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鎖樋

Kusari-Toi

1. source material

The initial drive for the source material was the youtube subgenre of calming ASMR rain videos, usually upwards of an hour long. I quickly realized that these wouldn't make an interesting edit, and in my searching rapidly found a wide range of other subgenres I hadn't even considered.

All videos are ripped directly from youtube, and though I manipulate most of them, I want to clarify that I have added no original content.

Chronologically, we open with the personalized intro for the videos on Kemal Dere's youtube channel. He is a Turkish blogger, and most of his videos show the process of making local foods with rural people, but here the intro and outro bookend a simple handheld shot of some hail precipitation. A generic ASMR rain fades in overlaid, and then the end scene of Peggy Ahwesh's *She-Puppet* does the same. Lara Croft looks around the bleak rainy virtual city, then leaps into the abyss. A kusari-toi, the Japanese word for a rain chain overlays, the water rushing down through little spouts. This opened a whole subgenre of home improvement channels. Once Lara vanishes into the darkness, we cut to a stabilized subjective shot of walking through Tokyo during a typhoon by tkviper, a prolific youtuber who's primary work at the moment is these calm walks through Tokyo, often during the rain. The next new subgenre is gameplay footage from the Playstation 4 racing game *Driveclub* on one of the Japan courses. Laid over this are two smartphone videos of lighting at night. The next three overlaid videos are from the channel change yourself, a member of the subliminal community. In order: *Attract Your Desire Clothes*, *Get Longer Hair ASMR Subliminal*, and *Better Eyesight Naturally Rain Sounds.* After the flash at the end of the tunnel, two videos appear. On top is a recreation of a scene from *Strange Days* by The80'sDIEHARD Studios. Underneath is a late moment from Lawrence Lek's *Europa, Mon Amour (2016 Brexit Edition).* Layered over these two is a video of a young girl and some rain chains uploaded by zenrainman, a page dedicated to rainwater harvesting and ecological sanitation systems in India. The next three videos that comes up under zenrainman's are more by tkviper, and then more rain chains, and then footage of a transformer exploding during hurricane Irma. This fades to a bafflingly positioned video titled *Tsunami in Japan – 1 City vanished in 9 minutes heavy rain*. The uploader, All World Celebrities, seems to be Indian. The architecture looks to be Japanese, and a Japanese man can be heard screaming, but Turkish text overlays the footage, and we hear a mournful song in what might be Turkish. The audio that continues for the rest of the video is extracted from another tkviper video.

2. major themes

I would argue that the kusari-toi is the organizing theme of the remix, serving as a metaphor for the flow of information and the slippery relationship between east and west. The idea of the subjective shot is also crucial, but I'll address that in the intended purpose. There seem to be two main types of kusari-toi, the cup-into-cup style and the linked chain style. They offer an alternative to the enclosure/tunnel of a gutter tube, suggesting rather than demanding a direction for the rainwater to go. But as is visible in many of the clips, they can be exceeded fairly easily. Our experience of the internet largely follows a prescribed path, dictated by algorithms, but it isn't difficult to veer off of these routes into strange territory. The kusari-toi also stands in for the west's obsession with eastern, especially Japanese, design and aesthetics. The inclusion of Japan-related materials was entirely the circumstance of the search, Japan just happens to be the place where tkviper is so moved to film his walks, or where people want to imagine themselves walking. Turkey and India are also important non-western sectors of the internet included here.

There are also several entirely generated virtual spaces that we pass through, and these experiences blend with the once-real-then-digitized virtual experiences of watching these youtube clips to demonstrate that the frame of a web browser is a tight lens to explore a rich virtual landscape through.

3. intended purpose

I intended for this to play with the charged multivalent affective meaning of experiencing rain as both deeply soothing and always on the verge of overwhelming. The visceral sensation of having the auditory and visual representations of the rain wash over the viewer I hope makes the experience an embodied one. As the sources and then the edit started to come together, I recognized that a majority of the work was rendered through a subjective shot. Almost automatically the experience of the video became continuous and narrativized by the moving subjectivity that passed through each point of view fluidly. As networked people it isn't unusual for us to transfer our identification between such radically different perspectives as Lara Croft, tkviper, a racecar, and a man running on a beach, so these experiences can be linked into the chain of the final video quite smoothly.

4. critical commentary

My main critiques are that the flattened vision of the internet as a globalizing equalizer is a farce, that the experience of a network strikes and stays in a viewer far beyond the visual, and that this overwhelming gush of information can contain some real genuine horror.

As I think is clearly evidenced by the video, the internet doesn't open up much in the way of a "Global Village". Sure, I was able to watch and enjoy a Turkish blogger's rain video, but the internet is a place as large as or even larger than the globe, and the communities that exist there have real material differences. The Kemal Dere video introduction is almost illegible from a western gaze, showing that just because we can access some parts of a foreign internet, we can't necessarily participate in them in a meaningful way.

The twenty minutes of darkness that extend beyond Dere's outro is meant to communicate that the internet is much more than its visual manifestations. It gestures toward the invisible

architectures that make the internet possible at all and calls back to my original starting source point, the extremely long-form ASMR videos. The image of these videos usually doesn't matter too much, as the viewer isn't expected to actually watch it. The audio is meant to layer with other experiences, online or off. This is a key example of not experiencing a network node-to-node, but simultaneously, with affective charge moving in many directions at once.

The explosion and the tsunami that it opens onto is meant to stand in for things much worse. The countercurrent I fashion against zenrainman's "Is it filtered?" doesn't mean to at all question the legitimacy of his sanitation systems, but instead conjures a sincere anxiety about search filters and the sanitation of content. While of course it is important that we be able to drink whatever we want on the internet, we need to know what it is we might be drinking, and online streams are so easily and often polluted. Not only are we rarely more than a few clicks away from natural disasters or Abu Ghraib or snuff, but the rise of global conservativism and the growing resurgence of fascist ideology has found prolific and insidious breeding ground via these modes of communication, poisoning simple exchanges and images.