



What is an animated image?

Korean shaman paintings as objects of ambiguity

Laurel KENDALL, *American Museum of Natural History and Columbia University*

Jongsung YANG, *The Museum of Shamanism (Seoul)*

Building on a crossdisciplinary interest in how religion works materially, we examine the triangulated relationship between Korean shamans (*mansin*), the paintings of gods that hang in their shrines, and the animating presences that empower both *mansin* and paintings, drawing inspiration from Alfred Gell's notion of "object agency." The gods who inspire a *mansin* to manifest them in ritual and who animate the paintings in her shrine perform inspiration (of the shaman) and animation (of the paintings) in analogous and complementary ways through relationships that are variable, contingent, and often ambiguous. By contrast, the Buddha images that also inhabit the *mansin*'s shrine are a different kind of animated thing. Our study argues for more fine-grained discussions of numinous paraphernalia and the ways that the efficacy of sacred objects and bodies is realized (or not). We also offer a caution against the presumptions of generalizing terminologies such as "animated images" where different images might be qualitatively different kinds of animated thing, even within the same lived religious world.

Keywords: Object agency, shaman, material religion, sacred object, ambiguity, animation, animism, Korea

The gods know in advance that they are going to an antique shop and they fly away of their own accord.

— Mansin Sö

Thus did Mansin Sö, a Korean shaman, describe gods voluntarily vacating the paintings that had been removed from a shaman's shrine when these same paintings entered

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons



| © Laurel Kendall and Jongsung Yang.

ISSN 2049-1115 (Online). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14318/hau5.2.011>

the art market. Mansin Sö would probably agree with Igor Kopytoff's notion of the mutable object biography: the significance of a thing is contingent upon shifting contexts of meaning as it circulates from one regime of value to another; art markets turn things once regarded as magical or sacred into collectable aesthetic commodities in a global marketplace (Kopytoff 1986) and gods have reason to "fly away." But the vacated painting is not necessarily a neutral object; in this same interview, Mansin Sö described a family with ties to the shaman world who had traded paintings to the antiquities market and subsequently experienced several early deaths because the new disposition of the paintings had displeased the gods. We will offer other examples of unquiet paintings below. If the de-animated paintings are no longer the active seats of gods, but not quite neutral media, it becomes necessary to try to situate them within a process of becoming and unbecoming that is part of a living shamanic practice.

In a work of collaborative research, we have been examining the biographies of Korean shaman paintings (*musindo*, *t'aenghwa*), considering how they operate in different contexts of use, transaction, and appreciation, and how these meanings are subject to debate, even among the shamans themselves. We have explored how, in recent decades, such paintings have become objects of collectable art, avidly sought by a coterie of South Korean collectors, and have noted how these same paintings retain a frisson from their prior association with shamans, gods, and souls (Kendall and Yang 2014; Kendall, Yang, and Yoon, forthcoming).¹ They are "hybrids" in Bruno Latour's sense (1993); once regarded as sacred, magical, and possibly even scary, they have been "purified" by their translation as collectable art (Mitchell 2005), but not completely. The collector responds to the same painted evocation of presence—a colorful god with bold, staring eyes—that caused the painting to stand out in the shrine as something "at odds with the normal" (Taussig 2009: 8). Many Korean collectors retain a visceral awareness that in popular parlance, ghosts, pollution, and generally inauspicious auras follow paintings and other shamanic paraphernalia (Kendall and Yang 2014; Kendall, Yang, and Yoon, forthcoming). Shamans themselves speak of "*t'ali*," the inauspicious consequences of improperly handling or otherwise being connected to objects that have been associated with a spirit/soul (*yöng*) presence or power.² It is this relationship—between shamans, things, and the animating presences that empower both shamans and things—that we explore here. We will suggest that the empowerment of images—even within the single regime of value of a Korean shaman's practice—is variable, contingent, and often ambiguous. Our examination of objects as the sites of such operations is inspired by Alfred Gell's notion of the agentive object (Gell 1998). The contingency of souls, the very notion that there are, or in appropriate circumstances ought be animating presences inside the paintings also suggests a possible conversation with the current revival of anthropological interest in "animism," a possibility that

1. Yoon Yul-soo, with whom we are collaborating on another project, is the Korean scholar who has probably been most active in creating an appreciation for shaman paintings as art (Yoon 1994).
2. Not only paintings and shaman paraphernalia but clothing and objects belonging to the more ordinary dead, as well as furniture, appliances, and ceremonial food brought into the house in inappropriate ways can have inauspicious attachments (Kendall 1985: 86–112).

we will take up in our conclusion (Costa and Fausto 2010; Descola [2004] 2014; Viveiros de Castro 2004; Ingold 1998). Our work builds on a project initiated by Fernando Santos-Granero and his colleagues in the seminal volume, *The occult life of things*, which attempted a native Amazonian theory of materiality and personhood and realized very quickly that amid disparate configurations of persons, gods, souls, ontologies, and material things, “there are multiple ways of being an object in Amerindian lived worlds” (Santos-Granero 2009: 3). Extending this discussion to an Asian lived world, we are in a place where images commonly become the sacred habitations of gods through liturgical rites of animation associated with Buddhist, Hindu, and many popular religious practices. This is also a place where, as in many if not most shamanic traditions, the shaman’s paraphernalia participates, in concert with the shaman’s own body, in the construction and efficacy of shamanic events (Bacigalupo 2014; Balzer 2008; Buyandelger 2013; Desjarlais 1996; Guzmán-Gallegos 2009; Jochelson 1926; Miller 2009, and many others). In the *mansin*’s³ practice, not only the paintings but the costumes she⁴ wears when she manifests the gods during a *kut*,⁵ her most elaborate ritual, as well as her drum, fan, bells, and other paraphernalia are sacred things kept in the shrine and used on ritual occasions, but also the paintings, as the site where she engages with her personal gods on a daily basis, are a critical marker of her relationship with them.

At a juncture between liturgically animated images and shamanic paraphernalia, a Korean shaman’s painting stretches the notion of ritual animation to account for the inconsistent agency of gods as it affects both painted images and shaman bodies. Our focus on the ungrounded presence of gods in association with the grounded presence of the painting as an operable shaman thing complicates a consideration of what the paintings are, both during their active service in the shrine and in a possible afterlife as art. Even while the paintings are hanging in the shrine, the gods might choose to “fly away.” We begin with a basic description of Korean shamans (for whom there is already a substantial literature) followed by a more substantive discussion of how their distinctive relationship with the gods they serve

-
3. Korean shamans and shaman-like practitioners are broadly referred to as *mudang*. *Mansin* who perform in the regional styles of Seoul and its surround and in a style originally performed in what is now North Korea install divine images in their shrines and manifest the gods in their own bodies while wearing appropriate costumes. Although these visual attributes of *mansin* have now been borrowed throughout Korea while *posal*, as a general term for a female religious practitioner, is now used by many *mansin*, *mansin* is used here as the most precise referent to our subject and “shaman” when we are making a broader statement.
 4. Although some Korean shamans are men, the majority are women and we use the feminine pronoun here.
 5. *Mansin* describe the *kut* as occasions where the ancestors are fed and the gods play. A team of *mansin* manifest the gods in sequence wearing appropriate costume, miming the gestures and facial expressions of the god, and then addressing the client in the god’s voice. These encounters are generally characterized by bargaining, bantering, often humorous play where the god typically berates the client for past neglect and eventually promises good fortune, and then another god appears and the process is repeated (Kendall 1985, 2009).

is abetted by the paintings that hang in their shrines. We then describe the different circumstances where gods operate through painted images (or do not) and link this discussion to the role of ambiguity in a practice that sees animated images as operating in tandem with shamans' bodies.

Shamans and paintings as media of the divine

Despite South Korea's large Christian population, the Buddhist establishment's divestment of its prior association with popular religion, and periodic "antisuperstition" campaigns over the last century, Korean shamans remain a vital part of the religious landscape of South Korea. Although many South Koreans know the *mansin* primarily through television documentaries and staged performances by those *mansin* who are government-designated heritage-bearers (*poyuja*), others seek their services to secure health and good fortune while they navigate the vicissitudes of a volatile economy (Kendall 2009). As with those we call "shaman" in other traditions, Korean shamanism is an embodied practice. The *mansin* is chosen by the gods. The prospective initiate's emaciated body, mysterious illnesses, and manic behavior are read as signs that the gods will torture her to death if she does not accept her calling. As a fully-realized *mansin* performing a ritual *kut*, she marks her transition into the presence of each god in sequence by wearing the particular god's costume and dancing vigorously to drum beats. When the drumming and dancing stop, she mimes the particular god's affect, performs physical feats, and delivers divinations in the god's voice. Although this is not a one-on-one trance possession, the *mansin* in her own costumed body is a medium for the visible and kinetic presence of her gods, a prosthesis enabling the actions of otherwise invisible entities. As we shall see, notions of "media" or "prosthesis" also apply to the paintings that hang in her shrine.⁶

In front of the painted images of her gods, a *mansin* makes daily offerings of pure water and liquor, lights candles, and burns incense and here she makes her petitions, both personal and on behalf of her clients. In the Seoul region, a shaman punctuates her departure for a client's house and her return from a ritual with greetings to the gods in her shrine. *Mansin* who assist at a *kut* will sometimes gather at the home of the shaman who has organized the team (*tangju mudang*) and before departing for the *kut*, they will also enter her shrine, greet her grandfathers, and sometimes leave an offering in gratitude for being included in the work of the *kut*. While *mansin* offer cautionary tales of the punishments inflicted by angry gods (we give examples below), the relationship can sometimes be enacted playfully as when, changing her clothing in the confines of a narrow public shrine, the *mansin* Yongsu's Mother shouted over her shoulder, "Don't look, Grandfathers!"⁷ Regular clients see themselves as linked to the gods in their particular *mansin*'s shrine through offerings

6. We are grateful for Clare Harris' (2013) thoughtful consideration of this and other appropriate terms for an animated image.

7. The paintings in a public shrine are not dedicated to a particular shaman and as a consequence are usually not animated. We doubt that Yongsu's Mother would change her clothes in her own or a fellow *mansin*'s personal shrine.

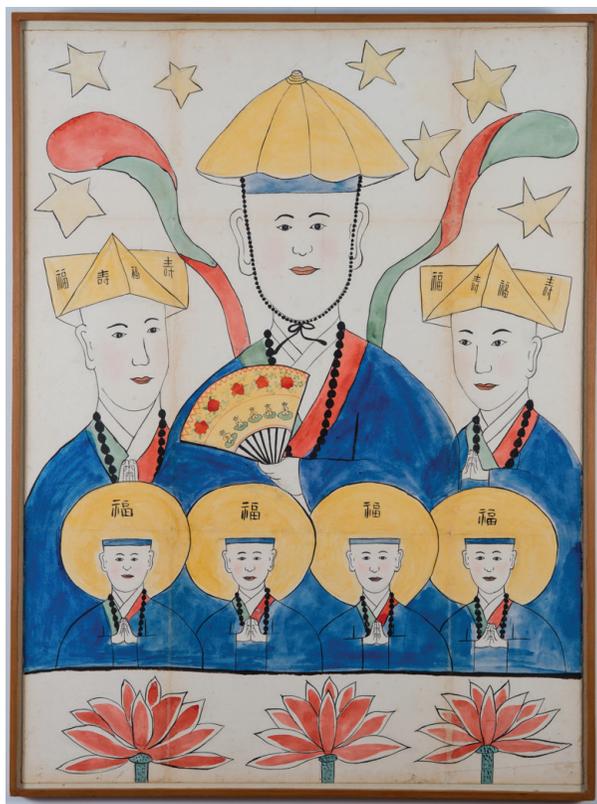


Figure 1. Early twentieth-century painting of Ch'ilsŏng, the “Seven Stars,” or god of the Big Dipper, from Kangwha Island on the northwest coast of South Korea. The Seven Stars provide blessings of good health, long life, and male babies. The seven figures in the painting represent the seven stars of the Big Dipper. Photo: Yang Jongsung, 2013; The Museum of Shamanism.

of costumes and utensils that bear their own names and through the regular seasonal devotions they make there. They express their loyalty by affirming the efficacy of the gods in their regular *mansin's* (*tan'gol*) shrine, the gods who respond favorably to their petitions and send them astute divinations. This resounds to the credit and success of the *mansin*. Similarly, a shrine devoid of regular clients suggests lackluster gods or a *mansin* who does not enjoy divine favor.

The gods in the paintings are a group of easily recognizable types but there are variations within type particular to each shaman; a General is nearly always present but he might be the Envoy General, the General who Rides the White Horse, a historical military hero, or another from a list of possible Generals, each (ideally) painted with appropriate variations. This surface presentation, the type in the painting, designates the role but not necessarily the actor who inhabits the role. As in Chinese popular religion, where a virtuous official might be “appointed” to serve as the City God of a particular place, the role of a particular god or goddess can be filled by a more intimate ancestral personage, someone from the shaman's own near or genealogically distant family or from a lineage of shamanic

teachers. Siblings or children who died of smallpox or measles appear as Child Gods (Tongja) in the *mansin's* own pantheon while the shaman who trained her or a shaman ancestor becomes her Great Spirit Guardian (Taesin) (Kendall 1985, 1988; Walraven 2009).⁸ Yongsu's Mother's husband who died of drink serves as the spirit warrior in her shrine and maintains his love of alcohol when Yongsu's Mother manifests him during *kut*; a healthy supply of bottles can usually be found in front of his image. Yongsu's Mother's portrait of the Spirit Warrior is standard but she addresses the god in the person of her husband, as when Kendall provided her with a portrait of the shaman performing *kut* and Yongsu's Mother slapped it on the altar in front of the Spirit Warrior's image saying, "Just see how pretty your wife is, ha!" In the tradition of Hwanghae Province, the portraits themselves are usually more individuated with the artist attempting to replicate the client's description of a dead shaman teacher (Kendall, Yang, and Yoon, forthcoming; Walraven 2009). Such paintings suggest biographical objects in Janet Hoskins' sense, objects "endowed with the personal characteristics of their owners" (Hoskins 1998: 7), but with a twist. The presence of particular gods associated with particular paintings in the shrine link intimate autobiography to otherwise standardized material images, but the materiality of the painting, its basic object-ness, is a temporary skin that can be shed when it becomes old and tattered and needs to be replaced so that the god in question can inhabit a fresh new seat. The god is a biographical presence; the god/painting is a biographical object only for so long as the god inhabits the painting. As we shall see, the status of old, de-animated paintings, like the habitation of new ones, is a matter of some ambiguity.

A painting? A god? A god in a painting

The paintings that hang in the *mansin's* shrine are the tangible site of her daily encounters with her gods and the primary material manifestation of their bond. The paintings in the *mansin's* shrine are, or ought to be, animated images, objects entered by gods when the *mansin* invited them in during a ritual *kut* and who subsequently operate through the painting, inspiring the shaman to do the work of divination, exorcism, and other mediations with the divine realm. It is useful to think of the enshrined paintings, like the shaman herself, as a sort of divine prosthesis (or avatar or vehicle or media), an object that can be taken up or set aside by its divine owner, but when in use, is deployed as an extension of the god's ability to move in and engage with the mortal world. In this sense, and using Santos-Granero's language (2009), the shaman painting is *a subject that becomes an object*; the god who is otherwise invisible, except in shaman's dreams and visions, claims material form and location in the shrine through the medium of the painting and during rituals through the *mansin's* own voice and costumed, embodied performance. The painting is *also an object that becomes subject* when, through its animation as the seat of a deity, the image merges with the presence of the god, at least for a time.

8. Near and distant ancestors in client families might also become deities in their household pantheons in ways that recall their activities when alive (Kendall 1985: chapters 1 and 6).

Mansin are able to enact the will of the gods because they enjoy a relationship of compatibility (*habwi*) with their personal gods fostered through devotions in front of the images in the shrine and pilgrimages to sacred mountains and experienced as a flow of inspiration from gods inhabiting paintings. The gods give the *mansin* inspiration (*myönggi*) through aural and visual cues, including vivid dreaming, bodily sensations, and intuition. By the gods' favor, experienced in part as a clear flow of inspiration through the paintings that hang in her shrine, she is able to divine, perform rituals that create auspiciousness and harmony for her clients, and cast misfortune from their path. For her part, the shaman must interpret the gods' will, putting correct words to their intentions when she manifests them in *kut*, however fragmentary and unclear the message they give her. The *mansin* who misinterprets the will of her gods risks punishment for herself and her clients; these beliefs are widely held within the Korean shaman world and are the stakes for prospective clients who parse the distinction between a "real" and efficacious shaman and one who is not. Many initiation rituals fail for lack of divine inspiration, many recent initiates abandon the profession in frustration, and some *mansin*, well into their careers, are abandoned by their gods after a serious infraction. In *mansin* talk, this happened when the shaman Okkyöng's Mother tended her brother's corpse, became polluted, and jeopardized her thirty-years' practice as a *mansin* and when Mansin An resumed a relationship with her prodigal husband and displeased her jealous gods.

The painting, then, functions as a medium, a transmitter of divine agency. For the sake of clarity it might be worth noting how the "animation" of paintings functions differently from "animation" as the life-simulation of puppets, masks, and in modern media animated cartoons, (Silvio 2010) game avatars and social media personas (Manning and Gershon 2013). In these examples, animation refers to the technical process that causes the thing to move. The animated painting remains stationary, inert to any but the shaman who derives inspiration through it. Just as the shaman needs the painting, the gods (acting through the painting) need the shaman to mime and speak, to make them an animated presence in a ritual setting through the shaman's body as the moving media. At the same time, I would resist easy analogies between shamans and puppets or other motion-animated media, although such analogies might be appropriate for some traditions of spirit mediumship in some places. In the case of Korean shamans, they risk eliding the critical effort of the shaman who, unlike those mediums who are assumed to have lost both consciousness and volition, must grasp the willful gods' intentions and appropriately perform them into being.

In the Korean shaman's world—no less than in Gell's discussion of "idols"—the divine image becomes "a locus for person-to-person encounters with divinities" (Gell 1998: 125, 128). Certain consequences in human affairs may be abducted to the god, sometimes owing to the treatment or placement of a painting as the god's seat. In the summer of 1983, the *mansin* Yongsu's Mother learned in a divination that her bad health and absence of clients was a consequence of the current location of her shrine room, a side room that recalled the spatial location of the servants' quarters in a traditional nobleman's household; things improved once she had them reinstalled, on a lucky day, in the centermost of her three rooms. In 1978, Yongsu's Mother had abducted Clear Spring Mansin's leg injury to "fighting"



Figure 2. Early twentieth-century painting of the “Willow Warrior” Yumok Shinjang, from Hwanghae Province, now in North Korea. Spirit Warriors, like this one drive out malevolent spirits and other inauspicious forces. Photo: Yang Jongsung, 2013; The Museum of Shamanism.

(*ssauda*) among Clear Spring Mansin’s gods. Clear Spring’s own father, who served as the Twelfth Spirit Warrior in her shrine, wanted to be placed near the Buddha but had been forced to endure the company of the *mansin*’s Knife-Riding Guardian God, a condition that Clear Spring quickly adjusted by moving his image. When Yongsu’s Mother was flat on her back with a broken leg and unable to tend her shrine, the grandfathers gave her rough and violent (*sanapda*) dreams until she ordered her grudging son to pour the pure water and alcohol that her different grandfathers and grandmothers expected for their daily offerings. A few years ago, the aspiring shaman Minju’s Mother paid 6,000,000 won (about US\$6,000) for a collective painting of her gods but was ill advised. Soon thereafter she fought with her son, fell into debt, had a bad fall that required repeated visits to the doctor, and experienced dizzy spells. In a dream, the troubled *mansin* saw the big painting in her shrine split down the middle as a black cloud floated over it and covered the images of her gods. Minju’s Mother took down the expensive painting and burned it up.

Among Korean shamans, god and painting are both commonly referred to as “*haraböji*” or “grandfather,” an intimate but respectful term of address, and as

“grandfathers,” gods and paintings are often indistinguishable in shaman talk (Yang 2004: 152). When a *mansin*, presiding over a difficult initiation, expressed her exasperation, she claimed that in fifteen years of service as a shaman, she had not once picked a quarrel with the gods (*sin*) but that she had reached her limit. And then, glaring up at the paintings on the wall, her anger and frustration exploded, “I’m going to tear you off the wall and burn you up!” (Kendall 1996: 41). Who or what would be torn off the wall and cast into the flames? When Chatterbox Mansin resolved to take down her alter and give up her work as a shaman, she made this report to Yongsu’s Mother, her sister and fellow *mansin*:

She said, “Listen to this, in a dream grandmother told me: ‘We aren’t going to be separated from each other so tie us all up!’ and so I did it, I tied them up together.” She tied up all the images that she had fixed to her wall. And then what next? She took the bundle of images and left it on top of my altar. Her gods had already come to my house, so they told her, “Tie us up, tie us up!” and bring them to my house.

Yongsu’s Mother, in her own dream, had already seen Chatterbox’s gods enter her shrine, they were already, in some sense, present and yet the transfer of the paintings seems to have been a necessary part of the process, urgently articulated by the gods in Chatterbox’s dream. Despite such portents, and despite a daylong ritual that invited the gods to take up residence in the shrine, it did not work out as the two sisters had planned. The gods may have been present but they were incompatible with the gods already present in her shrine and could not remain there. Again, in Yongsu’s Mother’s words,

Her grandfathers would not enter my shrine; they just would not do it. So I took them down from the wall and rolled them all up and now I keep them under the altar . . . and only my grandfathers are present in the shrine, giving me inspiration (*myōnggi*), the inspiration that comes from our spiritual compatibility (*habwi*), they respond to my petitions (*yōnggōm*). They give me inspiration and I do just as they show me. . . . When the gods are there, you feel it. Otherwise you can’t put them up on the wall. You approach them with an empty mind and they command you but now things were off-kilter, strange. My luck was blocked and then whenever I tried to work with them, the words just didn’t come out. It was as if they were mumbling and grumbling. It was all wrong.

Yongsu’s Mother’s business was off. Her health was bad and she had troubling dreams. In the shrine, she found that her own guardian god and Chatterbox’s had fallen to the floor and were stuck together. “They had been fighting,” she said. There was no compatibility among the shaman, her own gods, and these new gods; they would not help her in her work and she would not serve them. Although she had seen them enter her shrine and although they were sufficiently present there to “mumble and grumble” and quarrel with her own gods, they had not “come in,” they had not agreed to take their seats in the paintings, to fully inhabit them and work harmoniously with the shaman. Once they (the paintings) were rolled up under her altar, she made no offerings to them (Chatterbox’s gods). “If they were compatible with me, then I would feed them all together with my own grandfathers

but I don't give them anything. They live like beggars," she chuckled.⁹ In the spring of 1985, two years after these events, Yongsu's Mother would leave her shrine door open wide so that her resident "grandfathers" could enjoy the flowers blooming in the garden. Whenever Chatterbox passed the open threshold, she pulled the door firmly shut. Yongsu's Mother, with equal determination, would open it wide again. It became a tug of war between them. Yongsu's Mother told Kendall that she thought that Chatterbox was uneasy with this reminder of her abandoned gods and her own broken connection to shamanic practice, that her abandoned gods would shake her up and make her ill if she stayed too long in Yongsu's Mother's house.

What was it that remained in the bundle of images stashed below Yongsu's Mother's altar such that Chatterbox was shaken up when she passed by the open threshold? Yongsu's Mother clearly distinguished gods (who inhabit the images on the wall of her shrine) from the inert images rolled up under the altar: "Only my grandfathers are present in the shrine. They are the ones who give me inspiration, who send spiritual energy to me." And yet Korean syntax and the substance of Yongsu's Mother's story do not always make a clear distinction between gods and paintings: Chatterbox's *gods* order her in a dream, "tie us all up!" and she rolls up the *paintings* and binds them with a string, delivering them to Yongsu's Mother and telling her that she must now serve *them* (gods through the medium of paintings).¹⁰ The gods all play during a *kut* held to invite them into the new shrine and they (gods/paintings) are attached to the wall. The material sign of their incompatibility was as paintings fallen to the floor because "they" (gods) "had been fighting." De-animated and placed under the altar, the paintings still carried a sufficient trace of the gods' presence to unsettle Chatterbox and make her ill. This is the kind of ambiguity, the hybridity of image and god and the instability of god inside image, that bears consideration on its own terms, ambiguity as an attribute of paintings that are, ideally, either fully animated in shrines or fully de-animated when removed from them but might, in some circumstances, be the reverse.

Animated images

The notion of "animation" links the practices of the shaman shrine to other religious activities involving images in Korea and throughout the map of Asia: the ritual animation of Buddhist (Bentor 1996, 2004; Brinker 2011; Reedy 1991, 1992; Swearer 2004), Hindu (Gell 1998; Davis 1997), and other temple statues (Nguyen and Pham 2008; Kendall, Vu, and Nguyen 2008, 2010; Robson 2007) and the ritual activation of religious pictures and talismans (Strickmann 2002; Vu 2008). In these traditions, Buddhas and deities are ritually invited to inhabit statues following a prescribed and often elaborate ritual performed by a priest or ritual master.

-
9. A more complete account of the story of Chatterbox's gods and paintings appears in Kendall (1988) with an update in Kendall, Yang, and Yoon (forthcoming) but details are given here that do not appear in these publications.
 10. The specific references to "gods" and "paintings" that we have provided in translation were elided in the original Korean with the absence of a clear subject.

Gods, spirits, and other empowering entities are ceremoniously removed when the statue is taken down from the altar. Today most *mansin* include plaster Buddha images in their shrines, although this may not be a longstanding practice.¹¹ They regard the Buddhas as a generally benevolent but more passive presence than their own gods who deliver great blessings but are also capable of exacting severe punishments for slights and neglect and are therefore “frightening” (*musöpta*). *Mansin* are aware of the eye-opening rituals that animate Buddhist statues and for their own Buddhas they either hire a monk to do this work or perform their own liturgical improvisation with a text purchased from a shop selling Buddhist paraphernalia.

The animation of the painting, by contrast, is an extension of the *mansin*'s own embodied connection to her gods and of both gods and *mansin* to these images. Because the *mansin* regard their own contact with gods and other soul entities (*yöng, yönghon*) as immediate and personal, they see themselves, acting in tandem with their empowering gods, as the primary instrument of a painting's animation. Yongsu's Mother performed an elaborate ritual when she reinstalled new and larger Buddha statues in 1985, but when Kendall asked her about specific rituals to bring the gods into the paintings, she brushed the query aside as nearly irrelevant, stating that during the initiation *kut*, the initiate sees the presence of her gods, that their souls (*yönghon*) appear during the initiation ritual. Still not satisfied, Kendall asked again in another interview a few months later, “When do the gods come into the paintings?” and was told, “When the initiate sees the faces of the gods in her initiation ritual (*naerim kut*) then they are present in her shrine.” Kendall asked if there was a special ceremony (*haengsa*) for this. “Nothing special because the gods (*sin*) are already present, the gods are responding to the *mansin*'s petition (*yönggöm*). They have already helped the shaman make money so that she can install the paintings when she celebrates her gods (*kkonmaji kut*).”

Jane Atkinson's (1989: 14) distinction between liturgical and shamanic rituals is relevant to the different ways in which sacred things might be considered “animated” in shamanic, Buddhist, and other contexts. Liturgical rituals are scripted; by their careful reenactment they cause something to be done and failed rituals are commonly attributed to performance errors (Tambiah 1973). Shaman rituals are also subject to infelicities of performance and follow forms and procedures, but in contrast with liturgical rites, they are relatively open, fluid, to some degree unpredictable as an indication of the active presence of gods or spirits and the shaman's active interaction with them. Unpredictability is especially salient during a shaman's initiation when she may reach the desired state of inspiration and perform convincingly as a shaman, or not, and many initiates do not. Even for a seemingly successful initiation, the outcome can be ambiguous, as when the initiate Chini stood atop knife blades and proclaimed, “They're coming through. All the spirits are here!” but subsequently lacked sufficient inspiration to move forward in her

11. Early twentieth-century photographs of *mansin*'s shrines do not include statues in the form of Buddhas (Akamatsu and Akiba 1938; Kim 1989: 28; http://www.flet.keio.ac.jp/~shnomura/mura/contents/album_6k.htm). In some local traditions, inspirational diviners called *posal* enshrine simple Buddha figures or found stones in suggestive shapes as sites of a Buddha presence.

career as a shaman (Kendall 2009: 97–101). By contrast, the animation of a Buddha or other temple statue is a liturgical act that causes the god to be present, barring ritual infelicity, until parallel procedures are performed to de-animate the statue or until it is damaged or neglected over time. Although the shaman painting is likewise animated in a ritual setting, successful animation hangs on the will of the gods and the potentially changing nature of their relationship with the shaman. They may or may not respond to the shaman's supplications, may or may not send her clear and helpful messages, and may depart from the paintings even without the shamans' bidding them to do so.

Mansin in the Seoul tradition describe a *hot'un* or *hoch'in kut* where malevolent spirits are driven away and the initiate is purified in order to receive her gods. Aided by her “spirit mother”—the senior shaman who teaches and mentors her—the initiate calls out the names of her empowering gods as they pass before her eyes, identifying the twelve primary gods in her personal pantheon. These are written on slips of paper and venerated on her altar until the initiate has the resources to purchase paintings and welcome the spirits with a *sosul kut* where she calls in the gods who take up residence in her shrine via painted images and empower her to do her work. Since the 1980s, the process has been streamlined into single ritual. If the ritual fails, if the initiate has not been able to call the gods into her shrine, then the paintings go back to the shop. They are still empty, neutral media because the gods were not effectively present. Some shamans and shopkeepers consider these paintings suitable for resale as empty seats that can subsequently be inhabited by gods who have claimed a different *mansin* so long as the new gods match the images on the paintings. Others feel that the invocation itself is sufficient to irrevocably associate the painting with a god, even a god who has chosen not to inhabit it (Kendall, Yang, and Yoon, forthcoming).

Shamans practicing in the tradition of Hwanghae Province call the reception of paintings a *maji kut*, a *kut* to receive and greet the gods. Mansin Sö, a shaman performing in the tradition of Hwanghae, spoke unfavorably about the relative rapidity with which “Seoul shamans” install their images in contrast with the longer period of testing that precedes a *maji kut* among her colleagues:

After three years or seven years, then people say, “This child is really ready to honor them with a *maji kut*.” Only when it seems certain that one is going to follow the gods' path all the way to the end, when it is certain that one is not going to cast off the gods, that the initiate is a genuine disciple of the gods, only then do we hold the *maji*. . . . Usually once an apprentice shaman has had a *maji kut* she does not cast off her venerated gods . . . to do so would be to risk losing one's sight or becoming a cripple or experiencing other misfortunes.

Hwanghae shamans usually receive additional spirits over the course of their careers and honor them with paintings, something that is possible but less frequent among Seoul and Kyönggi shamans (Yang 2009). Boudewijn Walraven (2009) identifies this growing assemblage with other shamanic traditions where shamans gradually gain the capacity to muster the power of increasingly greater numbers of spirits. Sö Kyöng-uk, our barely middle-aged but well-regarded interlocutor, already venerates paintings for over a hundred gods:

They come to you when you are sitting, they come to you when you are sleeping, and they even come to you when you are washing the dishes. . . . Sometimes they just give a greeting and go on their way. . . . But if someone has come to stay and if you leave them out, then your work goes badly. For the sake of whatever you are doing, you have to make them peaceful. You have to serve them. If you have compatibility, then you must commission a painting and hold a *maji kut*. . . . If misfortune strikes, some sort of punishment leveled on the disciple, then she absolutely has to call in a painting, she has to do it well . . . one has to give it deep and careful thought. I've even repeated a *maji* ten years later because the gods who came in were constantly bothering me and I needed to settle them in their seats. . . . These aren't ordinary paintings. These aren't just works on paper. They have had gods put in them so they are very significant for us.

How do you know if you are compatible with them not?

For that, you implore the spirits constantly and then you know.

As with communion hosts and holy water, the sacred properties of a painting are invisible and silent, at least to non-*mansin*. Mansin Sö described shamans who operate a bogus practice with empty, uninhabited paintings in their shrines, either because the shaman was not sufficiently inspired to know the difference or because offended deities had departed on their own initiative. “We see and we know these things,” she said. But “seeing” is an ability limited to a few and the claims of a true *mansin* and the efficacy of her shrine are matters of contestation within their own world.

Gods removed from place

In the normal life of a painting, a *mansin* takes it down from the shrine when it becomes old and tattered, water damaged, or mouse eaten, and needs to be replaced with a fresh image or, as in the case of Chatterbox's paintings, when paintings/gods received from another shrine are incompatible with a shaman's own practice. Before the painting can be removed, the animating deity is petitioned to “please, rise up from this seat” and vacate the painting so that it can be burned in anticipation of the deity's invitation back into the new image. Gods are also asked to leave paintings when a shaman takes them down at the end of her practice. To avoid punishment for abandoning her gods, a *mansin* ideally transmits her gods to a successor, as Chatterbox tried to do. An aging shaman marks the end of her practice with a major ritual (*hajik kut*) where she feasts and entertains her guardian gods for one last time and sends them off with a sometimes-tearful farewell. Speaking through the mouth of the shaman, the gods indicate their desire to accompany one or another of her successor spirit daughters (*sinddal*) and spirit sons (*sinadül*), the shamans she has either initiated or mentored (Kendall and Yang 2014; Kendall, Yang, and Yoon, forthcoming). According to Mansin Sö, “The god speaks through the spirit mother to say where it wants to go. ‘I will go here, I will go there . . .’” But the world of master shamans and their disciples is a volatile and competitive place and within the micropolitics of a senior *mansin*'s practice, the outcome of such a ritual can be politically charged. In the words of one cynical male shaman, “the

gods' words are the shamans' words." In the easiest transitions, the *mansin's* successor is the apprentice who has been with her for the longest period of time, has the deepest knowledge of the rituals and how to lead them, and enjoys the greatest popularity. But in some situations, the apprentice with the longest history might not be the most competent apprentice, and depending on who is chosen, the rival might leave the circle and form a new group that makes their own claims for carrying on the master teacher's traditions and rituals. Sometimes the retiring *mansin* is influenced by money and does not adequately heed the gods' commands when choosing a successor, circumstances that result in financial problems, trouble with clients, and serious illness for the teacher, the successor, or both. Arjun Appadurai (1986: 21) might describe these competitions over a *mansin's* gods/paintings as "tournaments of value," particularly among Hwanghae shamans whose accumulations of paintings become a material measure of their growing spiritual power (Kendall and Yang 2014). And, as we have seen, even seemingly willing gods might not ultimately inhabit a successor shaman's shrine. The proprietor of a shaman supply shop described the spirit daughter's capacity to take the spirit mother's gods/paintings with an analogy of a bowl being filled with water; some spirit daughters have the capacity to hold what is poured into them and others do not. In addition to the dire consequences of enshrining incompatible gods, some of our conversation partners spoke of the danger of having too many gods present in too many paintings beyond the individual *mansin's* capacity to deal with them.

Some shamans, because they lack disciples or because they have ruptured relationships with former disciples, end their practice by holding a farewell *kut* and burying their de-animated paintings and other paraphernalia in a secret mountain site analogous to a mountain grave. According to Yongsu's Mother, these things all have souls (*yŏnghon*) "just as people do" and should be given a proper burial, but in another sense, these are not necessarily dead things, much as in a Korean shamanic worldview, the human dead are not necessarily inert. A potential *mansin*, tormented by the gods who have chosen her and driven to half-crazed wandering, can sometimes be drawn to the buried material by mysterious but irresistible forces, compulsively digging until she excavates the cache as one more sign of her calling and of a relationship with the deities who were served by the previous owner of the buried material (Choi 1989: 284–89). In these instances, the gods who have chosen her operate through the borrowed agency of the paintings and other paraphernalia that she will subsequently use to serve them.¹² Shamans associate these miraculous discoveries with a more magical past time but cite rare recent instances "just a few years ago" when an inspired initiate dug up a catch of paraphernalia on a mountainside. Likewise, a potential shaman, a stranger caught in crazed wandering, might find herself drawn into a shrine where her manic prostrations in front of the altar testify that the moment of transition has arrived, that the current proprietor of the shrine should retire, relinquishing gods and paraphernalia to the inspired newcomer (Kendall and Yang 2014). A painter of shaman paintings described the experience of his mother, a well-regarded shaman who, although very old, could not bring herself to take down her shrine and burn her paintings:

12. *Mansin* refer to these seemingly miraculous discoveries as "*kaewatta*," literally "dug up."

And then some extraordinary person arrived out of the blue and asked for them. There are a lot of those kinds of people. It wasn't that my mother intended to give them to her, to this person whom she had never seen before or even heard of, this person who just showed up and asked for them. That sort of thing is the work of gods.

This same painter described how an initiate might also be drawn to gods resident in paintings hidden under a seemingly blank papered wall, urgently shaking her bells as she stands in front of the hidden gods. He described this phenomenon with a smile, as something he has also seen with his own eyes.¹³ Not all shamans make adequate provisions for their own deaths, either because they are unwilling to give up their gods or because they die suddenly with their shrines still intact. Where the shaman is renowned and has an active following of spirit daughters whom she has initiated or trained, the spirit daughters are expected to perform a *kut* for the dead (*chinogi kut*) on behalf of their deceased spirit mother and disassemble her shrine. Speaking through one of the assembled *mansin*, the dead *mansin* describes the proper disposition of gods and paraphernalia, which of her spirit daughters is to take her bells and fan, and which god/painting will follow a particular successor. As in the case of a retiring shaman, there is always the danger that the presiding *mansin* will not have understood the gods' intentions and the new installation will wreak havoc on the recipient's household. In common with other intestate post-mortem distributions in other places, parsing the will of the deceased takes place amid living rivalries and a sometimes-ambiguous assignment of authority. Where there is no active community of spirit children, the dead shaman's family might ask a colleague to petition the gods to leave the painting and commission a shaman supply shop (*manmulsang*) to take down the shrine.

Discussion and conclusion

Our conversations with *mansin* illustrate how their relationships with the images in their shrines are a prosthetic extension of their relationship with their gods. Paintings and gods act together, sometimes with such unity that it is difficult to parse the referent in a statement about "the grandfathers" even as clients at a *kut* address and engage the *mansin* performing in the god's persona when the *mansin* is manifesting the presence of the god. The experiences that *mansin* and others in their world have shared with us underscore the seriousness with which *mansin* regard their material engagements with paintings as mounts, vehicles, or prosthesis of the gods they serve even as they observe avoidances and purifications with regard to their own bodies, which are similarly mobilized by the gods. The relationship between shamans, gods, and paintings is a triangulation whereby particular gods choose the *mansin*. For her part, the *mansin*, through the effort of her devotion and the favor she enjoys from her divine grandfathers, successfully petitions her gods to enter the paintings in her shrine where they give her continuing inspiration in her work (and sometimes not). Working through the paintings, gods enable *mansin* to give kinetic

13. These same procedures for acquiring paintings from a dead shaman's shrine are recounted in a late nineteenth-century Protestant missionary account (Landis 1895: 404).

and oral manifestations of presence, something that neither a god nor an animated paintings could accomplish on their own. This relationship is unstable, mutable, and above all ambiguous. The ambiguity that surrounds the presence and efficacy of gods in paintings is not unlike the efficacy that surrounds the shaman herself. As understood and experienced by *mansin*, the possibilities of presence or absence are more complex and variable than any blanket notion of charlatanry, although this possibility also exists.

Conversations with *mansin* suggest, following Gell, that as with other forms of social interaction, codes of conduct toward gods/paintings are idealized and generalized. It is also clear that as in the course of most social relationships, certain ambiguities occur in the space between an anthropological generalization about a custom and its here-and-now realization in social practice. *Mansin* attempt to parse the will of gods and dead *mansin* (who may be on their way to becoming gods) and *mansin* sometimes disagree with each other about the proper course of action, acknowledging the possibility of a dreaded misstep, of bringing the wrong gods into the shrine or giving offense to those who are already installed there. The gods are invited into the paintings, but they may not enter, or they may enter but not be sufficiently present to inspire the shaman. In the course of a long relationship the gods may take offence at some infraction by the *mansin* and “mumble and grumble” instead of providing her with a clear flow of inspiration. In extremis, the gods may “fly away” leaving the *mansin* bereft of their power. Conversely, even when a *mansin*'s gods have been ceremoniously invited to depart, they might, in rare circumstances, use retired paintings as a medium through which they draw a new shaman into their service. For this reason, *mansin* who wanted to protect Jongsung Yang from such a fate initially tried to discourage him from collecting old paintings for a future museum, paintings that would have been burned or buried without his intervention. The gods leave their trace (*t'ali*) and a sense of the instability and potential danger of the painted image migrates with it into the world of art collecting, sometimes bursting forth in troubling dreams and abductions of possible misfortune (Kendall and Yang 2014). One curator on the staff of a university museum described the staff's initial fear of touching the shamanic material that had been brought to them for accession. Another curator, in another museum, described with a mingling of humor and dismay, how Christian staff members were reluctant to touch a recent accession of paintings and other material from an old shaman shrine, flicking their fingers after contact with the “dirty” material.

The animated painting in the *mansin*'s shrine is thus similar to but not quite the same thing as an animated Buddha or temple image. The god's presence in the painting is less decisively bracketed by ritual work and with the shaman painting the god's own agency is the primary source of efficacy. Has the god actually entered the painting? Is the god efficaciously present or currently discontented and therefore silent or mumbling and grumbling? Has the god departed? The ambiguity of the god's presence in the painting through which the *mansin* receives inspiration is inextricable from the ambiguity that surrounds the *mansin* herself. Is her manifestation of the god during *kut* compelling and are the words of her divination credible because she enjoys the gods' favor and receives a clear flow of inspiration from them? Is she acting on the basis of experience and intuition with only a vague, imperfect sense of her gods' will? Can she perform an efficacious ritual? Is she a

bogus shaman performing in an empty shrine? Among themselves, *mansin* and clients offer these speculations regarding other *mansin*.

With the material turn in anthropology and a new crossdisciplinary interest in how religion works materially, anthropologists may now be more interested in the question of gods and souls inside of things than at any time since the Victorian era.¹⁴ Following on the discussion initiated by Santos-Granero regarding the multiple ways that things can be occult and Robert R. Desjarlais' (1996) earlier descriptions of how material objects work in Nepalese Yolmo shamanic ritual, our discussion of shaman paintings in Korea is a call for fine-grained discussions of shamanic paraphernalia in other places with an emphasis on the ways they do and sometimes do not work as they were intended. This account from Korea should also add a caution against the presumptions of generalizing terminologies, such as the notion of “animated images” that caused Kendall to ask her retrospectively naïve but ultimately useful questions about when and how the gods go into the paintings and whether or not this event is marked by a specific ritual procedures. The answer was less clear but more revealing than anticipated.

Our discussion of Korean shaman paintings takes place in an anthropology where discussions of “animism” and “animation” have been reawakened, largely through the work of two Amazonian anthropologists, Phillippe Descola ([2004] 2014) and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2004) and with a nod to Tim Ingold's work with northern hunters (1998). In this writing, “animism” is described as an ontological practice that recognizes spirits, humans, animals, and plants as endowed with more or less equivalent souls that enable interspecies communication, including hunting magic (Costa and Fausto 2010). In an animistic ontology, shamans merge with the souls of nonhuman beings such that the shaman as jaguar craves blood with the identical appetite that the shaman as man craves manioc beer (Viveiros de Castro 2004). Descola ([2004] 2014) takes the notion of an animist ontology further to destabilize the seeming universalism of the nature/culture divide.¹⁵ There are several reasons why an anthropologist working in Korea might resist engagement with this work. In the first instance, this is a discussion that has emerged from ethnographies of hunters and horticulturalists and with related socio-political forms. Engagement with animals and plants, including the cycle of rice cultivation whose palimpsest could once be discerned in Korean popular religious practice, is very far removed from the concerns addressed by most contemporary Korean shamans; Korea, in contrast with Amazonian ethnography, is, and has historically long been a state society with a complex polity whose forms and imagery organized the religious imaginary. In Korean shamanic practice, animals and plants are not conversation partners; shamanic communication is between humans, ancestors, and gods, most of whom are thought to have once been human and who are subject to human emotions, appetites, and desires. As described above, the alterities of

14. Bruno Latour made a similar comment during his distinguished lecture at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, December 6, 2014, although his referencing of souls was more figurative than our practical intentions here.

15. For a full discussion of the animism question and this work in particular, see the “Book symposium on *Beyond nature and culture*, by Phillippe Descola” (*HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, Volume 4.3, 2014).

gods are matters of relative power, an array of stock social types, and often gender. Moreover, the process that we have been describing here is not, strictly speaking, “animism,” the attribution of an equivalent soul to an animal, plant, or inanimate object, but “animation,” the installation of a soul in an inanimate object that acts as a seat, site, or container; the soul may not stay in the seat and the seat can be replaced with a fresh new one. Korean shamans no more worship painted paper than Catholics worship pieces of bread. And yet, these perhaps overly literal objections aside, the animism conversation does complement our discussion of shaman paintings both by focusing attention on how communication happens between shamans and nonnaturalist beings through a common idiom of souls.¹⁶ More broadly it gives encouragement to ethnographic projects that witness ontologies outside the frame of naturalism, as in effect does Gell’s (1998) discussion of agentive objects, from idols to cars and computers. As with some of Gell’s examples, we have been describing the social lives of animated objects in a place where naturalism is otherwise very present in school curricula, laboratories, and a robust biotech industry where different, even contradictory, ontologies may be said to cohabit, sometimes with less acrimony than a history of Korean modernity would lead us to expect.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the many shamans, curators, collectors, and dealers who made this research possible. We are particularly indebted to the help of our colleague Yul Soo Yoon, to Sungja Kim Sayers who was Kendall’s field assistant, and Katherine Skaggs who helped to prepare this article for publication. Laurel Kendall’s fieldwork was supported but the Belo-Tanenbaum Fund of the American Museum of Natural History. An early draft of this paper benefited by the suggestions of two anonymous reviewers and the journal’s editor, Giovanni da Col who challenged us to expand the horizons of our discussion. The shortcomings of this effort are our own.

References

- Akamatsu, Chijo, and Takashi Akiba. 1938. *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū (Study of Korean shamanism)*. Tokyo: Osakayago Shōten.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. “Introduction: Commodities and the politics of value.” In *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 2–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

16. One reviewer of this article suggested that Descola’s discussion of the “analogical ontology,” as a thought process marked by the difficulty in distinguishing in practice the components of beings seen as inhabiting both the domain of interiority and the one of physicality, might be the appropriate way to characterize Korean shamans’ relationships with paintings. We are not comfortable with this characterization and a full discussion of our material in relation to Descola’s expanded typology is well beyond the scope and intentions of our small study.

- Atkinson, Jane Monnig. 1989. *The art and politics of Wana shamanism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bacigalupo, Ana Mariella. 2014. "The potency of indigenous 'bibles' and biographies: Mapuche shamanic literacy and historical consciousness." *American Ethnologist* 41 (4): 648–63.
- Balzer, Marjorie Mandelstam. 2008. "Schamanenattribute, gender und sich wandelnde: Definitionen des heiligen (Shamanic regalia, gender-shifting definitions of the sacred)." In *Schamenen Sibiriens* (Siberian Shamans), edited by Erich Kasten, 62–69. Stuttgart: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.
- Bentor, Yael. 1996. *Consecration of images and stupas in Indo-Tibetan tantric Buddhism*. Leiden: Brill.
- . 2004. "The consecration of a Buddha image." In *Buddhist scriptures*, edited by Donald Lopez, 200–11. London: Penguin.
- Brinker, Helmut. 2011. *Secrets of the sacred: Empowering Buddhist images in clear, in code, and in cache*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Buyandelger, Manduhai. 2013. *Tragic spirits: Shamanism, memory, and gender in contemporary Mongolia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Choi, Chungmoo. 1989. "The recruitment of shamans in Korea: The symbiosis between cultural idiom and performing arts." In *Shamanism past and present*, edited by Mihaly Hoppal and Otto von Sadvoszky, 283–95. Budapest and Los Angeles: Fullerton, Ethnographic Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences and International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research.
- Costa, Luiz, and Carlos Fausto. 2010. "The return of the animists: Recent studies of Amazonian ontologies," *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 1: 89–109.
- Davis, Richard H. 1997. *Lives of Indian images*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Descola, Philippe. (2004) 2014. *Beyond nature and culture*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Desjarlais, Robert R. 1996. "Presence." In *The performance of healing*, edited by Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman, 143–64. New York: Routledge.
- Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and agency: An anthropological theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Guzmán-Gallegos, Maria A. 2009. "Textual objects in Runa worldview." In *The occult life of things: Native Amazonian theories of materiality and personhood*, edited by Fernando Santos-Granero, 214–34. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Harris, Clare. 2013. "The digitally distributed museum and its discontents." <https://soundcloud.com/pittriversound-1/clare-harris-fem-talk-2013/s-W78oy>.
- Hoskins, Janet. 1998. *Biographical objects: How things tell the stories of people's lives*. New York: Routledge.
- Ingold, Tim. 1998. "Totemism, animism, and the depiction of animals." In *Animal. Anima. Animus*, edited by Marketta Seppälä, Jari-Pekka Vanhala, and Linda Weintraub, 181–207. Pori, Finland: The Pori Art Museum.

- Jochelson, Waldemar. 1926. "Shamanism." In *The Yukaghir and the Yukaghirized Tungus*, Vol. 6, Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. 10, 162–92. New York: G.E. Stechert and Co.
- Kendall, Laurel. 1985. *Shamans, housewives, and other restless spirits: Women in Korean ritual life*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- . 1988. *The life and hard times of a Korean shaman: Of tales and the telling of tales*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- . 1996. "Initiating performance: The story of Chini, a Korean shaman." In *The performance of healing*, edited by Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman, 17–58. New York: Routledge.
- . 2009. *Shamans, nostalgias, and the IMF: South Korean popular religion in motion*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Kendall, Laurel, and Jongsung Yang. 2014. "Goddess with a Picasso face: Art markets, collectors and sacred things in the circulation of Korean shaman paintings." *Journal of Material Culture* 19 (4): 401–23.
- Kendall, Laurel, Thị Thanh Tâm Vũ, and Thị Thu Hương Nguyễn. 2008. "Three goddesses in and out of their shrine." *Asian Ethnology* 67 (2): 219–36.
- . 2010. "Beautiful and efficacious statues: Magic, commodities, agency and the production of sacred objects in popular religion in Vietnam." *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 6 (1): 60–85.
- Kendall, Laurel, Yongsung Yang, and Yul-soo Yoon. Forthcoming. *Korean Gods in contexts: The acquisition and meaning of Korean shaman paintings*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Kim, T'aegon. 1989. *Han'gugmusindo (Korean shaman paintings)*. Seoul: Yöhlhwadang.
- Kopytoff, Igor. 1986. "The cultural biography of things: Commoditization as process." In *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 64–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Landis, E. B. 1895. "Notes on the exorcism of spirits in Korea." *China Review* 21 (6): 399–404.
- Latour, Bruno. 1993. *We have never been modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Manning, Paul, and Ilana Gershon. 2013. "Animating interaction." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3 (3): 107–37.
- Miller, Joana. 2009. "Things as persons: Body ornaments and alterity among the Mamaindê (Nambiquara)." In *The occult life of things: Native Amazonian theories of materiality and personhood*, edited by Fernando Santos-Granero, 214–34. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. 2005. *What do pictures want?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nguyen, Van Huy, and Pham Lan Huong. 2008. "The one-eyed god at the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology: The story of a village conflict." *Asian Ethnology* 67 (2): 201–18.



- Reedy, Chandra L. 1991. "The opening of consecrated Tibetan bronzes with interior contents: Scholarly, conservation, and ethical considerations." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 30 (1): 13–34.
- . 1992. "Religious and ethical issues in the study and conservation of Tibetan sculpture." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 31 (1): 41–50.
- Robson, James. 2007. *Inside Asian images: An exhibition of religious statuary from the Artasia Gallery collection*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Institute for the Humanities.
- Santos-Granero, Fernando, ed. 2009. *The occult life of things: Native Amazonian theories of materiality and personhood*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Silvio, Teri. 2010. "Animation: The new performance?" *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20 (2): 422–38.
- Strickmann, Michel. 2002. *Chinese magical medicine*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Swearer, Donald K. 2004. *Becoming the Buddha: The ritual of image consecration in Thailand* (Buddhisms: A Princeton University Press Series). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tambiah, S. J. 1973. "Form and meaning of magical acts: A point of view." In *Modes of thought: Essays on thinking in Western and Non-Western societies*, edited by Robin Horton and Ruth Finnegan, 199–229. London: Faber and Faber.
- Taussig, Michael. 2009. *What color is the sacred?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2004. "Exchanging perspectives: The transformation of objects into subjects in Amerindian ontologies." *Common Knowledge* 10 (3): 463–84.
- Vu, Hong Thuat. 2008. "Amulets and the marketplace." *Asian Ethnology* 67 (2): 237–55.
- Walraven, Boudewijn. 2009. "National pantheon, regional deities, personal spirits? *Mushindo*, *Seongsu*, and the nature of Korean shamanism." *Asian Ethnology* 68 (1): 55–80.
- Yang, Jongsung. 2004. "Han'guk musoküi singwa sindo" [Korean deities and divine images]. In *Wönhyöngül ch'ajasö t'osoksinangüi musokhwa* (*Searching for the origin of folk religion-Painting of shamanism*), edited by Gahoe Museum (Kahoebangmulgwan), 149–55. Seoul: Gahoe Museum.
- . 2009. *Chöi Yöng changgun tang kut singajip* (*Anthology of songs for the kut at the shine of General Chöi Yöng*). Seoul: Minsogwön.
- Yoon, Yul-soo. 1994. *Kürimüro ponün han'gugüi musindo* (*Korean shaman paintings as art*). Taegu: Köndülbau Museum.

Qu'est-ce qu'une image animée? L'ambiguïté des peintures des shamans coréens

Résumé : A partir de l'intérêt interdisciplinaire porté à la dimension matérielle de la religion, et en nous inspirant de la notion d'Alfred Gell d'agentivité objectale (*object agency*), nous examinons la relation entre les shamans coréens (*mansin*), les

peintures de dieux accrochées dans leurs lieux de culte, et la présence *animatrice* qui confère une force au *mansin* ainsi qu'aux peintures. Les dieux qui inspirent un *mansin* lorsqu'il est amené à les incarner dans un rituel et qui animent également les peintures dans son lieu de pratique mènent ces activités d'inspiration (du shaman) et d'animation (des peintures) de manière analogue et complémentaire à travers des relations variables, contingentes et extrêmement ambiguës. Au contraire, les images de Bouddha qui habitent également le lieu de culte du *mansin* constituent un genre de chose animée différent. Notre étude encourage des discussions plus fines de ces supports numineux divers et des manières dont l'efficacité des objets et des corps sacrés est réalisée (ou non). Nous suggérons aussi qu'il est utile d'éviter les terminologies généralisatrices, et le terme d'"images animées" en particulier : ce terme amalgame des images qui peuvent être qualitativement très différentes en tant que choses animées, ceci même dans un même univers religieux.

Laurel KENDALL is Curator of Asian Ethnographic Collections and Chair of the Division of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History as well as a Fellow of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute at Columbia University. Best known for her work in Korea, based on more than forty years acquaintance begun as a US Peace Corps Volunteer, Kendall is the author, coauthor, editor, or coeditor of ten books and many journal articles including *Shamans, housewives, and other restless spirits: Women in Korean ritual life* and *Shamans, nostalgias, and the IMF: South Korean popular religion in motion*, which won the Korean Anthropological Association's Yim Suk-jay Award for the best work on Korea by a foreign anthropologist. Kendall's recent work concerns sacred objects and markets: objects made and sold for sacred uses, sacred forms adapted as secular commodities, and once-sacred objects that circulate as antiquities and art. She is vice president and president-elect of the Association for Asian Studies.

Laurel Kendall
Division of Anthropology
American Museum of Natural History
Central Park West at 79th St.
New York, NY 10024, USA
lkendall@amnh.org

Jongsung YANG has a PhD in Folklore from Indiana University, Bloomington (USA). He is a specialist in shamanism, a former senior curator at the National Folk Museum of Korea, and an ICOM-ICME board member. He is now Director of The Museum of Shamanism in Seoul and President of the Korean Society for Shamanism Studies. He is also an Invited Distinguished Professor at Dongbang Graduate University and Guest Professor in the Traditional Performance Department at the Korean National University of Art. He serves as a member of the Intangible Cultural Properties Committee for the Five Provinces of North Korea. He has published numerous of books and articles on Korean shamanism, including



Cultural protection policy in Korea: Intangible cultural properties and living treasures and An anthology of songs for the kut at the shrine of General Chòi Yōng.

*Jongsung Yang
The Museum of Shamanism
47, Jeongeung-Ro 6ga-
Gil, Seongbuk-Gu
Seoul, Korea 02812
yangshaman@hotmail.com*