

## The Spatial Experience of Department Stores\*

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### Abstract

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This article explores the spatial experience of department stores, focusing on East Asian department stores in the early twentieth century. Firstly, I explore East Asian department stores as male intellectuals' space and discuss how the department store played a role in circulating metropolitan exoticism and modernism globally. In East Asia, the department store was also related to configuring various images of urban men within familial boundaries: patriarchal tycoons, entrepreneurial brothers, disciplined children and a conformist head of the nuclear family. Secondly, this article examines human relationships in the space of the department store and the relationship between human beings and the space of the building. By focusing on the Renaissance architectural style, I discuss conservative masculinity and spatial characteristics related to the theatre and spectacle. Lastly, I explore concrete dimensions of bodily experience in the department store with the terms of "building machine" and "desiring machine." In describing urban masses' tactile experience of the technologically equipped building machine, I stress physical mobility and the unconscious. I approach "desire" from the perspective of political

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\* 이 논문은 2017년 정부(교육부)의 재원으로 한국연구재단의 지원을 받아 수행된 연구임 (2017S1A6A3A01079727)

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economy rather than configuring it in terms of Freudian psychoanalysis. By configuring both the space and its users as “machines,” I also challenge the subject-object binary. This study attempts to shift the critical focus on East Asian department stores from women, westernisation, and visuality to men, globality, and desiring machines.

**Keywords:** Department Store, Space, Masculinity, Desiring Machine, Spectacle, East Asia

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## I . Introduction

The department store became a global phenomenon that manifested everyday life in modern cities, and in East Asia, department stores emerged in major cities like Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Seoul in the early twentieth century. The multifunctional commercial space diffused, confused and redefined the notion of consumption. Shopping became the central mode of entertainment for urban masses and connoted a panoply of experiences rather than simply denoting buying goods.<sup>1)</sup> In general, the department store was more than a grand shop. In contrast to traditional shops, shoppers could freely wander the floors of multi-story department stores without the clear intention to purchase. With the emergence of the multifunctional commercial space, shopping became to be perceived as a liberating experience of entertainment and

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1) Department stores usually included a restaurant, an exhibition space, a roof garden, an amusement park, a beauty parlour, a travel agency, a theatre, and in some stores, a library. A few European department stores such as Nordiska Kompaniet had a library. (Whitaker 2011, 232–239); (Young 1999, 62).

a quick escape from the immediate reality.<sup>2)</sup>

However, the modern shopping space was not simply a space of liberation and escape: Steven Miles argues that “consumption does not provide some avenue of escape as has been argued in the past but rather an ideological space in which the norms of the consumer society are constantly reinforced and legitimised.”<sup>3)</sup> With its spatial characteristics of grand-scale and multifunction, the department store purported to be a “democratic” space where everyone is welcomed and accordingly, the goal of the commercial retail business was clouded as serving the public. The department store seems a space on the borderline between the public and the private or between politics and economy. Mike Featherstone calls the department store a “quasi-public space” because of a high level of surveillance and control in the space.<sup>4)</sup> The department store carried out didactic and ideological functions that did not “seem” money-spinning.<sup>5)</sup>

This study follows the critical observation of the department store, but it also attempts to challenge existing scholarship on Asian department stores which tends to gravitate towards women, visibility and the bourgeois individual. By paying closer attention to the spatial experience of the department store, in particular in East Asia, this study

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2) For instance, Jordan Sand says that mass consumers of the department store enjoyed “anonymous liberation” and “abundance.”(2003, 97)

3) (Miles 2010, 18)

4) (Featherstone 1998, 914)

5) Mitsukoshi carried out cultural activities in a very active and stable way. It organised art exhibitions, musical concerts (for instance by the Mitsukoshi boys’ quartet), cinema screenings, and family events. Mitsukoshi also hosted cultural events that were typically organised by the government. For example, the department store held the World Exhibition for Children from 1909 onwards, investing 30,000 yen in the year (the company’s initial capital was only 1 million yen).

points out the importance of men, mobility, the unconscious and urban masses in the space.

In terms of methodology, this article attempts to do “mapping” rather than “tracing,” which means it does not identify spatial characteristics as “western” or seek the “origin.” It aims to provide intercultural mappings instead of linear comparisons between Western and Eastern department stores or among department stores in China, Korea and Japan. I consider the department store a global institution rather than a western import.<sup>6)</sup> I refer mainly to East Asian department stores because my research area is East Asia but many characteristics I discuss in this article can be applied to department stores in other parts of the world. This article is based on historical research of department stores, drawing upon original and secondary sources in Korean, Chinese, Japanese and English.

Department stores were important for men as well as for women. In the first part, I explore how East Asian department stores contributed to shaping masculinities and how male customers used the space of the department stores. The department store as a global institution circulated not only commodities but also fantasies. In East Asia, the department store was also a space for nurturing and channelling such fantasies. The global artistic trend of modernism in the 1920s and 1930s was also circulated through the global hub of the department store, and East Asian intellectuals indulged in metropolitan exoticism in the space of department stores. In the second part, I examine the spatial experiences of customers and the relationship between customers and

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6) (Hong 2016, 126).

service workers on the sales floors of the department store. By focusing on the Renaissance architectural style, I discuss spatial characteristics related to the theatre and spectacle. Finally, this article will explore concrete aspects of bodily experience in the department store employing the terms of “building machine” and “desiring machine.” The department store was a technologically equipped building machine. Customers experienced the space while moving and the bodily experience cannot be limited to visuality and consciousness but is related to the whole body and the unconscious. The bodily experience of the department store can be illuminated by the Deleuzian concept of “desiring machine.” I approach “desire” from the Deleuzian perspective of political economy rather than in terms of Freudian psychoanalysis. By configuring both the space and its user as “machines”, I intend to challenge the subject-object binary.

## II . Space for Men: Masculinities and Male Intellectuals

Department stores have commonly been seen as “ladies’ paradise” and no doubt, they provided safe public spaces for women and played a significant role in leading new lifestyles for modern women, yet my historical investigation suggests that East Asian department stores also contributed to the formation of masculinities in East Asia. For instance, the gender proportion of shoppers also shows that department stores were a significant space for men as well as for women as I will discuss later.

## 1. Masculinities Studies

In order to associate the commercial space which was conventionally portrayed as women's space with men, I want to provide a brief review of masculinities studies. An interdisciplinary field of Masculinity Studies (Masculinities Studies or Men's Studies) started to develop in late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Masculinity Studies should be distinguished from the fathers' society or other organisations which promote men's rights. It is research about manliness as a social construction rather than a biological man, in other words, a question about what it socially means to be a man.<sup>7)</sup> Masculinity Studies investigate everyday life as well as social institutions in order to see how social roles, identity, and relationships of "men" are constructed and circulated. As many scholars such as Christopher Forth have pointed out, masculinities do not show universal unity or cannot be characterised by one stereotype.<sup>8)</sup> Masculinity varies according to historical epochs, cultures and contexts. It also changes according to the stage of a man's life. Thus the plural form of masculinities studies has been preferred to the singular form of masculinity studies. The essential characteristic of masculinities studies is to approach masculinities from a paradoxical relationship of crisis, instability, lack and fear rather than seeing them simply as a reflection of power. In particular, this study is deeply related to research on the formation of the masculine image in the modern consumer culture of

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7) Judith Butler challenges the notion of biological sexes seeing them also as a historical construction. (2006)

8) (2008)

fashion and shopping. For instance, Tim Edwards argues that men's images in the advertisements of products like deodorant and jeans contributed greatly to the social construction of masculinities.<sup>9)</sup> Neil Wrigley and Steven Miles develop research on spaces of consumption to discuss the relationship between men and consumption spaces.<sup>10)</sup> Christopher Breward approaches male consumers as an important urban subject and examines the social construction of male consumers: He suggests that ideal masculinity fused with class identity, is constructed through new leisure activities and clothes in the feminized modern urban culture.<sup>11)</sup> In the following part, I will explore East Asian department stores in relation to different images of masculinity which were associated with various social classes.

## 2. Housing Urban Men

In East Asia, the department store was related to configuring various images of urban men within familial boundaries: patriarchal tycoons, brother-entrepreneurs, disciplined children and *patres familias*. In East Asia, many of the department stores actively developed the images of the founders as patriarchal icons. Osuke Hibi, Mitsukoshi's managing director led many important innovations of the company and is commonly called the "Father of Japanese department stores." In particular, the entrepreneurial legacy of department stores was often portrayed as cooperative efforts of brothers in Japan and China: for

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9) (1997)

10) (2010)

11) (1999)

instance, the Ma brothers of Sincere, the Guo brothers of Wing On and the Minakai brothers of Minakai. As well as promoting the icons of patriarchal leadership or the image of brotherly entrepreneurship, East Asian department stores actively circulated the (visual) images of highly disciplined workers by displaying (photos of) marshalled workers. Workers of department stores were trained in a military and patriarchal manner, often living in dormitories.<sup>12)</sup> The employer's excessive dominance in the labour relationship was intensified greatly by the patriarchal justification.

If the department store as a company constructed masculine images of a strong patriarch and highly disciplined sons in a large household, it nurtured an image of a tired head of an urban nuclear family. No doubt, department stores played a great role in shaping a woman's image: they propagated the Victorian image of an "angel of the house." The ideological functions of the department store were explored by many scholars, in particular by scholars of Japanese studies such as Louise Young, Tomoko Tamari and Jordan Sand. Young and Tamari highlight the department store's role of "civilizing" women in modern Japan.<sup>13)</sup> Louise Young calls early Japanese department stores "the missionaries of civilisation" and Tomoko Tamari describes them as a "practical learning space for women to develop consumer culture lifestyles."<sup>14)</sup> Mitsukoshi published its own magazines and catalogues like "Hanagoromo" (1899), "Jikō" (1903), "Mitsukoshi Times" (1908), and "Mitsukoshi" (1911). Together with many other home magazines, these

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12) For the military style training, see (Hong 2016)

13) (Young 1999); (Tamari 2006)

14) (Young 1999, 56); (Tamari 2006, 102)

Mitsukoshi magazines contributed to the state's enlightenment and civilization (*bunmei kaika*) projects by presenting models of how to decorate bodies and houses or how to relate bodies to houses. What is noteworthy is also that the store also sponsored several "research groups." Jordan Sand finds out that prior to the importation of Western goods and texts, the Mitsukoshi research groups demonstrated their use. Through such "academic activities," the male bourgeois intellectuals of these groups were able to project their class-based vision of the nation to the public, and Mitsukoshi could generate consumer desire.<sup>15)</sup>

Japanese department stores played an important role in popularizing the image of the "obedient petite-urbanite" head of the urban nuclear family. Modern Japanese department stores were keen on creating a "familial" entertainment space. They stabilized a nuclear family centering on children as the basic unit of the urban masses, in tune with the state's ideological vision. In Japan, the consolatory terms like "shomin" (庶民 petit-urbanite) and "sararīman" (サラリーマン salaryman) modified the myth of the urban middle class by associating it with a passive, conformist subjectivity. Harry Harootunian finds a *mélange* of social changes including the "progressive fragmentation and destabilization of cultural forms," and the rationalization of "modern life" in interwar Japan and argues that "the house and the household were at the heart of this transformation."<sup>16)</sup>

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15) (Sand 2003)

16) (2000, 14-16)

Although cultural life targeted the city “salaryman” and his family, it was concentrated first on the production and consumption of commodities for family use. The forum for these commodities was the department store, which developed rapidly in those years and made available the permanent display of household consumer goods.<sup>17)</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari see the nuclear family as the “strictly capitalist form of human reproduction” which produces asceticism and guilt.<sup>18)</sup> The department store was involved in “domesticating” the image of an urban man within families and nations in the case of Japan.

### 3. Space for Male Intellectuals

Regarding the gender of customers, one historical survey on customers of Mitsukoshi, Nihonbashi shows that the number of male customers was slightly higher than that of female customers.<sup>19)</sup> A more sketchy observation of the gender proportion is provided by photos of department stores in Japan, China and Korea, in which male customers occupy more than half. In the case of Korean department stores, a great proportion of both workers and customers were men.

The department store played a role of a salon for urban intellectuals, male or female, and was a popular spatial trope for modern literature in East Asia. Quite a few literary texts from the period directly or

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17) Ibid. 15-16.

18) (Holland 1999, 13)

19) Kon Wajirō (1888-1973), a noted architect and his students ‘compiled an illuminating sketch of the typical Mitsukoshi customer in the late 1920s’ and they were ‘surprised to find that the men composed 48.2 percent, women 47.6 percent, and children 4.2 percent of the total’. Originally published in *Fujin no tomo* in January 1929, here quoted in (Aso 2014, 179).

indirectly involve the department store as a theme. In the modernist stories, the department store is like a chimera or hallucination of modernisation. For instance, the famous Japanese modernist writer, Itō Sei wrote a short story called “Department Store Called M” of which “M” obviously refers to the Mitsukoshi Department Store. In the story, the young male protagonist aimlessly wanders around the department store, moving up and down between the roof garden and the ground floor. The effortless, smooth transport by escalators is associated with the floating existence of the urban intellectual. The department store was an exotic source of inspiration for Korean modernists such as Yi Sang and Park Taewon. Most famously, the Korean modernist, Yi Sang’s *Wings*, ends with the protagonist’s monologue in the roof garden of Mitsukoshi Seoul, “Let’s fly”, implying the narcotic-addicted protagonist’s suicide. The story which is conventionally read as colonial allegory may have symbolised the premature death of the “modern bourgeois individual.” One of the representative views on the department store is to highlight the formation of the middle and upper classes. Scholars like Louise Young approaches the issue of class from consumer culture rather than from collective action like social movements. She sees the department store as the “central institution” where the new middle classes were formed in interwar Japan.<sup>20)</sup> Yet the department store should be seen also as the end of bourgeois individuality.<sup>21)</sup> The ending of Yi Sang’s “Wings” can be read from this context. While the term “urban middle class” is commonly

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20) (Young 1999)

21) For insights into the end of bourgeois individuality and tactile experience, I acknowledge the intellectual input by Professor Graeme Gilloch and Dr Jaeho Kang.

predicated on the European history of the bourgeois individual, the department store was closely associated with collective mass culture rather than the individualist culture of bourgeoisie, particularly in East Asia.

As well as in modernist works, the department store was an important literary motif of realist stories in China. The closing scene of “Shanghai, 1930 Spring,” which is a story written by a representative modern Chinese woman writer, Ding Ling, presents a temporal cut of the city: the two protagonists encounter each other in front of a department store as a street demonstrator and a shopper. Mao Dun’s “The Lin Family Shop” portrays the decline of the petit-bourgeois class in a society of imperialist capitalist dominance, highlighting the contrast between department stores in Shanghai and a small shop in a periphery city of Suzhou.

In particular, the department store was an important space of socialising for male intellectuals in colonial Seoul. It is said that the café and the restaurant in the Mitsukoshi department store in Seoul were so popular that there were no empty seats during mealtimes. The significance of male intellectuals as customers is also seen in the floor plan of department stores in Seoul. Hwashin and Mitsukoshi, Seoul did not have as many sub-departments as did the department stores of Shanghai and Tokyo. In the 1930s, the Hwashin department store had six floors featuring the following departments:

- 1F: Gift Vouchers, Miscellaneous Goods, Cosmetics, Pharmacy
- 2F: Silks and Satins, Jewellery, Watches, Spectacles
- 3F: Ladies’ Clothing, Children’s Clothing, Toys, Embroidery

4F: Gentlemen's Clothing, Fountain Pens, Stationery, Books

5F: Cafes and Restaurants

6F: Furniture, Sports Items, Hairdresser

Roof Garden<sup>22)</sup>

The major departments on the fourth floor merit attention: fountain pens, stationery and books as well as gentlemen's clothing, must have targeted educated male customers in the city. The Mitsukoshi store in Seoul in the same period had four floors excluding a basement and a roof garden and the classification system was similar to Hwashin except for its emphasis on dry goods.

Cafes, restaurants and roof gardens of Mitsukoshi, Seoul and Hwashin had rattan chairs, which were one of the top selling items of the Mitsukoshi Department Store. Mitsukoshi Tokyo imported rattan chairs from the colony, Taiwan and rattan chairs were popular in cafes and restaurants in Tokyo and Seoul.<sup>23)</sup> Customers like modern intellectuals in Seoul liked rattan chairs and tables for their modern, exotic and tropical flavor.<sup>24)</sup> As well known, department stores in metropolises attracted customers with exotic goods from colonies while those in colonies introduced foreign goods to local residents.

“Reproducibility” of the modern media such as photography and gramophone rendered it possible for images and sound to be detached from the “origin” and to be circulated globally. With the introduction of the technologies, fantasies of the distanced “other,” both in terms of time and space were circulated, and the department store was central in

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22) Accessed 5 July 2012, [www.modernseoul.culturecontent.com](http://www.modernseoul.culturecontent.com).

23) (Mitsukoshi 1990, 76-77)

24) (Oh 2017, 37-38)

circulating such fantasies on a global scale. Music (records and musical instruments), films and art (exhibitions and galleries) were important departments in East Asian department stores such as *Wing On* and *Sincere* in Shanghai.<sup>25)</sup> Mitsukoshi's flagship store in Nihonbashi established a "new art department" to host exhibitions in 1907 and Mitsukoshi hosted various exhibitions and expositions throughout its history.<sup>26)</sup>

The importation of commodities was packaged with customs, lifestyles and fantasies of the "other." When commercial goods came to Asian department stores, exoticism nurtured in (western) metropolises was imported together with them. Exoticism in both metropolises and colonies can be understood in relation to "lack" rather than "inclusion" as Fredric Jameson argues.<sup>27)</sup>

### III. Spatial Experience: Spectacle and Theatre

In this part, I will examine how customers and workers related to each other in the space of the department store and also how they related themselves to the space.

#### 1. Service Labour

Service, as at once labour and a commodity, is distinguished from

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25) (The Sincere Co., Ltd., 1925). (*Shanghai baihuo gongsi et. al., Shanghai Jindai baihuo shangye shi*, 1988, 72-98; 126-41). Chinese department stores integrated western luxuries and hygiene products with items for the local lifestyle. (Yen 1998, 54)

26) (Mitsukoshi 1990, 43-49)

27) (Jameson 1988, 9).

other forms of labour and commodity. Service labour/commodity is characterised by intangibility, simultaneity, spatial unity, and personalisation in production and consumption. Most of all, production and consumption happen simultaneously. As the production process is itself the consumption process, the production process of service labour is fully visible to consumers, unlike traditional blue-collar or white-collar workers' labour.

Rachel Sherman's ethnographic research on luxury hotels in the US reveals an important point about service labour. Compared with non-interactive workers in luxury hotels, interactive workers tend to normalise inequality by discussing it but not critiquing it.<sup>28)</sup> Thus, seemingly more visible and direct forms of inequality are not strongly perceptible to service workers. Yet the "normalisation of inequality" cannot be attributed primarily to the characteristics of interactive labour. For instance, domestic workers' labour, which is a more intense form of interactive labour, has invited more resistance from workers. I argue that inequality is regulated, ornamented, and becomes invisible in the spectacle of service labour, inclusive of desirable facial and bodily presentation and etiquette. Guy Debord argues that "the spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images."<sup>29)</sup> The spectacle of service labour in department stores did not simply mean visual splendour and the first-rate demeanour. Service labour in the department store is mass-produced and consumed according to global standards and the image of professional workers mediates the social relationship between the

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28) (2007).

29) (Debord 1983, 7)

consumer and the producer of service labour; inequality is shrouded in such a congenial image. For workers in the service industry, relationships with customers were added to the usual worker-employer dyad and in particular, for workers on the selling floor, social relations became the essence of the work itself.

## 2. Renaissance Architecture

The founders of early department stores around the world seem to have had little hesitation about the architectural style of the buildings, generally opting for Renaissance or neoclassical styles, sometimes mixed with Baroque. To name a few, the Bon Marché in Paris, Sydney's Anthony Hordern and Sons, Philadelphia's Wanamaker's, New York's Macy's, Tokyo's Mitsukoshi Nihonbanshi store, Shanghai's Sincere and Wing On, and Seoul's Hwashin all had magnificent neoclassical buildings. Compared with the earlier architectural styles of department stores in Japan, the newly built department stores in the 1920s consciously avoided eclecticism and showed respect for "authenticity." The latecomer, the Hwashin Department Store in Seoul was designed by a well-known architect of the period, Park Kilryong, and also used neoclassical architectural vocabulary, only in a humbler version. The Renaissance style remained fashionable until the 1920s in East Asia, and the Art Deco architectural style emerged around the 1930s, when modernist literature and art and American industrialism came into vogue. For instance, the Mitsukoshi Seoul branch building which was completed in 1929 adopted the style of Art Deco.

In East Asia, the distinctively alien glamour of such buildings instantly made them urban landmarks. At the time, the Renaissance architectural style stood out among local traditional buildings. The distinctive style registered the public functions of the building which were distinguished from private residential houses. The square, proportional style of Renaissance was more suitable for public buildings of great size than were the local architectural styles. The Renaissance architectural style marked the cities' cosmopolitan connection to the world and their participation in the global loop.

The neoclassical architectural style was often used by many banks and stock market buildings in modern cities because it conveyed a feeling of trustworthiness derived from classic antiquity—mathematical order and careful proportion. The basic philosophy influencing neoclassical architecture is that of order, balance, and harmony. It arranges all elements symmetrically in simple geometric forms. The balanced columns, domes, round arches and pediments evoke ancient Greece and Rome. “(T)he overall feeling is austere: pure, clean, masculine... a conscious reaction against the opulence and ostentatiousness of the baroque and rococo, both associated with the monarchy and church”<sup>30)</sup> Many public buildings and state schools built in this style reflect the republican nature of their function. The neoclassical department store buildings which mix the Baroque style were associated with palace and monarchy.

Department store buildings exhibit the architectural grammar of

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30) (Accessed 3 January 2019)

<https://sites.google.com/a/clintonpublic.net/serenbetzp/neoclassical-art-and-architecture>

conservative masculinity. In architectural discourses, vertical architectural elements and straight lines are associated with the “celestial, divine and the masculine” while horizontal elements and curves are often associated with the “earth, sea and the feminine.”<sup>31)</sup> The Renaissance-style department store buildings bespeak a masculine architectural language, feminizing local vernacular buildings. Vitruvian body-architecture parallelism in the Renaissance style also “implicitly regards the architectural coding of the body-politic as phallogocentric since Vitruvius dispenses that design of structure should be mimetic of a perfectly proportioned male body.”<sup>32)</sup> The department store’s external facade expresses regal splendor of authoritarian masculinity.

### 3. Theatre

The indoor space of the department store can be explored in relation to a theatre. Tomoko Tamari argues that department stores were theatrical spaces, especially for women.<sup>33)</sup> The Renaissance style, in particular, must have functioned to provide the department store-goers with theatrical performativity. The obvious attraction of the neoclassical style for early department stores must have been their glamour and grandeur, which had an obvious association with cathedrals, pantheons and, above all, palaces. The “palace emporium” materialised the urban masses’ daydreams of royalty and nobility and provided an implicit stage to modestly perform a spectacular self. The famous catchphrase of

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31) (Lico 2001, 33)

32) (Ibid. 33)

33) (Tamari 2006, 99-118)

Mitsukoshi in 1914, “Today in the Imperial Theatre, Tomorrow in Mitsukoshi”, seems to have articulated the point that the department store was itself a theatre, while also implying that if the entertainment of the day was theatre-going, then future entertainment would be shopping. In fact, both buildings of the Mitsukoshi Nihonbashi building and the Imperial Theatre were built by Yokogawa Tamisuke 横河民輔 (1864-1945) in the style of French Renaissance. The Renaissance style department stores, including the Mitsukoshi Nihonbashi building and the Minakai Seoul building, had a central atrium, which enhances theatricality. As Noriko Aso argues, the central atrium made shoppers “aware of gazing and being gazed upon.”<sup>34)</sup> Shoppers became part of the theatrical performance as well as the mass spectacle; such an imaginary, active, and participatory space, in which subject and object were fused together, accumulated diverse, open-ended, and heterogeneous dimensions, comparable to Deleuzian “assemblage.”

Theatre in this context does not imply a Freudian model of the “theatre” in which desire is an abstract, subjective essence, and in which the central question concerns meaning and representation. Rather, for Deleuze and Guattari, desire is a productive force which produces the real world. With the term of “desiring-machines,” they replaced the Freudian theatre model with the Marxian factory model.<sup>35)</sup> In particular, desire becomes the material(ist) real, which is directly connected to money in the case of department stores. The spatial experience of the Renaissance style is rhizomatic, and it should not be seen simply as a reproduction of the unconscious steered by the

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34) (Aso 2014, 178).

35) (Holland 1999).

architectural origin or as an inscription of the political and economic power. The department store was a desiring machine that functioned to produce, circulate, consume, and reproduce mass desire and the mass spectacle.

## IV. Bodily Experience: Building Machine, Desiring Machine

### 1. Building Machine

One of the key innovations of the department store is often said to be in display and in this regard, the transformation that took place in Japanese department stores merits discussion. In Japan, the traditional style of selling was *zauri*, that is, shop clerks fetching goods while customers waited, sitting on *tatami* 畳 mats.<sup>36)</sup> The transition from *tatami* to wooden floors facilitated the “democratisation” of indoor commercial spaces. Whereas traditional dry goods stores (*gofukuten*, 呉服店) served mainly merchants as their clientele, the modern department store, which did not require customers to remove their shoes to enter, was potentially open to everybody regardless of their intention to purchase. *Zauri* relied heavily on oral communication and contemplation. After the transition period (1895 - 1923), Japanese department stores evolved and began to use glass display-case systems.<sup>37)</sup> Such systems allowed commodities to be shown to mass consumers

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36) In Korea, proper department stores appeared in the late 1920s after the conversion to the glass-case display had already been completed in Japan.

37) Mitsukoshi's flagship introduced a display-case system on the second floor in 1895 (Moeran 1998, 146-147). Around 1923, most department stores embraced the

and to speak for themselves; shop assistants *assisted* commodities lying in the glass cases. It may thus be said that visibility became central to the experience of the commercial space. Yet such a visual experience should be seen in a broader context of the spatial experience of the grand, open space equipped with modern technologies such as escalators and elevators. Escalators appeared for the first time in Tokyo, in *Mitsukoshi*, in 1914; in Shanghai, in *Daxin*, in 1936; and in Seoul, in *Hwashin*, in 1941. Noting the importance of “moving”, a cultural critic, Mike Featherstone, stresses the “mobility of the gaze” and distraction in the experience of the department store.<sup>38)</sup>

I want to develop this perspective further and challenge the visibility-centred approach to the department store. Critically analysing the theoretical limitations of the panoptic model (for instance, its lack of understanding of the subjectivity of the observer), Anne Friedberg aptly notes that the new entertainment industry comprising the panorama, the world exhibition, and the department store represented a sort of “building-machine,” designed to “transport” rather than “confine” the spectator-subject.<sup>39)</sup> Advancements in architectural technologies such as iron and glass construction were widely applied to the entertainment industry and brought about a distinctive intersection of the collective subject and public space. In these public spaces, on the one hand, the “mobility” of the gaze greatly increased and, on the other, visual observation was increasingly superseded by more bodily engagement with the commodity spectacle. In particular, the experience

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street-shoe policy, which was accompanied by wooden floors (Young 1999, 60).

38) (1998)

39) (1994)

of the department store, a multifunctional building-cum-machine featuring escalators, elevators, revolving doors, a huge open hall, and often an amusement park on the roof, involved not a single sensorial activity but multi-sensorial behaviour bound up with shock and distraction. Department stores' rooftops had various functions: amusement park with rides (The Emporium, San Francisco), a large hydrogen balloon (Wanamaker's, New York), or a roller-skating rink (Daimaru, Osaka); a concert space (Nordiska Kompaniet, Stockholm); a roof garden (Mitsukoshi, Tokyo); and a zoo (Matsuzakaya, Tokyo). The bodily experience of department stores cannot be limited to "visuality" but should be configured as corporeal engagement in high stimuli of modern cities.

## 2. Desiring Machine

The collective experience *of* (and no longer *in*) the department store is less akin to optical perception than to tactile perception, that is, the urban culture of distraction which can be characterised as collective, habitual, everyday unconsciousness, and fragmentary. According to Walter Benjamin, one of the key aspects of "tactile perception" is "distraction."<sup>40</sup> Rather than casting a solely negative light on distraction, Benjamin sees it as the central characteristic of modern perception (such as the experience of cinema) and leads us to explore the everyday unconsciousness of the urban masses rather than analysing the rational intention of the bourgeois individual. In particular, while film-going audiences are, at least in principle, characterized by

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40) (Taussig 1991); (Benjamin 1999)

immobility and silence, the shoppers of the department store are mobile. Physical mobility may add greater complexity to Benjamin's conception of distraction.

I highlight physical mobility, participatory features, performativity, collectivity, distraction and the unconscious in the spatial experience of the technologically equipped building machine of the department store. The department store invokes, initiates, and lures the urban masses' desires and translates them into tactile experiences. Active bodily forces animate the synthesis of the unconsciousness; the radically fluid, fragmentary form of subjectivity I am gesturing toward here can be understood better in association with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the "body without organs", "plateau" and "desiring machine." They illuminate "plateau" and "body without organs" as follows:

A plateau is a piece of *immanence*. Every BwO [body without organs] is made up of plateaus. Every BwO is itself a plateau in communication with other plateaus on the plane of consistency. The BwO is a component of passage.<sup>41)</sup> (emphasis added)

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "plateau" embraces Spinoza's philosophy of immanence and, as is well known, is shared by quite a few theorists such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. The body without organs is made up of diverse plateaus and is opposed to the organism. The body's relation to the space of the department store and other bodies can be grasped as BwO and here the space of the department store is not an organism. Deleuze configures desire as

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41) (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 158).

“intensive difference,” “becoming,” “force” or “exteriority” and a philosophy of desire as “spontaneous, chaotic, and irreducible emergence.” Bodies are only distinguished in extension by degrees of “speed and slowness, movement and rest,” and not with respect to substance.<sup>42)</sup> Both bodies and desire are associated with “an increase in its number of dimensions, connections and parts”<sup>43)</sup> and the bodily experience of the department store can be approached as heterogeneous multitude of dimensions and connections. As much as the department store was a desiring machine, the urban masses are desiring machines. The spatial experience of the department store challenges the clear division between subject and object.

## V. Conclusion

In general, I have attempted to shift the focus of studies of (East Asian) department stores from women, westernisation, the bourgeois individual and visibility to men, globality, the urban masses and desiring machines. Relating East Asian department stores with men, I have pointed out patriarchal characteristics of the various images of masculinities: a strong head of a great household, entrepreneurial brothers, and the obedient petit-urbanite breadwinner of the urban nuclear family. I have explored East Asian department stores as male intellectuals’ space and discussed how the department store played a

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42) (Goodchild 1996, 11, 39)

43) (Ibid. 3)

role in circulating modernism including metropolitan exoticism globally. In the spatial experience of the department store, I have also examined human relationships in the space of the department store and the relationship between human beings and the space of the building. In the part on the Renaissance architectural style, I have discussed conservative masculinity of the exterior and the characteristics related to spectacle and a theatre of the interior space. Finally, I illuminated the concrete bodily experience of the department store with the terms of “building machine” and “desiring machine.” I have avoided corroborating the model of modern subjectivity or the conventional image of a coherent, rational, and individualised subjectivity. For instance, I did not focus on the subject’s—the shopper, the company, or the state’s—interest and rational intention. Instead, I have stressed multiple plateaus or assemblages of collectivity. Bodily experience of the department store also challenges the rigid division between subject and object or between “what is born” and “what is made”.

투 고 일: 2019년 1월 24일

심 사 완 료 일: 2019년 2월 09일

게 재 확 정 일: 2019년 2월 16일

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요약

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## 백화점의 공간 경험- 근대 동아시아를 중심으로

홍지순

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이 논문은 20세기 초 동아시아의 백화점들에 초점을 맞추어 백화점의 공간 경험을 연구한다. 백화점을 서구에서 수입된 문물로 보기보다 전지구적 소통의 지점으로 보고 여성, 서구화, 시각성, 중산층 개인 등을 중심으로 한 기존 백화점 연구의 방향을 남성, 전지구성, 신체 경험, 도시 대중 집단 등으로 바꾼다. 백화점의 남성성은 동아시아에서 가족적 이미지로 소통되었는데 예를 들어 가부장적 창업자(형제)와 도시 핵가족의 “소시민” 가장 소비자가 중요하게 부각되었다. 백화점은 모더니즘 문학 작품 등의 중요한 모티브가 되기도 했는데 백화점 공간은 유럽의 식민지 이국에 대한 환상이 상품과 더불어 전지구적으로 소통되는 지점으로 작용했다고 할 수 있다. 이 논문은 또한 백화점 공간에서 어떠한 인간 관계가 형성되는지 즉 서비스 노동에 대해서 살펴보고 소비자는 백화점 공간과 어떤 관계를 맺는지를 스펙타클, 극장 등의 개념을 통해 논의한다. 마지막으로 백화점 공간의 구체적 신체 경험을 빌딩기계, 욕망기계 등의 개념으로 접근한다. 백화점 공간의 경험이 시각적, 개인적 경험이라기 보다는 동적, 집단적 신체 경험이며 공간과 인간을 모두 기계라는 개념으로 접근하며 주, 객 혹은 인간, 기계의 확연한 구분에 문제를 제기한다.

**주제어:** 백화점, 공간, 남성성, 욕망기계, 스펙타클, 동아시아