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Learning Korean Culture: Embodied Visuality

This paper describes an interactive visual and audio experience intended for a mixed Korean-Western crowd at an electronic music club in Busan, Korea, aimed at teaching interconnected lessons. First, dance is a visual-audio-motile-emotive art, highlighting intermodal aspects of perception. Second and relatedly, through repeated rhythms from electronic genres such as techno and house music playing alongside an interactive visual breathing exercise, we will emphasize the body as a synergic system that achieves greater unity by coordinating around environmental contours. Third and most importantly, insofar as each individual synchronizes to the visualized collective breath and music, and inasmuch as each person's activity affects the visual and audio display, we hope to cultivate social coordination, in turn instilling a sense of communal consciousness, and therewith Dewey's idea that experience is shared and cultural, a notion also conveyed in the Korean concept of *uri* or "we-self". Dewey in fact spent several years in China, and perhaps absorbed the idea of co-dependent origination, central to Buddhism but also carried in outlooks such as Daoism. The principle is that things and their properties and even agents are metaphysically interdependent and such that they only show up together – an important lesson in an increasingly divided world. While *uri* is a primary experience for Koreans, it is typically foreign to Westerners, which creates a challenge, according to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. This is that 1) primary experience arises through bodily messing about in the world; 2) this primary experience is of a sort that cannot readily be communicated by

conventional abstract means such as language; and 3) primary experience is nonetheless the material out of which abstraction arises, including the concept of *uri*. Broadly, then, we hope that our interactive visual and audio exercise opens an experiential sense of oneness, especially to Westerners.

A recipient of teaching accommodations, Matthew Crippen is a professor and researcher in Germany and Korea. His work intersects history, cognitive science and cross-cultural value theory, all orbiting ecological concerns. He has over 40 publications in venues such as *Synthese*, *Topoi*, the *Brit. J. of Aesth.*, *Trans. Charles Peirce Soc.*, *Front. Psychol.* and *Envir. Ethics*, plus a Columbia Univ. Press book. Outside the academy, he has worked as a musician, music instructor and gymnastics coach.

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