be caught or fixed, arguably a reference to being held down emotionally by a single romantic partner or another reminder of her commercial success as she references

elsewhere in the song that she stays busy. This refusal to be static also supports the previous argument that her style-shifting (from ice queen to b-girl) functions to resist categorization. This elusiveness is further corroborated in line 10, where she claims that even psychics can't seem to figure her out. Twice in the song where the bridge appears (See Appendix lines 18-19) and 41-42), CL raps "You want it, come and get it now" in English followed by silhumyen sicipka 'if you hate it, get married'. The rhetorical question 'You want it?' could be understood as a threat and willingness to fight (another instance of braggadocio) or as an invitation to engage in sexual activity. The latter is a sarcastic Korean idiomatic expression that means if one is discontent with their current situation, they should go and get married instead. This is arguably a gendered expression given that women were (and often still are) expected to leave their parents' home to live with the husband's family where the wife is expected to take on the family chores under the direct supervision of the mother-in-law. The understanding here is that married life is, indeed, tough for the wife. The expression suggests limited mobility for women as it only presents two options: dealing with the current situation or marriage. This expression taps into traditional Korean family relations and hierarchy: if you are unhappy with the rules of your parents, get married and go be under someone else's roof. CL's use of it here presents marriage as an undesirable alternative to her own elusive lifestyle and practices that have already been alluded to in previous lyrics. She suggests that many people get married out of necessity, but rather than propose better reasons to get married, she suggests marriage is altogether an undesirable alternative. She would rather live the opulent and dynamic lifestyle of a cosmopolitan woman.

Finally, in a rather assertive comment on her sexual freedom, she boasts that she is never lonely (line 14) because every night she "get[s] right," slang for engaging in sexual

activity often used in hip hop lyrics and more broadly in African American English. The slang expression 'to get right' is opaque to most of her Korean listeners and even many speakers of standard English, but serves to boost CL's credibility as the "baddest female" and as a legitimate hip hop artist. These statements, as well her domineering position throughout the song, challenges the highly gendered neo-Confucian values vis-a-vis women's sexuality and sexual roles still pervasive in many aspects of Korean society.

Hegemonic discourses of global femininity

In the last minute of the song, there is an obvious change in tempo and a syncopated rhythm reminiscent of dubstep music. Acoustically, this brief instrumental segment marks a total change in the direction of the song while visually, the images correspond to the change in tempo. The neon colors featured in this part of the video are much more vibrant than the previous black and white backdrops. CL appears in a tropical setting, emerging from thick foliage as though she is looking for something or someone. She is shown here with wet hair and bronzed skin; moreover, later frames of dilapidated rooftops and unpaved roads give the impression she is far away from any urban center (see Figure 5). Footage of her making her way through the rainforest is interspersed with images of yet-again a completely different persona. The lyrics resume with her standing on the cliff wearing a leather military-style outfit with dominatrix overtones complete with a helmet with spikes (see Figure 6). The juxtaposition of these two scenes give the impression that she was lost or was searching for something but has emerged victoriously as a sort of military figure. Here, the lyrics are spoken - not sung or rapped – completely in English. CL overtly explains what she means by her use of 'bad' in the song.:

Excerpt 3: Bad girls

- This is for all my bad girls around the world.
- Not bad meaning bad but bad meaning good, you know?
- Let's light it up and let it burn like we don't care.
- Let 'em know how it feels damn good to be bad.

The referent to 'this' in line 53 is not totally clear: it may refer to the current segment or the entire song. However, she leaves no doubt as to whom she is addressing: "This is for all my bad girls around the world. Not bad meaning bad but bad meaning good, you know?" By bad girls, she means anyone who identifies with her and who align with her definition of badness. To English speakers, CL's use of bad as a positive term is so obvious that it makes her explanation unnecessary, or even silly, as evidenced by CL's bashful smile at this moment in the video. This meaning is not so transparent to all listeners, however, and it privileges a bilingual cosmopolitan audience. The song is clearly targeted, at least in part, to Koreans, but it also indexes her orientation to global hip hop fans. Line 55, "Let's light it up and burn like we don't care" echoes the kicipay chorus in that it, too, calls for solidarity, as exemplified by the use of the first person-plural ('let's' and 'we') while simultaneously demonstrating transgressive behavior ('Let's light it up and let it burn') and irreverence ('we don't care'). By standing in an elevated position – not to mention the overt militaristic imagery– CL positions herself metaphorically as a leader of *nappun kicipays* all over the world, asserting 'bad' as a desirable quality for women. The use of English provides her with the social capital to figuratively conquer other parts of the world and allows her to establish solidarity with other nappun kicipays to then assert herself at the top. The flag she holds displays her logo with the Old English font that has been used throughout the video in various contexts. If the use of English in lines 53-56 index her cosmopolitan identity, when they are taken in tandem with the

imperial overtones represented visually, the audiovisual whole produces a hegemonic discourse with CL at the global top.

Exportation of cultural products

This solidarity is further reinforced by the use of the informal first person pronoun in the chorus (as discussed above) as well as the use of the lexical item *enni* 'older sister' that is used throughout the song, most prevalent in the bridges (in lines 26-29 and 49-52, but also see 31 and 61-63). This term is used to refer to the elder sister of a female, but it can also be used to address an unrelated older woman. By using this kinship term, she calls for other women to consider her close like an *enni*. When this term is used in the video, CL frequently appears with other women, many of whom are clearly much younger than her (see Figure 7). This visual explanation of *enni* accommodates her non-Korean viewers while tapping into the familiar hierarchical understanding of the term for Korean speakers. By showing young women of various age groups, she provides a friendly, approachable persona that juxtaposes with the more aggressive Bad Bitch image. Given the kinship term would only be used amongst sisters or close friends in the Korean context, CL redefines global sisterhood but emphasizes her position at the top of that hierarchy.

Enni or unnie?: Bivalent links of language and materiality

The first time *enni* appears in the song, CL is performing the b-girl persona (discussed above). The camera zooms in on CL's hands sporting knuckle rings, one which says *UNNIE* and another *GIZIBE* (see Figure 8). The spelling of *unnie* privileges English orthography even as CL raps it with Korean phonology /ən:i/. Similarly, the main repeated line of the outro (see Appendix lines 61-64) is a bivalent directive charged by CL herself: *Do the enni*. This

statement is met with the response *hey* from another female voice, forming a call-and-response structure that encourages audience/listener participation. Here, the use of the do-verb followed by a definite article suggests *enni* is a known embodied practice - perhaps a gesture or dance choreography – which is being invoked by these lyrics (although the video never makes clear what that dance might be). The outro is repeated four times to create a chant-like conclusion to the song that is as catchy as the *kicipay* chorus. The presence of lexical items like *enni* and *kicipay* in otherwise English utterances creates further bivalency and allow such words to move beyond the confines of a single linguistic code by extending its usage through future iterations of the song.

The spelling of *gizibe* is less straightforward than *unnie*: there is no voiced alveolar fricative z in Korean, so that the affricate phoneme z often replaces this sound in loanwords. Spelling the word as if it were a borrowing from English gives the term a bivalent, transnational quality, forcing the viewer to ask, "Is it English or Korean?" Similarly, from start to finish, the video features many examples of similarly bivalent spelling. For instance, at the beginning of the video, CL is seen wearing a black snapback hat with the letters G, Z, and B emblazoned on it in gold, while dancers and other members of her crew wear variations of this hat throughout the video (see Figure 9). The pervasive presence of *unnie*, *gizibe*, and *GZB* in the song index a bivalency that CL herself embodies. At the same time, these bivalent spellings further allow for the embodied materiality to live on beyond the spatial and temporal confines of the video through explicit marketing of goods (see Figure 10) and online presence such as the use of hashtags. Since the song and especially the video are required to interpret these bivalent spellings, the material representations of the lexical items discussed above index identification with the *nappun kicipay* qualities defined in the video, including and especially the

cosmopolitan identity CL embodies. In other words, materiality acts as advertisement of and for *nappun kicipays*, allows the producers of the song to profit from the demands of global capitalism.

V. Conclusion

The curious case of CL: All of the above

The popular song analyzed in this paper exemplifies the ways musical artists can creatively use multiple linguistics codes and embodied practice in globalized musical genres (hip hop, Kpop) to challenge and generate discourses of gender and sexuality. The analysis of popular music exposes some of the sociocultural discourses that are being produced in the culture at large, especially among young people. Here, I have argued that CL's lyrical and embodied performance works to construct and negotiate a certain kind of femininity. To do this, the song invokes and localizes the figure of the Bad Bitch: an aggressive, sexually agentive, and polemical figure of womanhood in hip hop. This invocation happens through language and embodiment together. I have also argued that CL uses some features of African American English and conventionalized hip hop practices (such as braggadocio and call-and-response) to resignify kicipay, a traditionally pejorative term for women. She also performs alternative identities by visually style-shifting, sometimes sporting baggy, masculine attire and common objects from commercial hip hop like a gold chain and grill. By way of linguistic and visual style-shifting, CL frees herself from the limitations of a single linguistic code and expected social norms, including normative ways of speaking and behaving. Her performance in the video simultaneously deconstructs dominant notions of doing gender while also constructing a cosmopolitan femininity that can be accessed by all who align with the *nappun kicipay*. The mixture of English and Korean that occurs throughout the song culminates at the end, when Korean lexical items are constructed as bivalent forms: *gizibe*, *unnie*, and *GZB*. I argued that this bivalent quality parallels CL's own ability to straddle worlds and linguistic codes. Through dabbling in a little bit of everything from traditionally feminine ways of dressing to a more masculine style, back and forth from English to Korean, hip hop but still sort of K-pop, CL's message seems to be, "I will have it all."

CL would go on to perform for a global audience at one of the ultimate literal and figurative junctures of worlds: the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang. Unlike other musical performances that incorporated elements of Korean folkloric dance or traditional instruments, CL's performance was dominated by English and infused with explosions and contemporary dance moves, crystallizing her as the face of Korean modernity. She kicked off her performance with a mash-up of "Nappun Kicipay" that opened with the lines, "This is for all my bad girls around the world. Not bad meaning bad but bad meaning good, you know?" thereby solidifying her position as a global star addressing all *nappun kicipays* everywhere.

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Appendix

Song title: "나쁜 기집애" "The Baddest Female" (Yale romanization: nappun kicipay) Artist: CL

Chorus

- 1 난 나쁜 기집에 나난 나쁜 기집에 nan nappun kicipay na nan nappun kicipay I'm a bad girl/bitch I'm a bad girl/bitch
- 2 난 나쁜 기집애 nan nappun kicipay I'm a bad girl/bitch
- Where all my bad girls at?
- 4 난 나쁜 기집애 나난 나쁜 기집애 nan nappun kicipay na nan nappun kicipay I'm a bad girl/bitch, I'm a bad girl/bitch
- 5 난 나쁜 기집에 nan nappun kicipay I'm a bad girl/bitch
- 6 Where all my bad girls at?

Verse 1

- 7 그래 나는 쎄 아주 사납게 (yao) kulay nanun ssey acwu sanapkey (yao) yeah, I'm strong/hard very fierce (yao)⁷
- 8 너 정도론 날 절대 감당 못해 ne cengtolon nal celtay kamtang moshay someone like you can't ever handle me
- 9 질투 따윈 눈 꼽 만큼도 모르죠 cilthwu ttawin nwun kkop mankhumto molucyo *I don't have an ounce of jealousy in me*
- 10 점쟁이도 내 맘속은 못 맞추죠 (a-ha) cemcayngito nay mamsokun mos macchwucyo (a-ha) even psychics can't figure out my heart (a-ha)

⁷ Parentheses were used to distinguish elements that are not part of the main flow or rhyme

- 11 난 여왕벌 난 주인공
 nan yewangpel nan cwuinkong
 I'm the queen bee the protagonist
- 12 당장 어디로 튈지 몰라 rugby 공 tangcang etilo thwilci molla rugby kong it's unknown where I'll go next rugby ball
- 13 목에 걸린 gold chain swingin' left right mokey kellin gold chain swingin' left right on my neck gold chain swingin' left right
- 14 외롭지 않아 매일 밤마다 get right oylopci anha mayil pammata get right *I'm not lonely, every night I* get right
- 15 당당한 지조 고귀한 품위 (uh huh) tangtanghan cico kokwihan phwumwi (uh huh) imposing/confident stance, regal style (uh huh)
- 16 눈 웃음은 기본 내 눈물은 무기 (that's right) nwun wusumum kipon nay nwunmwulu mwuki (that's right) my eye smiles⁸ are a given my tears are weapons (that's right)
- 17 이 미소는 fire 널 태우니까 (burn) i misonun fire nel thaywunikka (burn) this smile is fire because it burns you (burn)
- 18 you want it come and get it now
- 19 싫으면 시집가 silhumyen sicipka if you hate it get married⁹

Chorus repeats: Lines 20-25

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⁸ "Eye smiles" is a term used to describe the act of smiling mainly with the eyes. It may connote aloofness or flirtatiousness.

⁹ *(This is a Korean expression meaning if you don't like your current situation, get married, connoting that marriage would release the person in question out of the parents' hands into a more difficult situation, i.e. marriage. It is a play on words as both clauses start with si (/ʃi/). The English equivalent would be something like "Tough shit."

Bridge

- 26 언니야 (wooh) enniya (wooh) hey sister (wooh)
- 27 언니 언니 언니 (hey) enni enni enni (hey) sister sister sister (hey)
- 28 언니야 (wooh) enniya (wooh) hev sister (wooh)
- 29 언니 언니 언니 (hey) enni enni enni (hey) sister sister (hey)

Verse 2

- 30 남자들은 허니라 불러요 namcatulun henila pwulleyo boys call me honey
- 31 여자들은 언니라 불러요 yecatulun ennila pwulleyo girls call me older sister
- 32 팍팍 잘나가는 내 싸늘한 한마디 phakphak calnakanun nay ssanulhan hanmati my cool words are popular
- 33 Round round 돌고 도는 이이상한 맬로디 (yeah) round round tolko tonun iisanghan maylloti (yeah) *this strange melody goes* round round (yeah)
- 34 내가 제일 잘나가¹⁰ huh nayka ceyil calnaka huh *I'm the most popular* huh
- 35 난 매일 바빠 너무바빠 왜 기분 나빠 huh nan mayil pappa nemwupappa way kipwun nappa huh I'm busy every day I'm so busy why do you feel bad huh

 $^{^{10}}$ "Nayka ceyil calnaka" is a reference to a 2NE1 song that was a hit single in 2011

- 36 G5 G6 보다 더 높이 날라가 huh G5, G6 bota de nophi nallaka huh I fly higher than a G5 G6 huh
- 37 all my b-boys and b-girls 자 나를 따라와 all my b-boys and b-girls ca nalul ttalawa all my b-boys and b-girls *now follow me*
- 38 콧대는 지존 I never say sorry (nope) khostaynun cicon I never say sorry (nope) determined pride I never say sorry (nope)
- 39 가식은 기본 내 똑똑한 머리 (yes) kasikun kipon nay ttokttokhan meli (yes) pretense is a given, my intelligent mind (yes)
- 40 내 미소는 killa 너를 죽이니까 (oops) nay misonun killa nelul cwukinikka (oops) My smile is killa because it kills you (oops)
- 41 you want it come and get it now
- 42 싫으면 시집가 silhumyen sicipka if you hate it get married.

Chorus repeats: Lines 43-48

Bridge repeats: lines 49-52 49 언니야 (wooh) enniya (wooh) hey sister (wooh)

- 50 언니 언니 언니 (hey) enni enni enni (hey) sister sister (hey)
- 51 언니야 (wooh) enniya (wooh) hey sister (wooh)
- 52 언니 언니 언니 (hey) enni enni enni (hey) sister sister (hey)

- this is for all my bad girls around the world.
- not bad meaning bad but bad meaning good, you know?
- let's light it up and let it burn like we don't care.
- let 'em know how it feels damn good to be bad.
- 57 G-I-Z to the I-B-E
- 58 난 나쁜 기집애 can't you see nan nappun kicipay can't you see *I'm a bad girl/bitch* can't you see
- 59 G-I-Z to the I-B-E
- 60 난 나쁜 기집에 come with me nan nappun kicipay come with me *I'm a bad girl/bitch* come with me

Outro (repeats 4 times): Lines 61-64

- 61 now do the 언니 (hey)
 now do the enni (hey)
- 62 now do the 언니 (hey) now do the enni (hey)
- 63 now do the 언니 now do the enni
- 64 해가 질 때까지 모두 다같이 hayka cil ttaykkaci motwu takathi altogether now until the sun sets

Figures

Figure 1. Ice queen meets b-girl





Figure 2. CL with lowrider in front of graffiti wall



Figure 3. Cholo aesthetics



Figure 4. Chain and grill from commercial hip hop





Figure 5. Tropical setting, rooftops, and unpaved roads







Figure 6. CL on a cliff





Figure 7. CL as enni



Figure 8. Knuckle rings with bivalent spellings





Figure 9. GZB hats in the music video











Figure 10: Materiality beyond video

