<u>**Audience Generations: Millennials, "Becomers," and Beyond, pt. 2**</u>

"From viewser to broadcasting jockey – immersion into the Afreeca TV community**"**

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In 2016, Facebook successfully launched the live streaming option to enhance the interactivity between their users and offer an additional format to share memories. By offering this choice of personal curation to digital space, the social network integrates the good practices of other broadcasting platforms to attract younger audiences that start giving up on their site.

Afreeca TV, The South Korean live streaming platform is one enduring example that relies primarily on the contribution of a community of young users.

The few articles available about this DIY database all revolve around the same issues: food porn, stupidity of content, sexual exhibitionism, and exploitative financial gain of the creators. This limited vision reveals a restricted comprehension and negative bias toward Youth Media. Hence, when dealing specifically with a youth subculture, only immersion into these platforms can allow for deconstructive discourses relating to the perception of the Media by young users. I have then decided to conduct short-term field research on the Global platform. First, I conversed online with different broadcasting jockeys (Bjs) and viewers, then I produced my own show to experience the different layers of interactivity that are at the root of this participatory (sub)culture.

Scattered between the South Korean "hyposite" (only available for South Korean users) and the Global replica, the bicephalous platform fosters the creation of a "fandom" community around Korean culture. The Korean Broadcasting Jockeys have the advantage to migrate between both platforms and update the global audience about the latest Korean entries. As a positive consequence, this design allows many young users from a mixed-racial background to reflect on their status as uprooted global citizens.

Community cohesion is very well secured by the modus operandi of the platform, which makes it possible to simultaneously be both Broadcasting Jockey and audience, allowing for a stretch in time between both positions. In the chats many of the producers confess taking breaks. This implies that stopping broadcasting activity does not mean leaving the community but rather participating as a viewer for a certain amount of time. The creators of the site have also designed other intermediary roles like *manager* or *fan and super fan* positions which provide an honorary title on the BJ channel. These entities also sometimes act as producers-advisers.

Economically, the designers of the database provide a system where the BJs can earn money from their shows and cash out on their star currency, often given as a remuneration from followers. This currency becomes the "like and love market" of the fans.

Thus, intuitive use of the platform along with the multiplicity of roles available further encourage constant connection to the social network. This call for contribution is also visible in the ongoing debates and chats between the members about the required qualities of an exemplary BJ. However, more than just a highly competitive space, the BJ community supports newcomers by creating tutorials that provide advice on how to produce a show that brings interesting perspectives and insight to the forum.

In addition, the platform does not provide videochat conversation (only videos, the audience interacts in written form), the BJ needs to connect with the audience through a continuous stream of consciousness. This controlled performativity forces the Bjs to well prepare their shows in advance with playlists, video extracts and supplementary content. The most experienced build a digital persona that stands apart from the crowd.

The fact that this mode of interaction resembles a mode of "interveillance" raises questions. For a younger generation that has grown up in the era of the omnipresent cam, the issue does not seem to

be stressed in the exhibition process anymore. The real challenge is to skillfully adhere a digital persona with content that serves the database and supports a personal need for communication. Most of the BJs appear comfortable with having their digital persona heavily criticized. The fact that audience can become BJ and vice versa usually tames inevitable frustrations and supports the experiential process.

Afreeca TV reveals once again the strength of the New Millennium generation to create the TV of the future by supporting a sense of community that offers a space to express the unique voice of the individual. More then being (only) an extension of the systematic abuse of platforms that make money out of data-mining voluntary involvement, the youths seem to take advantage of the platform features to extend their own network. It is clear that some of them hope that behind each silent viewer would be the one who would transform their shows into a Hollywoodesque success story. It is also apparent that such aspirations are not the only motivation for those producing content.