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Relocating the Alliance:
The U.S.-South Korea Military Alliance in Cultural Representations

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An Abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in American Studies
2011

Abstract

"Relocating the Alliance" explores the politics of culture arising from the U.S.-South Korea military alliance since the Korean War (1950-1953). Throughout the study, I maintain a critical view of the alliance that has created a particular national context of imperial/colonial traditions in which Koreans and Korean Americans have experienced military, economic, social, and cultural subordination. Locating 'culture' as the alliance's key framework, the study investigates how the alliance, now redefined as a process of transnational, cross-cultural encounters, has worked through the lives of the people who have consciously and unconsciously engaged the process.

Also locating some important cultural texts that have emerged out of the alliance, this study details how the military and cultural hegemony of the U.S. has politicized cultural identities, practices, and representations within and across national spaces. Speeches and essays by Park Chung Hee highlight how the South Korean government reacted to the Cold War initiative of the U.S., its patron state, by mobilizing pro-U.S., anti-communistic, ethnic nationalism as a ruling ideology for developmental autocracy. Nam Jeong Hyun's short story *Bunji* and Shin Tong Yeop's poems illustrate dissident intellectuals' oppositional discourse against Park in a form of anti-U.S., ethnic *minjung* nationalism while Shin Joong Hyun's rock music shows how the popular cultural entertainers contributed to the transformation of local culture, challenging the dominant discourses of nationalism by the state and the intellectuals.

Two post-1990s South Korea films, Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown* and Bong Joon-ho's *The Host*, reflect significant changes in the discursive terrain of the U.S.-South Korea relations in recent periods. Reconstructing neocolonial conditions of South Korea, the movies challenge the hegemonic discourse of the alliance in strikingly different modes as they represent the contemporary discourse of anti-U.S. imperialism in South Korea. Finally, Heinz Insu Fenkl's autoethnographic novel *Memories of My Ghost Father* offers penetrating insights into the social effects of the alliance within the landscape of camptowns. Among others, the novel shows how the U.S. Cold War military intervention in South Korea has transposed American racial ideologies onto the liminal spaces between the U.S. imperial presence and the South Korean client-state in a highly gendered context.

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Although I have placed my name in the author of this dissertation, I owe the honor to so many names, more than I can enumerate on this page. On top of the list is my Lord who has kept His promise that He will not leave me nor forsake me. Thank you so much Lord for holding me on throughout all these years!

My next thanks are reserved for those in my dissertation committee without whom this blissful moment would have never occurred to me. My adviser Professor Catherine Nickerson has nurtured my faith and vision in this project and sustained my work throughout the entire process. She has provided not only intellectual support and advice but also emotional care and prayer whenever I needed them. One of the most important lessons that I have learned from Professor Nickerson is that doubt never helps but only produces fear as she always assured me of my finishing this dissertation, and I am so thrilled to see it happen.

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Thanks so much everyone!

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List of Figures

A Note to Korean-English Transliteration

Korean terms and personal or place names in this study follow the Revised Romanization System standardized by the National Institute of Korean Language (Guknip Gugeowon), except in the case of quoted material. Many of the works cited in this text use the older McCune-Reischauer system. I tried to follow the Korean naming convention of surname followed by given name whenever the person referred is Korean. The transliteration of previously published Korean names, however, has been retained as they appear in English-language publications.

INTRODUCTION

Locating the U.S.-South Korea Military Alliance in Cultural Representations

In this dissertation, I explore the politics of culture arising from the U.S.-South Korea military alliance since the Korean War (1959-1953). The vast majority of previous studies on the subject have focused on so-called 'high politics' as if the alliance had solely been 'a state to state business' and defined its scope within cold war international politics, economy, and security concerns. Few studies have addressed the subject in a context that incorporates various arenas at multiple levels of interactions entailed in this comprehensive relationship.

"Relocating the Alliance" aims to provide an alternative account of the U.S.-South Korea military alliance by foregrounding 'culture' as its key framework. Redefining the alliance as a process of transnational, cross-cultural encounters on a long term basis, the study investigates how the alliance has worked through the lives of people who have participated in the process. Both Koreans and Americans, soldiers and civilians, are the subjects here, although the study's emphasis lies mainly with Koreans and Korean Americans—in particular the cultural politics of cultural and national identity.

The U.S.-ROK Alliance in a Transnational, Cross-cultural Perspective

Waged on the Korean Peninsula, the Korean War (June 1950-July 1953) was "the first "hot" war of the cold war" in the U.S.-Soviet struggle for global hegemony.[1] The

[1] Ramsay Liem, "History, Trauma, and Identity: The Legacy of the Korean War for Korean Americans," *Amerasia Journal* 29, no. 3 (2003). 114.

war pitted the United States, South Korea, and sixteen other countries in what the United Nations called a "police action" against North Korea, China, and the Soviet Union. Despite the relatively short span of fighting that lasted for less than three years, the results were devastating: more than three million civilian lives along with two million military casualties on both sides, including approximately 33,000 deaths of American soldiers.[2] The Korean War made a huge impact on domestic and international spheres as it helped shape the course of the Cold War. Nevertheless, the war, overshadowed by World War II (1939-1945) and the Vietnam War (1955-1975), has been generally under-examined by historians. As Ramsay Liem writes, the Korean War became what is "at best remembered as the "Forgotten War"," especially in the United States.[3]

The Korean War, a continuing reality in Korea, left pervasive effects not only in Korea but also in the United States which continue to affect the lives of Koreans and Americans, tying them together in particular ways. An immediate aftermath of the war, the U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), signed in October 1953, committed the two nations to a military alliance. Often emphasized as *Hyulmaeng*, a 'relationship forged in blood,' the U.S.-ROK military alliance remains "the main pillar" of the U.S.-ROK relationship. Ever since the treaty was made, the role of the U.S.-South Korea alliance as "a bulwark against the communist expansion in Asia" has been critical to the area's peace and stability.[4] Bringing in a large amount of economic aid to South

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[2] Carter Malkasian, *The Korean War*, Essential Histories (Oxford: Osprey Pub., 2001). 88. Also see Jon Halliday and Bruce Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

[3] Ramsay Liem, "Introduction," in *Still Present Past: Korean Americans and the "Forgotten War"*, ed. Boston College (Boston: Cenveo, Inc., 2005).

[4] Shieila A. Smith, "Shifting Terrain: The Domestic Politics of the U.S. Military Presence in Asia," in *East-West Center Special Reports* (Honolulu: East-West Center, March 2006). 3.

Korea, the alliance also helped the country achieve rapid economic development within a generation.

On the other hand, the bilateral alliance, far from an equal relationship, initiated a pattern of 'patron and client' with the United States as the patron and South Korea as its client. Over the next several decades, the alliance deepened the military relationship between South Korean and the United States, and this relationship wrought its own set of social and economic consequences. South Korea, heavily dependent on U.S. military and economic aid, became a neocolony of the United States. The installation of U.S. military bases in South Korea where tens of thousands American GIs have been staying on a long-term basis created a context of transnational, cross-cultural encounters in which Korean people have experienced imperial domination and exploitation by those who occupy their land.

One sort of physical evidence of the relationship is the existence of camptowns (*gijichon*) clustered around U.S. military bases, a landscape that is, in Whitney Taejin Hwang's description, "racially stratified and economically exploitative as well as culturally persuasive and materially alluring."[5] It is in the camptowns that "a system of militarized prostitution" is practiced. A tangible consequence of subordination, this system, fully developed in the 1960s and 1970s at the behest of the U.S. military and with the cooperation of the South Korean government, continues to this day. Although prostitution is illegal in South Korea, it is legal in the camptowns, or "special

[5] Whitney Taejin Hwang, "Borderland Intimacies: Gis, Koreans, and American Military Landscapes in Cold War Korea" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Californai, Berkeley, 2010). 7.

entertainment districts" to use the official classification.[6] Most camptown clubs that cater only to American soldiers offer sex service to their foreign patrons. In the 1970s the government praised camptown prostitutes as patriots for earning foreign exchange and strengthening national security by ensuring strong morale among U.S. troops in South Korea.[7]

A less tangible but more pervasive consequence of the alliance in the same context is the spread of U.S. culture in South Korea. Although U.S. troops have been generally occupying the areas near the demilitarized zone (DMZ), a large number of GIs stay in and around major cities including Seoul with easy access to the local population with whom they have maintained intimate relationships. A wide array of educational and cultural programs launched by U.S.-sponsored institutions, including the U.S. Information Service (USIS), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Peace Corps, has cultivated American aspirations and values among the South Korean population. Koreans with access to U.S. soldiers, missionaries, and other Americans, says Ji-Yeon Yuh, "browsed the Sears Roebuck catalogue, dreamt of "America, the land of plenty."[8]

Challenging the official narratives, "Relocating the Alliance" holds a critical view of the U.S.-South Korea alliance focusing on the role of the United States Forces in Korea (USFK). Established in 1954, a year after the alliance treaty was made, the USFK has been a primary, if not the only, point of contact for Koreans with Americans and

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[6] Jin-Yeon Yuh, "The Korean War: A Still Present Past," in *Still Present Pasts: Korean Americans and the "Forgotten War"* (2005). 26.

[7] Katharine H. S. Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Also see Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown : Korean Military Brides in America*, Nation of Newcomers (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

[8] Yuh, "The Korean War: A Still Present Past." 26.

American culture. A constant, physical reminder of the unequal power relations between the two countries, the USFK also represents a major institution exerting hegemonic ideologies and cultural pressures, a phenomenon that one might describe as the attempted military, economic, and cultural colonization by the United States. Although the United States did not annex territories to create an empire of colonies, its vast network of military bases constitutes "an empire of bases," according to Chalmers Johnson. Johnson argues that imperialism manifests itself in different and evolving forms today, such as the neocolonialism of multinational corporations, or America's militarism and its system of "satellites" based on mutual security alliances that station American military forces in enclaves resembling "micro-colonies."[9]

Catherine Lutz similarly contends that the United States is an empire because its policies aim to assert and to maintain dominance over other countries and areas; and because U.S. military bases facilitate "the wealth and welfare of the powerful center," these bases can be seen as "expressions of a nation's will to status and power."[10] Mark Gillem also offers a study of American empire through an innovative fusion of militarism and consumption in his study of the spatial ramifications of "exporting" American military bases abroad. Although past empires also transported sociospatial practices to

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[9]Johnson describes these overseas bases as "micro-colonies" in that they are governed under American jurisdiction and these bases have helped turn America "into a new kind of military empire—a consumerist Sparta, a warrior culture that flaunts" its consumption. These bases are manifestations of militarism and imperialism, according to Johnson, and locates the beginning of militarism with the onset of the cold war and the rise of a professional military class, preponderance of military officers or representatives of the arms industry in high government positions, and a devotion to policies in which military preparedness becomes the highest priority of the state. The American network of bases is a sign not of military preparedness but of militarism, the inescapable companion of imperialism. Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004). 7, 23-4, 30-5, 55-63.

[10] Catherine Lutz, "Introduction: Bases, Empire, and Global Response," in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts*, ed. Catherine Lutz (New York: New York University Press, 2009). 1-8.

diverse settings to regulate and achieve order, Pax Americana differs from Pax Romana or Pax Britannica in that the new empire does not require vast territories, dependent colonies, or puppet governments, but rather just military installations. Gillem describes America's empire today as an "entangled empire."[11]

By all accounts, the U.S.-South Korea alliance made a significant contribution to the transformation of social arrangements and cultural geographies in postwar South Korea. At the same time, the alliance also made a deep impact on U.S. society by triggering postwar Korean migration into the United States. Through the practice of international marriages and adoptions, American soldiers have brought Korean women and children into the United States, a kind of "corporeal return of U.S. neocolonial endeavors in South Korea."[12] Understanding the nature of these transnational exchanges requires thoughtful and critical insights into the alliance.

While the long-standing U.S.-South Korea alliance has survived the Cold War, it has undergone a series of transformations. Popular images of the United States in South Korea have navigated from that of a beneficent country or blood alliance to more recent images of a merciless, imperialist country. Since the late 1980s, along with structural changes in South Korean society, a growing sensitivity of Koreans especially among younger people to the imperial ideology and practices of the United States has posed serious challenges against the alliance.

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[11]Gillem describes overseas installations as "America Town," replicas of American suburbs to provide "slices of the American Dream" to the expatriates abroad, which subsequently require sprawl and land consumption in often dense locations. The process of making the unfamiliar territory into familiar home replicates "conformity and consumption" throughout the world regardless of difference in local conditions and concerns. Mark L. Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). xv-xvi, 17, 264-9.

[12] Hwang, "Borderland Intimacies: Gis, Koreans, and American Military Landscapes in Cold War Korea"; Susie Woo, ""A New American Comes 'Home'": Race, Nation, and the Immigration of Korean War Adoptees, "Gi Babies" and Brides" (Yale University, 2009). 16.

Organization and Summary of Chapters

Following the Introduction, the six chapters detail how the U.S.-South Korea alliance has conscripted the lives and experiences of people, mostly Koreans and Korean Americans, and politicized cultural identities, practices, and representations within and across national spaces. Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of the U.S.-South Korea relations through the military alliance trying to map the political, economic, social, and cultural landscape of the postwar South Korea. Chapter 2 and 3 explore how Cold War politics as a key dimension of the alliance played out in the discursive formation and contestation of nationalism during the Park Chung Hee era (1961-1979). Among various individuals and groups who participated in the process at different levels, three important groups come in focus: Park Chung Hee, Nam Jeong Hyun and Shin Tong Yeop, and Shin Joong Hyun, each representing the state, dissident intellectuals, and popular cultural entertainers respectively.

Chapter 2 elaborates how Park Chung Hee opted for ethnic nationalism, anti-Communism, and pro-Americanism as the state's ruling ideology in his pursuit of developmental autocracy. Continuing the discussion, Chapter 3 explains that despite the harsh repressions by the government, dissident intellectuals fashioned oppositional discourse of anti-autocracy, pro-democracy, and anti-U.S. *minjung* nationalism. The chapter also shows that Shin Joonghyun and other Korean rock musicians who became major players in the domestic cultural industries by assimilating imported styles of American cultural productions also contributed to the transformation of local culture, challenging the dominant discourses of nationalism by the state and the intellectuals.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine two contemporary South Korean films, Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown* (2001) and Bong Joon-ho's *The Host* (2006). Representing the New Korean Cinema in the wake of the national cinema movement that began to emerge during the late 1980s, *Address Unknown* and *The Host* reflect significant changes in the discursive terrain of the U.S.-South Korea relations over the recent decades. Although these two films have often been commonly referred to as anti-U.S. narratives, they show striking contrasts with each other in almost every detail. Focusing on the ways in which they reconstruct the neocolonial conditions of South Korea in specific relation to the U.S. military in South Korea, these chapters analyze the narrative structures, specific cultural codes and metaphors as well as their significance to the issues of race, gender, class, sexuality, spatiality, neocolonialism, and national identity.

Chapter 6 turns to Korean American cultural production in an attempt to locate the stories of Korean military brides, including those who came from camptowns, as well as the stories of their long-silenced mixed-raced children. This chapter analyzes Heinz Insu Fenkl's autoethnographic novel *Memories of My Ghost Father* (1996) in which the author makes visible the camptown geography as the liminal space between the U.S. Cold War imperialism and the South Korean client-state. The details in the story show how the U.S. military presence has transplanted American racial ideologies in this particular location in a highly gendered context. The U.S. military and camptowns also represent multiple generations of racially hybridized Koreans and Korean Americans, the growing consciousness in Koreans of racial sameness and otherness along the imported American color caste, and the marginalization of multiracial Koreans.

Based on the discussion and analysis in these chapters, "Relocating the Alliance" concludes by reemphasizing the U.S.-South Korea alliance as a transnational, cross-cultural process as opposed to the traditional view of it as a state-to-state business. If the asymmetry of power between the United States and South Korea has generally defined the frameworks of the alliance, the presence of the U.S. military has been crucial in shaping particular contexts for ground-level interactions among participants as can be best illustrated in the racialized, gendered landscape of camptowns. This means that Koreans have been subject to neocolonial experiences including the domination and exploitation by those who occupy their land. It will be stressed that the alliance has also entailed a creative process through which Koreans (and Korean Americans) have been able to negotiate, appropriate and articulate their experiences associating them with issues of identity including race, gender, sexuality, spatiality and nation.

Culture, Power, and History: Theorizing the Alliance and the Politics of Identity

As a form of occupation, an exercise of military authority, installing military bases and stationing military personnel in a foreign country has temporal and spatial implications given that it is operated in a specific area over a certain period of time. Almost six decades have passed since the U.S. military began to stay in South Korea right after the Korean War (1950-1953) on a permanent basis. In order to account for what happened, why it happened, and how it happened during the period, one needs to have some historical and geographical insights into the U.S.-South Korea military alliance. While "Relocating the Alliance" seeks to provide the insights with specific

details manifested on the ground, it finds the best way to address complex phenomena associated with the alliance in the concept of culture.

As to the elusive concept of culture, Raymond Williams has provided a useful definition for the purpose of this study, writing that a "culture" is "a whole way of life" as well as "arts and learning."[13] Culture is ordinary in the sense that it is based on the experience in everyday life including various texts, practices, and the meaning of all the people in their lives. Culture, thus defined, incorporates the material, ideological, structural, and institutional. In all its complexity, culture can be shared or contested, durable or constantly changing, coherent and consistent, or contradictory and fragmented Based on this definition, culture in this study refers to "multiple discourses" or "a theater" where various political and ideological causes engage one another, occasionally merging in large systemic configuration, but more often coexisting within dynamic fields of interaction and conflict.[14]

The fundamental merit of this approach lies in its recognition of 'unequal' power relations among the constituents of society. If the social world is ordered as a field of inequalities, discursive structures, Foucault says, constitute society itself.[15] Conventions and social practices have histories, and discourses convey ideas that shape collective understandings of society and its order. Discourse, defined by Joan Scott, is "a structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs" generated within a particular social and

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[13] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Marxist Introductions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). 6.

[14] Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994). 4. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 1st ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1993). xiii.

[15] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

institutional context.[16] This definition also emphasizes the institutional relations of power that undergird processes of signification—that is the production of meaning—in particular contexts. Ideas are not free-floating entities; they are produced within and in relation to specific structures of power.

Also embedded in the view of culture as 'multiple discourses' or 'a theater' is the nature of culture as encounter and process. In other words, culture is a contested and changing terrain in which discursive patterns are constituted and reconstituted. This becomes more visible when we look at the so-called 'cultural borderlands' whose margins and borders make a room for differences and allow dynamic interactions that lead to uneven results across time and space. Anthropologists and cultural theorists who share the perspective of culture as process have emphasized the significance of 'border zones' as 'contact zones' for the study of culture. The reason is obvious: an older concept of culture as "an autonomous internally coherent universe," cannot address the existence of such differences and even dismisses their role in the process of discursive formation.[17]

Discourses are not detached from material world. Rather, they help to determine the shape and the form of it. Human bodies, for example, are an important discursive object whose physical distinctions and transformations are subject to particular meanings and interpretations. A distinction can be made here that culture structures the material world through shaping individuals and their social relationships not vice versa. That culture is not an objective thing but a subjective process is based on the same logic. Yet, culture is often 'claimed' as an 'object' because when people say 'American culture,'

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[16] Joan W. Scott, "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism," in *Conflicts in Feminism*, ed. Marianne; Forx Hirsh, Keller E. (New York: NY: Routledge, 1990). 135.

[17] Renato Rosaldo, *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989). 217.

they surely have 'something' specific in mind. Likewise, when they say 'Korean culture,' they tend to assume 'something' different from the 'American culture.' We use these terms even when we know that a national culture is neither monolithic nor static. How to account for the persistent appearance of 'fixedness' implied in those usages? A key to the paradox lies in the "unevenness" of discursive formation with which ideologies develop as dominant discourses. Mary Renda offers a useful insight:

> There is no single, fixed, monolithic body of ideas, meanings, or images that can be described as the culture of a particular nation or group. But there are, within a given community, sets of ideas, meanings, and images that are overdetermined given the particular combination of *overlapping* discourses that seem to fix them in place, and given the weight of overlapping institutional power that supports their continued operation.[18]

If culture exists at any given moment, it includes some "overlapping" discourses. These "overlapping but not coincident discourses," writes Renda, are "produced, engaged, and negotiated by a community of sorts" whose members' sense of connectedness one way or another helps them to claim a group identity in the form of 'we.' Even when culture shifts with constant movement and flux in the sum total of discourses, some overlap always remains in such a manner as to "overdetermine" certain ideas, meanings, and images.[19] In a similar vein, Williams has called our attention in his theoretical scheme of cultural changes to "residual and emergent cultures" articulating

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[18] Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti : Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*, Gender & American Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). 26. *Italic* emphasis added.

[19] Ibid.

with "dominant" cultures.[20] Notwithstanding the tenacity of structures of meaning and power, it seems fair to advocate culture as a contested and changing terrain, not a single unified object. The same stance needs to be maintained in our consideration of 'national' culture which cannot be boiled down to a single grand narrative given the distinctive particularities of different groups, histories, and geographies along the alleged common ground.

A remaining concern of culture is its linkage with identity. Once divested of assumed coherence and consistency, culture has no reason to act as basis for the formation of stable identities or subjectivities. The barrage of cultural production and its pandemic dissemination today exacerbates the vulnerable relationship of culture and identity. The problem, though one may see it not as a problem, is that the relationship continues to work in still important ways. Again, when people say they are 'Americans,' they are claiming a national identity just as saying that they are 'Koreans' is the claim of another national identity. One may argue that the nation in both cases is an "imagined community," but the implications of different national identifications suggest more than simple imaginations when they are constructed in specific historical and social contexts.[21] The same can be said of other categories such as racial, gender, and sexual identities, and this study maintains that the presence of U.S. military in South Korea has been integral to the construction of these identities in historical and social contexts.

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[20] Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives and Cultural Studies*, ed. Chandra; Schudson Mukerji, Michael (Berkeley; CA: University of California Press, 1991). 415-6.

[21] Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

According to Judith Butler, a prominent American post-structuralist and feminist scholar, enactment of cultural identities is directly related to the "performativity" of discourse.[22] Similarly, Williams emphasized the lived experiences and feelings as "affective elements of consciousness and relationships" called "structures of feeling."[23] Individuals positioned differently within a given social formation will experience culture or discourses in their own ways. This framework is important to examining the relationship between culture and the individual, between culture and consciousness as well as to considering the process of cultural changes in general. Moreover, it enables us to see that U.S. military domination in South Korea has necessitated "creative processes of conscription and resistance" in and through which "new subjective formations" have occurred.[24] This must be true because if the military power has been fundamental in securing U.S. hegemony in South Korea, the incessant crimes and violence committed by American GIs increased the volatility of the hegemonic status-quo with the result that growing sensitivity to imperial abuse among the Korean population turned to alternative narratives as a means of both individual and collective resistances.

Cross-cultural and transnational in scope, "Relocating the Alliance" employs 'critical discourse analysis,' an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse as an analytical framework. This method is based on the view of "language as a form of social practice" and focuses on the ways social and political domination is reproduced by text

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[22] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Thinking Gender (New York: Routledge, 1990). Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[23] Williams, *Marxism and Literature*. 132.

[24] Renda, *Taking Haiti : Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*. 29.

and talk.[25] The founding idea of critical discourse analysis is that there is unequal access to linguistic and social resources, resources that are controlled institutionally. Critical discourse analysis is, however, distinguished from 'discourse analysis' in that it underscores social and political inequality, power abuse or domination rather than specific structures of linguistic discourses.

Norman Fairclough, a well-known advocate of critical discourse analysis, emphasizes that the method helps the researcher explore power relations and struggle over power in discursive practices, events and texts within wider social and cultural structures.[26] He then suggests a three-dimensional model for studying discourse in order to "map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice. Fairclough constructs it as a process or a continual movement back and forth among the various levels of analysis, descriptive, interpretative, and explanatory. A graphical representation of the model is presented below:

[25] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, Language in Social Life Series (London; New York: Longman, 1989).

[26] Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 1 ed. (London: Routledge, 2003). 135.

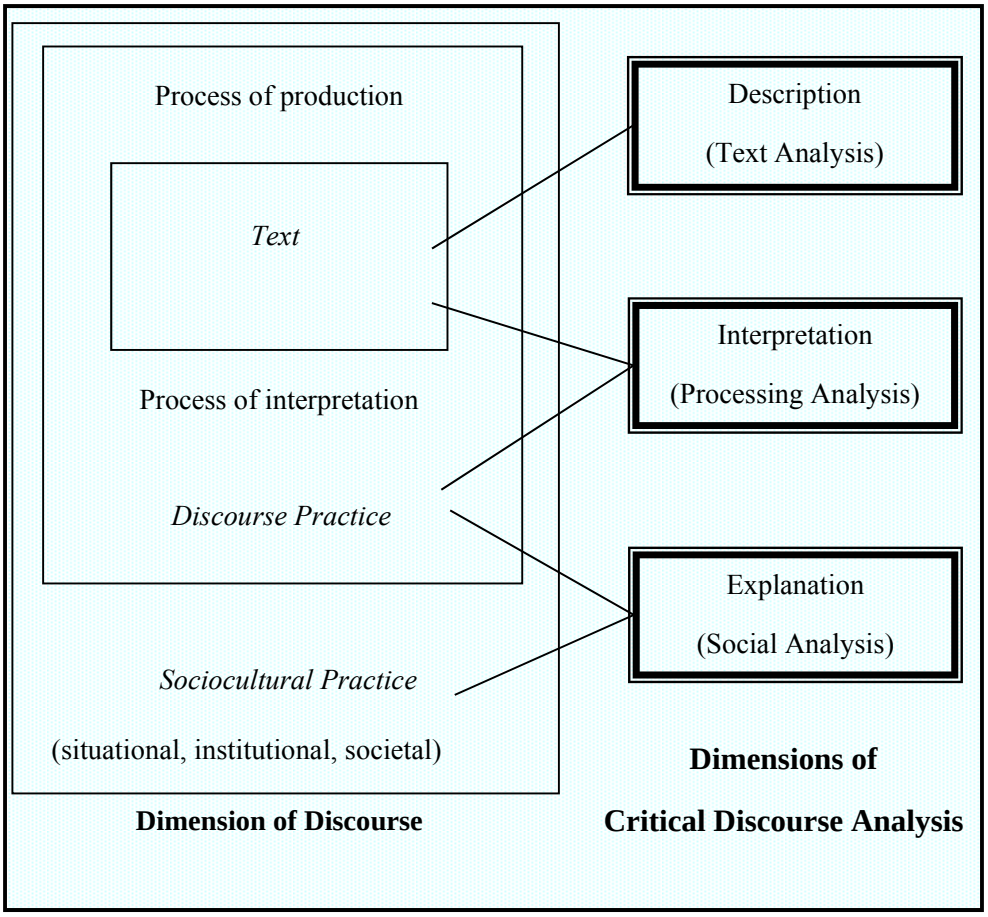

Figure 2 Dimensions of discourse and critical discourse analysis[27]

The production, distribution, and consumption of cultural texts are useful indicators of the discursive formation and its changes as they encompass creative domains where people would articulate their social experiences. Various forms of cultural texts produced by Koreans and Korean Americans illustrate how the military and cultural hegemony of the U.S. has conscripted their lives and experiences. The texts also embody politicization of cultural identities, practices, and representation across national spaces as the authors and their audiences have sought to engage in politics, understand cultural difference, and imagine and construct their social worlds. A critical discourse analysis of

[27] Eva Vetter et al., eds., *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis* (London: Sage,2000). 152.

selected popular forms such as novels, short stories, poems, music, and films constitutes the main part of the study trying to address the following questions:

- What types of cultural 'texts' have emerged out of the U.S.-South Korea military alliance? In what ways do they fit into the hegemonic or anti-hegemonic narratives of U.S. imperialism?

- How do such narratives engage cross-cultural dynamics involving the issues of race, gender, sexuality, spatiality, and nation? How important and effective are they in reenacting or contesting the practices of the alliance?

- What kinds of 'narrative patterns' do the 'texts' reveal in terms of national identity? What constitute the discourse of nationalism? Have they changed over time? Why and under what circumstances?

- What are 'the long-term effects' of the alliance on cultural developments in South Korea and the United States?

While looking at various forms of cultural texts, "Relocating the Alliance" consistently uses Fairclough's model to examine how the texts have engaged the politics of alliance as a complex process on multiple levels of national cultures. Primary sources in this study range from public materials including government documents, military reports, political speeches, and official records to personal items such as diaries, letters, photographs, and memoirs. Public records offer fundamental insights into the broad, contextual understanding of the alliance and the role of institutional structures shaping dominant discourses of cultural identities. On the other hand, private records illustrate how individuals experience discourses and ideologies based on their own social positions or positionalities. Both public and private records, therefore, help locate the voices of the people who have participated in the process of the alliance playing the role of interlocutors whether consciously or unconsciously.

My central argument in "Relocating the Alliance" is that the U.S.-South Korea military alliance since 1953 at the end of the Korean War has entailed a complex process of transnational, cross-cultural encounters in a particular mode of imperial/colonial national context. Tracing the discursive formation and development in various cultural representations, "Relocating the Alliance" shows that Koreans (and Korean Americans), throughout the process of the alliance, have actively responded to the realities of U.S. hegemony while seeking to engage them critically. More often than not, this process has enabled new subjectivities expressed in the intertwined terms of cultural identities such as race, gender, sexuality, social class, space, and nation.

CHAPTER ONE

In the Name of Alliance: Mapping the Sociocultural Landscape of South Korea

In his recent publication on the U.S.-Korea relations, Gi-Wook Shin, a prominent scholar in the field, asserts the significance of power disparities between the two nations as an essential element in the frameworks of the alliance. Shin also emphasizes that the asymmetric relationship has generated different perceptions of the alliance between Korean and Americans. Shin says:

> To South Korea, in particular, the United States is not simply another state in the international system with which it shares interests. Rather, the United States has been a significant other, shaping South Korea's national identity in the post-1945 era; from its position as patron, the United States and its anticommunist banner heavily influenced South Korea's constructed identity. For the United States, however, South Korea served principally as a strategic bulwark against regional communist advancement during the cold war era. Thus, while U.S.-ROK relations became a pillar of national identity for Koreans, for Americans, the alliance was a matter of policy with little, if any, particular bearing on the national psyche.[1]

In South Korea, disagreement between progressives and conservatives over the issues of the U.S.-ROK alliance and North Korea, often referred to as the 'South-South conflict' or 'a house divided," has become a key issue in the national politics since the late 1990s. A Korean scholar describes that South Korea has been "caught between two conflicting identities: the alliance identity that sees the United States as a friendly provider and the nationalist identity that pits Korean identity against the United States."[2]

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[1] Gi-Wook Shin, *One Alliance, Two Lenses: U.S.-Korea Relations in a New Era*, Studies of the Walter H Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010). 10.

[2] Chaibong Hahm, "The Two South Koreas: A House Divided," *Washington Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Summer 2005); Byung-Hoon Suh, "Kim Dae Jung's Engagement Policy and the South-South Conflict in South Korea: Implications for U.S. Policy," *Asian Update* (Summer 2001). J. J. Suh, Peter J. Katzenstein, and

Still, Gi-wook Shin correctly points out that both progressives and conservatives, regardless of the striking difference in their points of view, share the common references of the United States and North Korea as "significant others" in defining their visions of national identity.[3]

A broad, contextual understanding of the identity politics surrounding the U.S.-ROK alliance is crucial to grasping the changing realities as well as the evolution of South Korean views on U.S.-ROK relations. The first part of this chapter provides a brief narrative of the U.S.-South Korea relations tracking some important shifts in the history of the alliance. On the other hand, specific details and practices of the alliance manifested on the ground will also provide equally significant insights into the subject given the purpose of this study. The second part of this chapter outlines the sociocultural landscape of South Korea shaped by the asymmetric frameworks of the alliance identifying some important issues and problems.

A Historical Overview of the U.S.-South Korea Relations through Military Alliance

Although Korea and the United States made the first diplomatic ties in 1882, the modern relationship between the two countries began in 1945 at the end of World War II when the United States, upon its defeat of Japan which had colonized Korea since 1910, agreed with the Soviet Union to divide the Korean Peninsula. On September 7 1945, General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the Supreme Command for the Allied

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Allen Carlson, *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency*, Studies in Asian Security (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004).169. Quoted in Shin, *One Alliance, Two Lenses: U.S.-Korea Relations in a New Era*. 18.

[3] Shin, *One Alliance, Two Lenses: U.S.-Korea Relations in a New Era*. 18. Also see Gi-Wook Shin and Kristin C. Burke, "North Korea and Identity Politics in South Korea," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15, no. 1 (Fall/Winter) (2008).

Powers, formally established U.S. control in Korea south of the 38th parallel. The following day, Major General John R. Hodge and his 72,000 Twenty-fourth Corps landed in Korea through the port of Inchon, making the first day of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). For the next three years, the USAMGIK was the official ruling body of the southern half of the Korean Peninsula, and many of the foundations for the modern South Korean system were laid during this period.

Figure 1 Surrender of Japanese Forces in Southern Korea, September 1945[4]

After nearly four decades of colonial rule by Japan, Korea in this period was plagued by political and economic chaos. Arriving with no knowledge of the language or political situation, the U.S. occupation authority was largely unprepared for the challenge of administering the country.[5] General Hodge who became head of the USAMGIK saw

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[4] Surrender of Japanese Forces in Southern Korea, September 1945. Lowering the Japanese flag and raising the U.S. flag, during surrender ceremonies at Seoul, Korea, 9 September 1945. Photos taken by a USS San Francisco (CA-38) photographer. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives. Photo #: 8—G-39-391464; Photo #: 8-G39-391465. Available at http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/wwii-pac/japansur/js-10t.htm. Last accessed on June 2, 2011.

[5] Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981). 126.

little difference between Koreans and Japanese as he called them "breeds of the same cat" and planned to treat Koreans as "conquered enemies."[6] Moreover, the U.S. Military Government relied on the Japanese colonial system keeping former Japanese officials on as advisors while refusing to recognize local self-governing bodies such as the People's Republic of Korea (PRK) and the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea (PGRK), both organized and led by Korea's leading politicians. In May 1948, the USAMGIK, following the U.S. decision to establish separate regimes in the peninsula, held general elections only in the south under the supervision of the United Nations. Three months later, south Korea became South Korea, officially the Republic of Korea (ROK).

Before the Korean War broke out, however, Washington did not acknowledge the strategic importance of the Peninsula.[7] In the late 1940s, the White House and the U.S. national security planners saw that the United States had "little strategic interest in Korea, or maintaining troops or bases in Korea . . . and the Soviet threat [was] not immediately serious".[8] Indeed, by June 1949, the United States withdrew its combat forces almost entirely from South Korea. Also in January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson made an important announcement about U.S. "defense perimeter" in East Asia which incorporated various islands including the Philippines and Okinawa, but excluded the Korean peninsula. Regarding the significance of Acheson's announcement, many

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[6] Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War* (New York: Times Books, 1982). 20.

[7] Although President Harry Truman and his advisers considered possibilities of a Communist victory in Asia, they spent more time thinking about Japan and other Asian states than about Korea. David Kang and Paul Chamberlin, "A History of U.S.-Rok Relations to 2002," in *Strategy and Sentiment: South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-Rok Alliance*, ed. Derek J. Mitchell (Washington, D. C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004). 14.

[8] U.S. Department of State, "Memorandum for the Secretary of State and the Secratary of War ".

scholars have pointed out that North Korea's invasion of South Korea in June 1950 rested on its confidence that the United States would not interfere. This immediately turned out to be an overwrought interpretation, and in early July 1950, the U.S. troops returned to South Korea to fight the Korean War.[9]

Whereas Koreans fought a North-South war to resolve the postliberation question of which Korean government would govern unified Korea, the United States had to decide whether or not to fight what was then considered a "monolithic Communist menace."[10] Closely advised by Acheson and the military, President Truman, now realizing that the war would serve the ends of the containment strategy, committed the U.S. forces to the conflict, seeking UN support for this step afterward. The United States became involved in defending South Korea as part of a broader ideological conception of strategic interests aligned with its superpower status. Korea ultimately became the proving ground for the new U.S. policy to resist Communist expansion.

On October 1, 1953, two months after the Armistice Agreement, the United States and the ROK signed a bilateral security alliance designed to "strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific area." While the alliance provided a security guarantee to a weak South Korea, completely dependent on the United States for its defense, it in fact meant the creation of a military alliance, calling for building up the ROK as a political and economic barricade against Communist expansion in Northeast Asia.

Throughout the Cold War, the U.S-ROK alliance remained strong and even evolved into a comprehensive relationship extending well beyond security. South Korean involvement in the Vietnam War during the late 1960s deepened the relationship as

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[9] Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*, New ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2001). 9.

[10] Kang and Chamberlin, "A History of U.S.-Rok Relations to 2002." 15.

approximately 300,000 South Korean troops served in Vietnam to support the U.S. military. In return for the participation in its ally's war efforts, South Korea received many economic benefits through various arrangements promised by the United States, which boosted the South Korean economy during a rapid developmental period.[11]

The Vietnam War also brought substantial challenges to the U.S.-ROK. President Richard Nixon, following his speech in Guam on July 25, 1969 (a.k.a. Nixon Doctrine) in which he stated that the U.S. expected its Asian allies to take care of their own military defense, decided to pull out 20,000 U.S. troops from South Korea. The withdrawal and repositioning of the Second Infantry Division in 1971 downsized USFK by one third from 62,000 to 42,000.

Although Nixon in his statement promised that the U.S. would keep its treaty commitments to its allies in Asia, the reduction of USFK panicked the South Korean government especially its leader Park Chung Hee, who saw the need to rely on the U.S. military a critical aspect of South Korean political and economic reality. The Nixon Doctrine thus made South Korean leaders aware that the U.S. commitment to South Korean defense could change at any time, and Park, in response to the reported withdrawal plan, called the continued presence of American troops "absolutely necessary until we have developed our own capability to cope successfully with North Korea."[12]

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[11] See Sung-joo Han, "South Korea's Participation in the Vietnam Conflict," *Orbis* 21, no. 4 (Winter, 1978). 898. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided $150 million specifically for Korean economic development, while the U.S. paid for the cost of basing South Korean troops in Vietnam. The United States also paid shipping costs for South Korean goods sent to Vietnam in support of the troops. Between 1965 and 1969, South Korean earnings from its involvement in Vietnam totaled $546 million, or 16 percent of its total foreign receipts for that period and by 1973 the total extended to $1 billion. Quoted in Kang and Chamberlin, "A History of U.S.-Rok Relations to 2002."

[12] "Seoul Chief Terms Us Troops Vital," *New York Times*, June 24 1970. 1.

Jimmy Carter's pledge upon his presidential inauguration in 1971 to remove all U.S. ground forces from the Korean Peninsula increased the anxiety of South Koreans about the possibility of U.S. abandonment although it did not come as a surprise. Carter had already spoken about the plan during his presidential campaign. Facing substantial protests and domestic and international pressure against it, Carter could only accomplish part of his goal by withdrawing one battalion (3,500 soldiers) in 1978, but this, again, "unpleasantly reminded South Koreans of their keen vulnerability to U.S. actions, while raising questions about U.S. reliability as an ally."[13] Also, Carter's reluctance to support Park's authoritarian regime due to its violation of human rights posed another serious challenge to the alliance at least at the governmental level. Meanwhile, the so-called "Korea gate" scandal occurred in 1976 revealing that Park Tong-sun, a secret agent of the South Korean government, was spending almost $1 million a year to bribe U.S. congressional members and other officials as part of the government's attempt to persuade the United States to remain in South Korea.[14]

A further complication emerged in the context of Chun Doo Hwan's seizing power in South Korea through a "creeping" coup d'état after Park Chung Hee's death in October 1979. When Park was assassinated by Kim Jae Kyu, one of his closest aids, who then was head of the Korea Central Intelligence Agency, Army Major General Chun led the investigation and subsequently led an internal coup against the army's chief of staff and senior leaders on December 12, 1979. South Korean civil society including students,

[13] Kang and Chamberlin, "A History of U.S.-Rok Relations to 2002." 16.

[14] William H. Gleysteen, *Massive Entanglement, Marginal Influence: Carter and Korea in Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1999). 34.

dissident intellectuals, and oppositional politicians mobilized massive protests against Chun's move and his status of de facto ruler.

Tension escalated in May 1980 with major demonstrations in Kwangju, the capital of South Cholla Province, after the government imposed martial law, closed the National Assembly, and arrested oppositional politicians including two future presidents—Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung. Chun dispatched special military forces to Kwangju to suppress the demonstration which resulted in a violent confrontation and the deaths of more than 2,000 people. On August 27, 1980, about three months after the Kwangju Incident, the National Conference for Unification elected General Chun as South Korea's president.

Given that the U.S. military had the operational control of the combined U.S.-ROK forces, many South Koreans believed the U.S. had the power to stop Chun and blamed Washington for not doing so. In this view, Chun could not have suppressed the Kwangju uprising without at least an implicit U.S. consent. For this reason, some critics perceived the USFK as "complicit with if not supportive of Chun's suppression of South Korea's pro-democracy movements" because of its failure to prevent the bloody action. Whether the United States had implicitly or explicitly supported Chun's coup and the Kwangju massacre has been a long debate in South Korea. Meanwhile, scholars have agreed that the Kwangju massacre led to a basic shift in opinions among many South Koreans, "sowing the seeds for Korean resentment of USFK, especially among pro-democracy activists."[15]

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[15] Scott Snyder, "Pursuing a Comprehensive Vision for the U.S.-South Korea Alliance," (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009). 4; Gi-Wook Shin, "South Korean Anti-Americanism: A Comparative Perspective," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 8 (1996). 787-804; Kang and Chamberlin, "A History of U.S.-Rok Relations to 2002." 16-7.

In the aftermath of Kwangju, anti-American sentiment grew, occasionally erupting into violent actions such as the arson attacks against the U.S. Information Center in Seoul and the U.S. Cultural Center in Pusan in 1980 and 1982 respectively. Meanwhile, when the U.S. President Ronald W. Reagan and South Korean President Chun Doo-Hwan met in February 1981 (Chun was the first head of state to visit Reagan in Washington as soon as he became the president), President Reagan assured President Chun that he did not have any plans to withdraw U.S. forces from South Korea.

The beginning of the1990s was characterized by dramatic changes in the context surrounding the Korean Peninsula with the end of the Cold War, South Korea's improved international standing, and a political transition from authoritarianism to democracy. While all these changes could have eased the tension in the Peninsula, it came as a shock that North Korea had embarked on a nuclear weapons development program. This event raised the stake of the alliance as the nuclear issue persisted to be an overarching security concern for both the United States and South Korea. The United States remained primarily responsible for South Korea's defense, and the USFK maintained a level of operational flexibility befitting wartime.

By the late 1990s, both the U.S. and South Korean governments made attempts to adjust to the new situation in Korea. The Clinton administration proposed the Land Partnership Plan (LPP), whereby USFK prepared to vacate and return some bases and land to South Korea. Negotiations were also started to revise the terms of the Status of Forces Agreement that had been long regarded by South Koreans as blatantly unfair with particular respect to its provision of criminal jurisdiction. In December 2001, the ROK and the U.S. governments completed negotiations for the revision that was supposed to

provide greater Korean autonomy and responsibility in handling offenses by off-duty U.S. military personnel.

Yet these changes did not correspond to altered strategic environment or the structure of South Korean domestic sphere. President Clinton also initiated engagement policy toward North Korea focusing on diplomatic efforts to solve the nuclear problem. On October 21, 1994, the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) signed on the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework. The first diplomatic agreement ever made between the two countries, the significance of the framework, according to Kang and Chamberlin, represented "a major shift in U.S. policy toward North Korea." as Washington concluded that traditional deterrence policy and confrontation could not stop Pyongyang from pursuing "indigenous weapons programs."[16]

A critical development between the late 1990s and early 2000s was South Korea's change in approach toward North Korea under the leadership of President Kim Dae Jung. Kim's "sunshine policy" focused more on reconciliatory actions than on confrontational measures through political, commercial, and social exchanges with the North. The most dramatic result of the policy was the June 2000 inter-Korean summit. Kim's trip to Pyongyang and the first-ever meeting between North and South Korean leaders was a historic event with powerful reverberations for South Korean perceptions of inter-Korean relations and the U.S.-ROK alliance per se. Upon his "triumphant return from Pyongyang," President Kim made a statement in which he predicted "an end to military confrontation and promising concrete measures to consolidate the goodwill to be generated by his three-day summit with the North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. Kim declared:

[16] Snyder, "Pursuing a Comprehensive Vision for the U.S.-South Korea Alliance." 5.

> A new age has dawned for our nation. We have reached a turning-point, so we can put an end to the history of territorial division of 55 years. . . There is no longer going to be any war. The North will no longer attempt unification by force and . . . we will not do any harm to the North.[17]

Kim's statement, though apparently over-optimistic, facilitated the transformation of South Korean public perceptions of the North "from enemy to brother-in-need."[18] This transformation also carried a subtle implication for the shifting perceptions toward the U.S. military presence in South Korea "from necessity to luxury or even as legacy of the past era of inter-Korean conflict."[19] At the same time, some hi-profile scandals, crimes, and accidents involving the USFK personnel drew public attention intensifying the debate over the U.S.-ROK alliance and contributing to anti-American sentiment in South Korea. Such incidents, Snyder contends, were far from unusual but symptoms of a deeper problem; "the U.S.-ROK alliance remained on auto-pilot, based on Cold War premises, structures, and patterns of interaction; no serious effort had been made to update the strategic framework underlying the alliance in a manner similar to the process that led to the reaffirmation of the U.S.-Japan alliance."[20]

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[17] "President Predicts a New Age of Harmony for Korea," *The Independent* June 16, 2000. Available at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/president-predicts-a-new-age-of-harmony-for-korea-712557.html. Last Accessed on May 31, 2011.

[18] Scott Snyder, *Strengthening the U.S.-Rok Alliance* (Center for Strategies and International Studies, February 2009). 6.

[19] Scott Snyder, "North Korean Nuclear Factor and Changing Asia-Pacific Alliances," in *Asia-Pacific Alliances in the 21st Centry: Waxing or Waning?*, ed. In-Taek Hyun, Kyudok Hong, and Sung-han Kim (Seoul, Korea: Oreum Publishing Company, 2007).

[20] Snyder, "Pursuing a Comprehensive Vision for the U.S.-South Korea Alliance." 5. The reaffirmation of the U.S.-Japan alliance refers to the 1996 U.S.-Japan Joint Security Declaration. From October 1994 through April 1996, both the U.S. and Japanese governments undertook an intensive bilateral review of the security relationship in a post-Cold war context. This review, named "the Nye Initiative" after the assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs Joseph Nye Jr., was halted in September 1995 when a young school girl was raped by U.S. servicemen on Okinawa. Despite the U.S. official apologies immediately after the incident, this case intensified public debate over the utility of the alliance in Japan with large anti-U.S. protests. Meanwhile, the Chinese missile demonstrations in the Taiwan Strait in March 1996 "added a new urgency to the two governments' dialogue" and in April 1996, the following month,

A revealing case of this discrepancy surrounding the parties of the alliance is the 2002 Yangju traffic accident in which a U.S. armored vehicle struck and killed two 14-year-old school girls who were walking on the side of a narrow road. While the incident became widely publicized, the consensus among South Koreans was that those who had driven the vehicle should be prosecuted in civilian courts under Korean law. The U.S.-ROK SOFA stipulated that US military personnel fell under the jurisdiction of U.S. military courts should they commit crimes while performing official duties, but the jurisdiction can be transferred to Korea at the discretion of the U.S. military commander. When the Korean Justice Ministry requested transfer of the jurisdiction, the U.S. military refused and pursued the proceedings on its own. Both the driver of the vehicle and his senior associate who at the time of the incident was the commander of the vehicle were charged with negligent homicide, but in a few months, the U.S. military court found them not guilty.

The acquittal of the two servicemen sparked anti-U.S. demonstrations in various locations, termed "the biggest anti-American protests the country has seen in recent years" by a BBC report covering the December 2002 visit of then US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to South Korea.[21] In addition to anger, sadness, and outrage at the death of the victims, the response to this incident, which included violent protests and

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Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and U.S. president Bill Clinton finally had a meeting in which they "reaffirmed the importance of maintaining forward U.S. presence" in Japan. The results of the review were documented in the Joint Security Declaration. For more details on the U.S.-Japan alliance, see Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin, *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999).

[21] "Korean Anger as Us Soldiers Cleared," *BBC News*, December 06 2002. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2497947.stm. Last accessed on June 12, 2011.The same report also suggested that presidential elections in South Korea, set to take place that same December, may have focused attention on the issue as a larger referendum on the US-ROK relationship, and thus exacerbated tensions.

extended street demonstrations, revealed "an underlying perception by South Koreans that USFK had not updated its treatment of South Korea as a partner in line with economic and political accomplishments of recent decades."[22]

Earlier in January 2002, President Bush's State of Union address in which he used the "axis of evil" phrase with specific reference to Iran, Iraq, and North Korea also stirred South Koreans' anxieties because of its negative implications against apparent progress in inter-Korean relations and South Korea's security posture. Combined with skepticism within South Korea over the U.S. motivations for invading Iraq, Bush's "axis of evil" remark incited the anger at what was perceived as U.S. arrogance and high-handedness, raising the doubts about whether the alliance would contribute in practical terms to enhancing or reducing South Korea's security. The massive candlelight demonstrations that occurred in the wake of the 2002 Yangju incident expressed the growing public awareness in South Korea of "the lack of an updated rationale, shared vision or articulation of mutual interests" and called for "a broader reevaluation of the security relationship."[23]

The U.S.-ROK relationship remained one of the most important issues in the 2002 presidential elections that ended up with surprising results. With a narrow 2% margin, Roh Moo Hyun, a former human rights lawyer and pro-democracy activist, won the presidency by defeating Lee Hoi Chang, a conservative politician and powerful critic of liberal engagement toward North Korea. Unlike Lee who had proudly demonstrated his

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[22] Snyder, "Pursuing a Comprehensive Vision for the U.S.-South Korea Alliance." 6.

[23] Ibid. David I. Steinberg, *Korean Attitudes toward the United States: Changing Dynamics* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2005). Derek J. Mitchell, *Strategy and Sentiment : South Korean Views of the United States and the U.S.-Rok Alliance*, Csis Working Group Report (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004).

ties to the United States by visiting Washington, D.C. early in his campaign, Roh championed greater independence and equality in South Korea's relations with the United States and the need to seek "cooperative, self-reliant defense" while maintaining the bilateral alliance.[24] The wave of anti-U.S. sentiment that had swept the country the same year proved crucial in producing the result.

Although anti-U.S. sentiment in South Korea persisted after Roh Moo Hyun's inauguration and the tension existed between the Roh and Bush administrations, both sides cooperated to "modernize the US-South Korean military alliance." They announced agreements to move Yongsan Garrison, home of the 37,000 US troops stationed on the peninsula, to south of the Han River.[25] Subsequent talks successfully set a timetable for replacing the Combined Forces Command (CFC) with separate command arrangements in which the United States would play a supporting role. All these efforts, as Snyder argues, represented "a significant evolution in the structure of alliance cooperation mechanisms."

However, there were visible signs of disparity between the Roh and Bush administrations in their perceptions of the North Korean threat and the consequent policy rift over how to deal with North Korea pursuing nuclear weapons.[26] It appeared that the United States and South Korea had divergent interests that would result in the dissolution of the alliance. Chung-in Moon, one of Roh's closest advisors, acknowledged the existence of a widespread perception that "the core of bilateral friction lies in . . . [the]

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[24] Shin, *One Alliance, Two Lenses: U.S.-Korea Relations in a New Era*. 2.

[25] "Us Army to Move S Korea Base," *BBC News*, April 9 2003. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2930997.stm. Last accessed on May 23, 2011.

[26] Shin, *One Alliance, Two Lenses: U.S.-Korea Relations in a New Era*.

trade-off between inter-Korean engagement and the ROK-U.S. alliance."[27] In fact, U.S. troops became less valued as a deterrent, and the social and political consequences of U.S. military deployment in South Korea, especially in increasingly urban areas, seemed less tolerable. Under these new circumstances, U.S. forces appeared to some as "an unnecessary inconvenience" or, even worse, as "an infringement on South Korean sovereignty," "a source of interference in Korean politics, and a symbol of national stigma."[28]

Along with his commitment to continuing his predecessor's engagement policy with the North, Roh, according to Gi-wook Shin, pressed for "a more region-centered foreign policy" asserting that the Republic of Korea must actively participate in the new era, an "era of Northeast Asia" by becoming "a hub in the region." This initiative, Shin says, was commonly perceived as "a veiled strategy to weaken the U.S.-ROK alliance and move closer to China."[29] While critics contested the way he sought to redefine relations with the United States, Roh, on the other hand, proved that he was willing to work together with the Bush administration on many sensitive alliance issues such as reconfiguration of USFK, ROK troop dispatch to Iraq, and South Korea's free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States.[30]

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[27] Chung-In Moon, "Rok-Dprk Engagement and Us-Rok Alliance: Trade-Off or Complementary?," (paper presented at the U.S.-DPRK Next Steps Workshop, Nautilus Institute and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, January 27, 2003). Quoted in Shin, *One Alliance, Two Lenses: U.S.-Korea Relations in a New Era*. 16.

[28] Shin, *One Alliance, Two Lenses: U.S.-Korea Relations in a New Era*. 16.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Snyder, "Pursuing a Comprehensive Vision for the U.S.-South Korea Alliance." 7.

Not all South Koreans favored the general direction of the shift in the U.S.-ROK relations since the late 1990s. Throughout the Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations, conservatives remained critical of the liberal engagement policy toward the North believing that it would only hurt South Korea's longstanding relationship (forged in blood) with the United States. Also skeptical that the North would change, conservatives demanded "greater reciprocity within inter-Korean relations," while emphasizing the importance of the U.S.-ROK alliance in even stronger terms than was traditionally the case.[31] During the 2007 presidential campaign, Lee Myung Bak repeated the claim that a decade of progressive rule had almost irreparably strained the alliance in its attempt to make South Korea more independent of the United States. Once he won the elections, Lee reaffirmed his campaign pledge to "restore the U.S.-ROK alliance based on the established friendship" as his top priority.[32]

During his interview with the *New York Times*, Yoon Duk-min, one of President Lee's foreign policy advisors said, "Disagreement over North Korea was always the main obstacle to good relations [with the United States]." Yoon continued to insist that President Lee's policy toward North Korea was "not that different from the Bush administration's current policy" pointing to it as "a favorable environment for bilateral relations."[33] Lee who has maintained a tougher line with North Korea had no disagreement with President Bush who consistently sought to isolate Pyongyang. During his visit of Bush in April 2008, Lee pledged that the alliance going forward should be based on the principles of "common values, trust, and peace." On April 19, the two

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[31] Shin, *One Alliance, Two Lenses: U.S.-Korea Relations in a New Era*. 17.

[32] "President Elect Vows Creative Diplomacy," *Korea Times* December 19, 2007.
[33] Norimitsu Onishi, "South Korean President Pledges Pragmatism," *New York Times* February 26, 2008.

leaders at Camp David announced the establishment of a "strategic alliance for the twenty-first century" although the definition of the relationship in concrete terms would not be made until in June 2009 after Barack Obama was inaugurated.[34] As of 2011, the U.S.-ROK alliance at the state level under the Obama and Lee administrations appears solid without an indication of any significant conflict in their policies. But it is still uncertain how deep the relationship is rooted among the general public.[35]

The USFK and the Web of Domination

> In the center of this crowded city lies a green expanse of rolling hills, complete with split-level homes, baseball diamond and 18-hole golf course. It is Yongsan, the United States military base that for many South Korans has become a nagging symbol of the dominant American presence here . . . Driving into the South Post gate, site of the base's homes and recreational area, is a trip out of South Korea and into American suburbia . . . "People call it the boulder in the middle of Seoul," said Bill Fullerton, a spokesman for the United States Forces Korean Command who said the command had no information about the moving the base.[36]

The above passage is from Susan Chira's article in the *New York Times* on August 14, 1988 in which she reported that a preliminary agreement had been made between the United States and South Korean governments to move the Yongsan Garrison in Seoul. Located at the center of Seoul close to the Han River, Yongsan has been the site of the commanding center for foreign militaries at least from the thirteenth century.[37] At the

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[34] The White House, "President Bush Participates in Joint Press Availability with President Lee Myung-Bak of the Republic of Korea, Camp David," ed. Office of the Press Secretary (April 19, 2008). Available at http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/04/20080419-1.html. Last accessed on May 23, 2011.

[35] Victor D. Cha and Katrin Katz, "South Korea in 2010," *Asian Survey* 51, no. 1 (Janauary/February) (2011).

[36] Susan Chira, "In Heart of Seoul, an Unwanted U.S. Presence," *New York Times*, August, 14 1988.

[37] In the 13th century Yongsan area was used as a garrison for the occupying Mongolian Army as well as in the 16th century by the invading Japanese samurai as part of the Hideyoshi invasion of Korea. Prior to the

time Chira wrote the article, Yongsan Garrison, the heart of USFK, housed the headquarters of 42,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea scattered throughout the country.

While Yongsan represents a bitter legacy of foreign invasions and occupations, the contrasting image of the landscapes inside and outside the base in Chira's description vividly illustrates the asymmetry of power in the U.S.-South Korea alliance indicating South Korea's neocolonial status under U.S. military domination. U.S. military bases, according to Catherine Lutz, should be seen as "expressions of a nation's will to status and power," and they in fact facilitate "the wealth and welfare of the powerful center" aiming to maintain dominance over other regions.[38] Similarly, Mark Gillem in his study of U.S. military bases around the globe finds that the spatial models of the "America Towns" filled with "rambling subdivisions, supersized shopping centers, and lush golf courses" represent "sprawling suburbs" exported from the homeland. He explains the implications of this spatiality:

> If our encounters with others tell us as much about ourselves as the other, what does this tell us about American soldiers living abroad? In defense of the United

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Japanese colonization of Korea in the 20th century the area had been used by the Chinese military as well who set up a headquarters in the Yongsan area in 1882. During the colonial period, Yongsan Garrison would remain in Japanese control until it was handed over to the United States military with the surrender of the Japanese Imperial Army at the end of World War II. The garrison was used by U.S. military occupying forces until 1948 and after the withdrawal of the occupying force, the garrison was used by the U.S. military's Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) soldiers that advised and helped train the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army. In June 1950 with the start of the Korean War, Yongsan Garrison was captured in less than a week by the invading North Korean forces. With the September 1950 land at Incheon by U.S. Forces led by General Douglas MacArthur Yongsan would be recaptured by the U.S. military to only be lost yet again a few months later with the Chinese entry into the war. By March 1951 the U.S. military and their allies had recaptured Seoul and Yongsan Garrison once again from the Chinese. After the Korean War, Yongsan Garrison went on to become the home of United States Forces Korea (USFK), the United Nations Command (UNC), the Combined Forces Command (CFC), as well as the home of Eighth United States Army (EUSA). GI Korea, "A Profile of Usfk Camps in Seoul," http://rokdrop.com/2008/05/13/a-profile-of-usfk-camps-in-seoul/. Last accessed on June 10, 2011.

[38] Lutz, "Introduction: Bases, Empire, and Global Response." 1-8.

> States, the military has imposed on the globe the single-family home and the shopping mall. "I will live in a suburb regardless of how valuable or how limited your land is. I will live the way I want, build the way I want, and act the way I want. I have my rules, and they apply whether I'm in Kadena or Kansas, so don't make me change them for you."[39]

The MDT allowed the U.S. forces to stay in South Korea and to use the country's land, sea, and air for an indefinite period. The Article VI of the treaty reads, "The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air, and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement."[40] There has been virtually no compensation for private landowners even though they own substantial portions of the grant land based on the SOFA. In 2002, privately owned land accounted for about 25% of the total land that the ROK granted to the USFK in the form of either exclusive-use land or restricted areas.

It is only recently that the issue of land ownership received public attention along with other problems engendered by the presence of U.S. military. Some landowners whose land was granted without compensation to the U.S. forces for exclusive use brought their complaints to the court system where they often won their cases. Some farmers who owned land within the restricted SOFA grant land attempted to enter the land for farming purposes, which caused public safety concerns for local military commanders. In response, the USFK commander asked Korean authorities to ensure public safety by establishing and enforcing safety easements around his ammunition

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[39] Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire*. xv, 267.

[40] United States Forces in South Korea, "1953 Mutual Defense Treaty," The United States Forces in South Korea Official Website, http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/sofa.1953.mutual.defense.treaty.76. Last accessed on May 23, 2011.

depots and rearming facilities.[41] No wonder that this exacerbated the already escalating public resentment against the USFK"[42]

Camptowns (*Gijichon*), a distinctive mixed-culture neighborhood surrounding U.S. military bases, are another important sociocultural ramification of the alliance. An American reporter named K. Heldman wrote about his experiences around U.S. military camps during his visit of South Korea in 1996:

> On any given night in Itaewon women in prostitution costume hang out club doors soliciting GIs; one part come on, one part contempt. An old Korean woman, hands clasped behind her back, spends the night strolling up and down Hooker Hill, approaching young GIs in their downy sports jackets asking "Lady?" as the GI, after questioning How much? And How old? follows her up the hill and down an alley. Later in the barracks the soldiers imitate mockingly, "Suckee, Suckee, fuck, I do everything, I go home with you," clinging to the full metal jacket fantasy that they're still occupying forces in the hooch village.[43]

What Heldman described in the passage with astonishment is a routine scene occurring every night in any camptown. Sitting next to the Yongsan Garrison, Itaewon[44]

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[41] Chang-hee Nam, "Relocating Usfk Bases: Background and Implications," *East Asian Review* 15, no. 3 (2003). 113.

[42] According to a 2002 survey reported in a newspaper, when 1,200 South Koreans were asked what the United States could do first to improve the situation in South Korea, 45 percent of respondents wanted the United States to use less land. Next, at 19 percent, was better education and improved regulations for the soldiers. Ji-ho Kim, "U.S. Military Causes Problems to Residents: Survey," *Korea Herald*, December 18 2002.

[43] K. Heldman, "Itaewon, South Korea: On the Town with the U.S. Military," *Korea Web Weekly* Dec. 19, 1996.

[44] It should be interesting that the name of Itaewon also reflects Korea's colonial history. During the 16th century Japanese invasion of Korea, Japanese troops broke into a Buddhist temple in the area and raped the nuns. When the Korean (then Joseon Dynasty) government returned to Seoul after an exile, it allowed nuns who had gotten pregnant to live and raise their babies there at a nursery established for them. The area was named I Tae Won. "I (異)" means "different," "Tae (胎)" means "fetus," and "Won (院)" means "home." Some Japanese troops who surrendered at the end of the war settled in Itaewon, establishing a permanent foreign presence there. During the 1600s, Itaewon's name came to mean "large pear tree" because of the trees planted there. There isn't a single remaining pear tree in Itaewon. Itaewon is now home to most of Seoul's expat population. "Itaewon: What's in a Name?," *Stars and Stripes*, January 4 2009.

is packed with western-styled shops, bars, hotels, and restaurants and is one of the most popular places for foreign tourists including those from the United States pleased by familiar signs like Cadillac Bar, Love Cupid, Texas Club, Boston Club, the King Club, the Palladium, the Grand Ole Opry, and so on. Like in other camptowns, in Itaewon informally named Hooker Hill, the selling and buying of sex by Koreans and Americans does not draw much attention.

Militarized prostitution around camptowns in South Korea has been in practice for more than a half century along with the support and regulation by the U.S. military and Korean government. *Sex among Allies*, a groundbreaking study of the subject by Katherine H. S. Moon, concludes that roughly six million American soldiers served in Korea between 1950 and 1971, and upward of one million South Korean women worked as "sex providers" for them in the camptowns that sprang up around U.S. bases.[45] Although similar forms of militarized prostitution have existed elsewhere not to mention in Philippines and Japan, its system in South Korea has been so pervasive and so central to the dynamics of alliance that Bruce Cumings calls it, "the most important aspect of the whole relationship between the United States and South Korea and the primary memory of Korea for generations of young Americans who have served there."[46]

Above all, the plight of camptown women is insurmountable. In addition to the racism and sexism of their American patrons, the social stigma and alienation women face within their own society aggravate their agony in dual weight. It is a common story that camptown women are rejected by their own families when they return to them. They

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[45] Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*. 1.
[46] Bruce Cumings, "Silent but Deadly: Sexual Subordination in the U.S.-Korea Relationship"," in *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia*, ed. Saundra Pollock and Brenda Stoltzfus (New York: New Press, 1992). 170.

remain as pariah while suffering from a bitter sense of abandonment and painful trauma of abused body and soul.[47] This may be one of the reasons that some camptown women in fear of such miseries determine to marry American soldiers and leave their homeland for the United States where they often find things no better than before. According to Ji-Yeon Yuh whose 2002 study focuses on the history of these Korean "military brides," more than one hundred thousand Korean women have entered the United States since 1950 as spouses of American servicemen.[48]

The so-called 'Amerasians' who are of mixed races born between American fathers and Asian mothers have encountered the same kind of fate. Amerasian or more specifically Amerkorean children, particularly those of African-American-Korean parentage, are frequently humiliated and harassed in schools. When grown-ups, they often remain trapped in self-marginalization and self-degradation, easily identified as the lowest of the low in Korean society. It has been alleged that fewer than two thousand Amerkoreans were born each year during the 1960s. Given that the number of American GIs stationed in South Korea was greatest during the 1960s, the record-high Amerkorean birth-rate during the same period is no coincidence. Tobias Hübinette's *Comforting an Orphaned Nation* (2005) brings to the front the issues of mixed-race children and international adoption examining how nationalism is articulated in various ways in light of the colonial experiences in modern Korean history and recent (post/neo)colonial developments within the contemporary Korean society.[49]

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[47] Kathernine H. S. Moon, "South Korean Movements against Militarized Sexual Labor," *Asian Survey* 39, no. 2 (1997). 313.

[48] Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown : Korean Military Brides in America*.

[49] Tobias Hübinette, *Comforting an Orphaned Nation : Representations of International Adoption and Adopted Koreans in Korean Popular Culture*, Korean Studies Series (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006).

Camptowns have served as extensions of military bases as well as "literal and symbolic buffers between the foreign military and the greater Korea." Although located on the peripheral-edge of Korean society, marginalized as a place of "dispensable" people, violent clashes, and sexual exploitations, camptowns also represent "an indispensable-edge" for postwar Korea. Camps and camptowns have presented opportunities of employment and foreign currency earnings for the economic development, as well as provide an important locus for desired American culture. Moreover, these spaces have been an important "origin" place for transpacific migration for many Koreans. The ways in which GIs interacted with Koreans in this "intimate borderland" have produced both "cold war integrations" as well as an "imperfect" imperialism.[50]

Inevitably, however, the boundaries of camptowns have not been strong enough to contain all the problems of the alliance, and one of the most troubling effects of the spillovers has been "a crime spree around American outposts."[51] Thousands of crimes ranging from minor offenses and violations to felonies have been reported each year since 1967. Having caused innumerable deaths, injuries, and property damages as well as deep frustration and humiliation, the U.S. military in South Korea has a history of atrocities although that has been deliberately silenced by the Korean government and the U.S. military.[52]

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[50] Hwang, "Borderland Intimacies: Gis, Koreans, and American Military Landscapes in Cold War Korea". 11.

[51] Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire*. 48.

[52] According to the South Korean government's official statistics, 50,082 crimes were committed by U.S. soldiers from 1967 to 1998 (including those by soldiers' families), and 56,904 U.S. soldiers were involved (including soldiers' families). Given that the government does not have the relevant statistics to the crimes committed before 1967 because SOFA went into effect in 1967, the actual figure must be higher than the announced one. Based on the statistics, one group estimated the total number of the crimes between 1945

In 1992 Yoon Guemi, a former camptown prostitute, was brutally raped and murdered by an American GI who turned out to be one of the victim's clients. A photo of the crime scene was disclosed in a news coverage, and it horrified the viewers; the victim's naked body was sprawled on the floor of her room with her legs spread widely apart, her body and face covered with blood and powdered laundry detergent, her mouth full of matchsticks, a bottle inserted in her vagina, and an umbrella inserted 11 inches from her anus into rectum. Despite the fact that Yoon's death was not the first of its kind, this case generated unusual degree of public outrage against the USFK and anti-U.S. protests nationwide, which in turn gave birth to the establishment of the National Campaign for Elimination of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea (NCECUTK), a civic organization dedicated to addressing criminal misconduct by the U.S. military. Since then, NCECUTK has been a key player in promoting civil activism against U.S. military-related abuses in South Korea.

Crimes by the U.S. military in South Korea are not limited to human rights violations or civil disorders. Over the past decade, environmental contamination by the USFK has become a volatile issue. In January 2003, 2,000 gallons of diesel fuel leaked out of a fuel tan at Osan Air Base, and 700 gallons of jet fuel leaked out of a containment system following a spill at Kunsan Air Base. In Seoul, oil leaks around Yongsan garrison and at a religious retreat center near Mt. Namsan have saturated the ground, contaminating spring water.[53] The so-called 'McFarland incident' is perhaps the most

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and 2001 would be around 100,000 with the number of victims over 100,000. Civil Network for a Peaceful Korea, "Statistics on Crimes Committed by Us Troops in South Korea," in *Report on US Crimes in Korea 1945-2001*
(New York: Korea International War Crimes Tribunal, June 23, 2001).

[53] Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire*. 46.

known case. In July 2000, Green Korea, an environmental NGO, discovered that the U.S. Eighth Army in Yongsan, Seoul had released about 120 liters of formaldehyde, a highly toxic chemical used chiefly as a disinfectant and preservative, into the Han River. It became known that in February 2000 Albert McFarland, a senior officer at the morgue in Yongsan garrison, had enforced the spill despite the reluctance of the Korean subordinate who executed the order after reminding his boss that the drain would directly run into the Han River, the lifeline of more than 10 million citizens.

Faced with angry protests from local civic groups who demanded an immediate apology with a full investigation and disciplinary measures, Lt. Gen. Daniel Petrosky, the commander of the Eighth Army did make an official apology. Gen. Petrosky's statement marked an historic moment because it was "the first time that the U.S. military in South Korea has issued an apology to the public."[54] U.S. military, however, sparked further outrage by insisting that Korean courts had no authority over the case under the SOFA rules. After a long debate, McFarland was subjected to trials under Korean jurisdiction but he further alienated Koreans by refusing to show up for the trial except for the appeal.

Most of the U.S. military-related problems engendered by and associated with the alliance ultimately converge on the U.S.-ROK Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). First established in 1966, twelve years after the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty was made, the SOFA has been the basis of defining the legal status of U.S. military personnel in South Korea as well as their relationship with Korean civilians. While the treaty mirrored asymmetric power relations between the U.S. and South Korea, the U.S.-ROK SOFA has

[54] "Usfk Issues Official Apology for Illegal Disposal of Toxic Waste," *People's Daily Online*, July 25 2000.

been criticized as “the world’s most unequal and unjust agreement between the two countries.”[55]

At the core of the controversy are Articles IV and XXII that, respectively, define the use of land by the U.S. military and the jurisdiction over the crimes by U.S. troops. Most problematic, Article XXII stipulates that the United States has a primary right to decide whether a serviceman charged with a crime will be given over to the local authorities or not. A study by Ministry of Justice of South Korea shows that among 39,452 cases of crimes committed by the U.S. military (involving 45,183 soldiers) between 1967 and 1987, South Korea was able to exercise its jurisdiction only in 234 cases against 351 U.S. soldiers.[56] The Yoon Geumi case in 1992 marked the first time that the U.S. military handed over a soldier to Korean authorities for trial under Korean law.

The original 1966 U.S-ROK SOFA has been revised twice in 1991 and in 2001. The 1991 revision created relatively minor changes governing then 43,000 U.S. troops (soon cut to about 37,000) stationed in South Korea on such issues as customs procedures, labor, rights, and health precautions. Although it clarified jurisdictional issues surrounding custody of American forces accused of committing crimes by spelling out the requirements for an act to be considered ‘official duty,’ it maintained jurisdictional divisions in favor of the U.S. military. Several accusations of criminal misconduct by U.S. forces became highly publicized incidents arousing public attention among South Koreans to the “custody upon indictment” issue while under the new SOFA, the U.S.

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[55] Keun-joo Christine Pae, "Western Princesses in the Borderlands: A Christian Feminist Ethical Analysis of U.S. Military Prostitution in South Korea" (Ph. D. Dissertation, The Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York 2009). 86.

[56] Korea, "Statistics on Crimes Committed by Us Troops in South Korea."

troops could not be turned over to Korean authorities until a conviction had been obtained in Korean courts.

Dissatisfied with the results of the 1991 revision, Koreans sought to have broader prosecution provisions governing U.S. troops accused of committing crimes. The second revision of SOFA in 2001 addressed some, though not all concerns over the issue of criminal jurisdiction. The U.S. and Korean authorities agreed that in 12 major crimes, such as rape and murder, SOFA personnel could be taken into custody at the time of indictment instead of following conclusion of all judicial proceedings. In the wake of the McFarland incident in 2000 and other cases of contamination, environmental concerns became crucial during the negotiation process. Article IV of the original SOFA declares that "the United States is not obliged, when it returns facilities and areas to restore to the condition in which they were at the time they became available to the United States armed forces or to compensate the government of the Republic of Korea in lieu of such restoration."[57] Without making any substantial change to the original, the new SOFA of 2001 only added a 'Memorandum on Special Understandings on Environmental Protection' stating that U.S. forces in Korea will respect Korean environmental regulations.

Also in 2001 the U.S. and South Korean governments under the Bush and Roh administrations concluded agreements on realignment of USFK. Dubbed as the Land Partnership Plan (LPP), this included the merging of U.S. Second Infantry Division bases and the relocation of Yongsan Base to Pyeongtaek area, south of Seoul in Gyeonggi

[57] United States Forces in South Korea, "Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Korea," The United States Forces in South Korea Official Website, http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/Uploads/130/US-ROKStatusofForcesAgreement_1966-67.pdf. Last accessed on May 23, 2011.

Province. The number of troops, over 37,000 at the time, was scheduled for a phased reduction to the level of 28,000. A return of 32,000 acres of land worth $1.3 billion used by the United States, and a reduction in the number of main operating locations from 41 to 23 were laid out in the plan. This plan, if completed, would reduce the U.S. "footprint" by 53 percent.[58] In October, four months after the Yangju highway incident that killed two teenage girls, the South Korean National Assembly ratified the land component of the plan. Explaining the significance of the realignment plan, Gillem says that this major development is a synchronized reaction to local, national, and international events.[59]

As of June 2011, U.S. forces in South Korea have ninety-five installations across South Korea with 28,500 American soldiers stationed while the implementation of the LPP is in process. Tension is still high. The LPP, while calling for reducing U.S. land use in some areas, also called for additional land in other areas like in Kunsan and Osan bases two Air Force hubs. It also called for expanding Camp Humphreys, an Army helicopter base near Osan in Gyeonggi Province. The biggest demand for land comes with the relocation of the 640-acre Yongsan Garrison out of the heart of Seoul to Pyeongtaek, and there has been significant opposition against the move among the local residents. In 2003, USFK began a new campaign in the name of "Good Neighbor" aiming to improve relations with the citizens of South Korea. On the other hand, it became known that the areas of Yongsan Garrison are extremely polluted with chemicals, for which U.S. military authority has refused to take any responsibility based on the SOFA Article IV. Instead, the USFK announced that it would leave 1,000 of the 3,200 soldiers in Yongsan after the move.

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[58] Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire*. 206.

[59] Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

Contesting the Nation (Part I): Park Chung Hee's *Our Nation's Path* (1962) and the State Nationalism

Throughout this [March First] movement, our forefathers were able for the first time in our modern history to achieve a broad unity of the nation. . . . The fundamental purposes of the October Revitalizing Reforms include achievement of an impregnable unity of the entire people, regardless of faction or class, on the basis of a broad national will, . . . and . . . enhancement of our national glory throughout the world.[1]

Throughout Korea's modern history, the eighteen-year period between 1961 and 1979 has found few rivals in its transformative effects on South Korean society. Better known as the 'Park Chung Hee Era' following his military coup d'état in 1961 until his unexpected death by assassination in 1979, this period now carries an infamous title of extremely repressive autocracy. The same period is also marked by rapid economic development that pulled South Korea "out of poverty into an industrial powerhouse in one generation."[2]

At the core of these complex results is the Park's nationalist politics aligned with his pursuit of modernization of South Korea in a form of developmental autocracy. In this and the next chapter, I address how the U.S.-South Korea military alliance weighed in the discursive formation of nationalism during the Park Chung Hee era. Among various individuals and groups who participated in the process at different levels, three important

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[1] Chung Hee Park, "*The October Revitalizing Reforms Are a Great Save-the-Nation Movement*," in *Major Speeches by President Park Chung Hee* (Seoul: Samhwa, 1973). 188-92. Quoted in Gi-Wook Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea," in *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, ed. Pai Hyung-Il and Tim Tangherlini (Berkeley: The Institute of East Asian Studies at UC- Berkeley, 1998). 148.

[2] Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel, eds., *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press,2011). 1.

groups come in focus: Park Chung Hee, Nam Jeong Hyun and Shin Tong Yeop, and Shin Joong Hyun, each representing the state, dissident intellectuals, and popular cultural entertainers respectively. Analyzing some important texts produced by these groups, the chapters seek to show how they competed to assert different conceptions of nationhood or national identity based on their social positions and positionalities.

It is important to see how Cold War logics initiated by the U.S. and its dominant presence in South Korea conditioned the interplay in both hegemonic and anti-hegemonic modalities. Representing the South Korean state, Park Chung Hee and his regime, this chapter emphasizes, responded to U.S. hegemony by producing and enforcing a particular kind of statist ideology of ethnic nationalism based on pro-U.S. anti-communism. The chapter also discusses the ways in which Park actively sought to dominate the discourse of national identity in his pursuit of modernization of South Korea in a form of developmental autocracy.

From April Revolution to *Yusin*: U.S.-South Korea Relations during the Park Chung Hee Era

Toward the end of 1950s, approaching the fourth presidential election in 1960, Syngman Rhee's autocracy was reaching its peak. The South Korean National Assembly passed a new National Security Law and amendment to the Local Autonomy Law were passed in December 1958, a further move to fortify Rhee's control over the increasing opposition movement. One of the key weapons used by Rhee to counterattack his opponents, the National Security Law (NSL), first introduced in 1948 and still existing, was so vague and broadly defined that it could be easily used as a political tool to

suppress virtually any kind of opposition. Armed with the law, Rhee embarked on a massive campaign of anti-communist witch-hunts that affected tens of thousands of people, of whom the majority had no connection whatsoever with the political left.

All major organizations, the military, the press, and educational institutions, had been subjected to close scrutiny and purge since the early days of Rhee regime. In the spring of 1950, South Korean prisons held 60,000 people, of which 50 or 60 percent were charged with NSL violations. The NSL was also invoked to dragoon the National Assembly into compliance with Rhee's will. In October 1949, 16 assemblymen were jailed under national security violations. Not surprisingly, these 16 men were those who had called for arrests and trials of Japanese collaborators and the resignation of the whole cabinet, an action that struck at the heart of Rhee's rightist support.

When the new NSL was passed in 1958, Acting Secretary of State Robert Murphy told U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower that the opposition and the press were convinced that the government would use the law to suppress political opponents and ensure its success in the 1960 Korean presidential elections.[3] In his personal communication with Rhee, Eisenhower expressed his concern about "the manner in which the law [had] just been passed, with Democratic Party Assemblymen confined outside the Assembly hall," but he still hoped that the law would be used "to deal effectively with the Communist threat of subversion" in the prospect of "the continued

[3] "Murphy to Eisenhower," (AWF/I: Korea, December 24, 1958); "Parsons to Dowling," Foreign Relations, 1958 - 1960, Vol. XVIII, Japan; Korea, Microfiche Supplement, No. 701 (Department of the State, Dec. 27, 1958). See L. Galambos and D. van Ee, eds., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, Doc. 985. World Wide Web Facsimile by the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission of the Print Edition (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press,1996).

growth of the democratic and representative government in the Republic of Korea."[4] Yet, in May 1959, the government closed *Kyunghyang Sinmun*, a leading daily that maintained a critical voice against the Rhee regime for reasons of 'national security.' Cho Pong-am, the representative of the moderate left on the national scene who was a presidential candidate in 1952 and 1956 against Rhee, was executed in July 1959 on charges of violating the National Security Law by colluding with North Korean spies to subvert South Korea.[5]

The blatantly rigged elections of March 15, 1960 enforced by violence, intimidation, and fraudulent vote counting prompted the April Revolution of 1960. Although the revolution was led by students, the U.S. government, as documented in *The Foreign Relations of the United States*, *1958-1960*, played a role. The United States had to nurture a stable pro-American and anti-communist government in a country where American blood and money had been heavily invested. On April 11, a dead body was recovered from the sea near Masan, a city in South Gyungsang Province, and the corpse that carried clear evidence of brutal beating turned out to be the body of a 17-year-old student who had been missing since March 15 demonstrations. Large-scale riots broke

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[4] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Secret to Syngman Rhee," in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, ed. L. Galambos and D. van Ee (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). Available at http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/presidential-papers/second-term/documents/985.cfm. Last Accessed on Mar. 21, 2011.

[5] In November 2010, the South Korean Supreme Court held a hearing on Cho's death reopening the case for the first time in more than five decades to determine a second ruling on whether Cho's execution was legally justifiable. The retrial came after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded in September, 2007 that the original trial was clouded by mystery and the case should be retried. It said the subversion charge against him was created by the Syngman Rhee administration to "get rid of Rhee's strongest rival in the presidential election." In January, 2011, the South Korean Supreme Court agreed with the Commission clearing the charges against Cho and declared he was the victim of a "judicial murder" by the Rhee autocracy. Si-soo Park, "Cho Bong-Am Case Reopened after 51 Years," *The Korea Times*, November 19 2010; Tae-jong Kim, "Cho Bong-Am Cleared of Spy Charge in 52 Years," *The Korea Times*, January 20 2011.

out anew in the city of Masan, and with the general public joined they built up a growing atmosphere of popular resentment marked by violence. By now both American officials in South Korea and those in the States saw that the Rhee's regime crossed the line, and they decided to make concerted pressure to "reverse the domestic trends," which, they feared, "could suddenly take most dangerous turn leaving situation wide open for Communist manipulation" and thus "endanger US national interests."[6].

On April 19 large student protests broke out in major cities such as Seoul, Inchon, Pusan, Taegu, Kwangju, Chonju, and Chinju. They were joined by intellectuals and people from all walks of life. At three in the afternoon, the South Korean government declared martial law in the Seoul area and obtained the approval of General Cummings, then the acting Commander of the UN Forces, to send the 15th Division of the South Korean Army to cope with the situation. In late afternoon, U.S. Embassy in Seoul reported to the Department of State by telegram that General Song Yo-chan, who was designated martial law commander, brought in armored vehicles to clear the streets of Seoul, and demonstrators were killed when police fired into the crowd. By that evening, another telegram from the Embassy reported, "the sound of automatic weapon fire" was heard in Seoul, and large crowds destroyed police boxes and burned police stations. At least 115 people were killed and 773 injured on April 19 in Seoul, Pusan, and Kwangju while the heaviest casualties occurred in Seoul where 94 civilians, mostly students, and 3 policemen were killed.[7]

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[6] The United States Department of State, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1994). 618. 617.

[7] Ibid. 619-20.

The same night, Walter P. McConaughy, the U.S. Ambassador in Seoul, visited President Rhee and requested him to take a "prompt remedial action," reminding him that "US vital interest in maintenance of a secure and stable operating base [was] jeopardized."[8] McConaughy also mentioned to Rhee that he had instructions from Washington regarding "some basic issues which required attention:" (1) removal of public and party officials responsible for election irregularities, (2) examination of election laws with a view to their amendment, (3) reopening of the *Kyonghyang Sinmun*, (4) repeal of the amendments to the Local Autonomy Law, and (5) repeal of the controversial articles of the new National Security Law adopted in December 1958.[9]

Demonstrations broke out again on April 25 following a parade of some 200 university professors through the streets to National Assembly. With troops rushing into the center of Seoul, the situation was tense. President Rhee during his conversation with Ambassador McConaughy on April 26 presented a four-point resolution of his regime on the U.S. demand including the amendment of the Constitution and Rhee's resignation 'upon the will of South Korean people.' Finding the presidential statement vague and inconclusive, McConaughy insisted on more "clear and satisfying statements intent" from Rhee, stating that "not only were valid interests Korean people at stake, but fundamental American interests as well."[10]

On April 26, South Korean National Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the immediate resignation of President Rhee with most of his party members absent. The next day, Rhee submitted his resignation to the National Assembly and

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[8] Ibid. 621.

[9] Ibid.624-5.

[10] Ibid. 642.

released a statement which read, "I, Syngman Rhee, respect the resolution of the National Assembly, and resign from the office of the presidency. Henceforth, I will devote myself for the rest of my life to country and people as a citizen of this country."[11] Rhee was succeeded by Ho Chong, the newly appointed Foreign Minister, who took the role as Acting President. On April 28, a DC-4 belonging to the United States Central Intelligence Agency – operated by Civil Air Transport – flew Rhee out of South Korea as protestors converged on the Blue House. Until his death on July 19, 1965, Rhee lived in exile in Hawaii with his Austrian-born wife and their adopted son.

Throughout the course of the April Revolution, South Koreans, without deep understanding of the clandestine characteristics of U.S. intervention in South Korean politics, were grateful to Americans, particularly to Ambassador Walter P. McConaughy, for their role in the collapse of the Rhee regime. When they learned that Rhee had finally agreed to resign, demonstrators, alleged by Duk-Hwan Kim, shouted "Long Live America! Long Live McConaughy!"[12] Two episodes that had been reported by the *New York Times* further illustrate how Americans were favored by South Koreans as "the patron of world peace and freedom" and the much-admired protector of democracy.[13] In the midst of demonstrations in Seoul, while the statue of President Rhee at the Pagoda Park was smashed down by students, the statute of General MacArthur several blocks away was decorated with flowers. Later when students looted and ravaged the home of Yi Ki-bung, then the Vice President-elect, they found a huge U.S. flag and turned it over

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[11] Ibid. 644.

[12] Duk-Hwan Kim, "Anti-Americanism in South Korea, 1945-1992: A Struggle for Positive National Identity" (Ph. D. Dissertation, American University, 1992). 126.

[13] Jae-Bong Lee, "Cultural Representation of Anti-Americanism: The Negative Images of the United States in South Korean Literature and Arts, 1945-1994" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1994). 125.

to an American reporter.[14] Even if the crimes of American servicemen against Koreans in the late 1950s occasionally disturbed South Koreans' friendly views toward the U.S., the revolution effectively deterred their further development into anti-U.S. sentiment.

The 4.19 (April 19 Revolution) provided South Korea with a long-expected opportunity to follow the path of democracy. In the July 29 elections, the opposition Democratic Party won a majority in the General Assembly, and Chang Myon, better known to the U.S. as John M. Chang, (a Catholic, pro-American, liberal democrat) became prime minister, the new leader of South Korea together with President Yun Bo Sun. According to Gregg Brazinsky, Chang's administration was "sincerely committed to the development and democratization of South Korea" and proved "much more amenable to working with the United States, to achieve these objectives than had the government it replaced."[15]

With limited experience in governing the country, however, Chang and his administration appeared to be unprepared to meet the high expectations of the electorate. Before the democratic processes were even implemented, the Second Republic was overthrown by a group of military leaders led by Park Chung Hee on May 16, 1961. This was the beginning of a military dictatorship that would continue for nearly three decades. The first thing that Park did was to proclaim martial law and set up a special military tribunal to purge the military, government, and society of people whom he considered

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[14] "Rioters in Seoul Save a U.S. Flag," *The New York Times*, April 27 1960. Quoted in Lee, "Cultural Representation of Anti-Americanism: The Negative Images of the United States in South Korean Literature and Arts, 1945-1994". 125.

[15] Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*, The New Cold War History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). 108.

undesirable. The National Assembly was dissolved and political activity forbidden. The press was strictly controlled by the military dictatorship.

Before 1945, Brazinsky presumes, few Koreans would have predicted that the political leaders who proved most successful at guiding South Korea's emergence as a modern industrialized nation would come from the military. How did South Korean military elites acquire "the power, competence, and will to steer the country" through a brutally swift process of industrialization?[16] "America's need for a powerful indigenous army to serve as a partner during the Korean War and as an ally once the war ended," writes Brazinsky "played the most important role in enabling them to do so."[17] From the time they first occupied southern Korea in 1945 through the years of military trusteeship and beyond, American officials in South Korea invested a great deal in creating a strong army, recruiting the force, and training Korean officers.

One of the earliest efforts was the establishment of the Military English Language School in 1945 whose first 110 graduates would dominate the highest positions in the South Korean military for the next two decades. Another important resource for training the Korean officers was the program called Provisional Military Advisory Group (PMAG), later converted into the permanent Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) through which hundreds of American military advisers established a host of new schools to provide technical training for officers and enlisted men. When the Korean War broke out in 1950, the KMAG advisers concentrated on "introducing their Korean protégés to

[16] Ibid. 71.

[17] Ibid.

American ideals of military efficiency, duty, and patriotism."[18] In so doing, the American advisers, Brazinsky writes, "sought not only to train these officers as combat leaders but also to remold their character, making them more capable of independent judgment and more dedicated to serving their nation."[19]

If American officials had succeeded in building the South Korean Army into an efficient fighting force while stirring up military nationalism among the elite officers, they failed to infuse their Korean counterparts with a strong faith in democratic politics. Despite their enthusiastic participation in the U.S. training programs and close ties with American system and people, most Korean officers remained ambivalent about holding the United States up as a model for their own nation except for its staunch ideology of anti-Communism. It can be argued that U.S. policies in South Korea by the late 1950s had yielded a group of elite officers who believed that only they had the ability and resolve to save their country from the vicious communists in the north and from equally vile politicians in the south. Gregory Henderson observes how this anti-communistic paradigm was the key agenda in the 1961 military coup particularly in relation to the United States:

> Almost unseen, the military was taking the place of the police as the instrument of security. It had by 1960 become the best-financed and trained South Korean institution, buttressed by the closest ties to the United States. Its anti-communism was virulent and institutionalized. On seizing power in a May 1961 coup under Maj. Gen. Park Chung Hee, it promptly created the Korean CIA (Since January 1, 1981, renamed the national Security Planning Agency), built up systematic surveillance, and implemented a stern and extreme anti-communism.[20]

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[18] Ibid. 79.

[19] Ibid. 80.

[20] Gregory Henderson, "The Politics of Korea," in *Two Koreas--One Future?: A Report*, ed. John Sullivan and Robert Foss (Lanham: MD: University Press of America, 1987). 103.

Two days after the coup, Lieutenant General Chang Do-young, chairman of the junta at the time although he was the puppet in place of General Park Chung Hee, sent a cable message to U.S. President Kennedy concerning the various pledges by the Military Revolutionary Committee. Among the pledges, the greatest emphasis was placed upon anti-communism and effectiveness to combat communism; "the committee promised that the new government will (1) be strictly anti-Communist, (2) root out corruption, (3) observe the UN Charter and all international agreements and cooperation with the US and all other free nation, (4) endeavor to stabilize the national economy (5) unify Korea an anti-Communist nation, and (6) turn over the reins of government to "honest and competent political leaders."[21] Two special articles in the *New York Times* published on May 18 disclosed Prime Minister Chang's resignation after the coup, and that Washington welcomed his decision as a move toward quickly ending political chaos while remaining "optimistic" on the change in South Korea.[22]

It is not surprising that the U.S. as early as April 1961 had already known about the plans of coups plotted by two different groups, including one by Park Chung Hee, revealed in the secret memorandum from Allen W. Dulles, then the director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to President Kennedy on May 16.[23] Indeed, the Kennedy administration, upon its recognition of the Park's coup as a fait accompli and, more importantly, its potential for redressing the combination of political turmoil and economic

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[21] The United States Department of State, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963," Foreign Relations of the United States (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1996). 213-4.

[22] Bernard Kalb, "Junta Proclaims Victory in Korea; Premier Resigns," *The New York Times*, May 18 1961; William J. Jorden, "U.S. Is Optimistic on Korea Change: Washington Hopes Remier Chang's Resignation Will Bring Stable Regime " *The New York Times*, May 18 1961.

[23] State, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963." 456-7.

hardship that had prevailed in South Korea, decided to support military rule rather than insisting on the restoration of democratic government, paving the way for Park's "developmental autocracy."[24] Soon after the coup, Kim Chong-pil, the second-in-command of the junta and mastermind of the coup, founded the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) with the assistance of the U.S. CIA. KCIA, relying on brutal methods of censorship, intimidation, abduction, imprisonment, torture, and killing, was the most powerful instrument of the Park's dictatorship.[25]

Throughout the 1960s, Park's regime enjoyed an extended honeymoon with the United States in spite of some early tension and conflict surrounding the holding of open elections promised by the junta. Under intense pressure from the United States, elections took place in October 1963 in which Park managed to win a narrow victory over Yun Poson, the President at the time of the coup in May 1961. When the Kennedy administration continued to pressure the South Korean government, Park had to undertake an array of difficult tasks to meet the demand. Two specific measures of foreign policy turned out to be critical in the U.S.-South Korea relations during the first half of the Park's rule: normalization of Korea's relationship with Japan, its former colonizer and enemy, and sending ROK forces to Vietnam.

Since 1945, Washington had consistently sought to improve the relationship between South Korea and Japan so that it could divide the burden of subsidizing South Korea with Japan. Yet, both the South Korean people and the Rhee government vehemently resisted the move, and the U.S. could hardly manage the deep-seated

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[24] Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. 101, 102.

[25] For more about the KCIA during the Park era, see Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, Updated ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005).

animosity held by Koreans toward Japan. By the early 1960s, however, the U.S. government, already stricken with the extraordinary costs of its military campaign in Vietnam, was determined to bring Japan to lessen its share of aid to South Korea. Despite the nation-wide protests, Park made a swift move to start negotiating with Japan.

When Park in June 1962 declared martial law to suppress the opposition, Samuel Berger, the then U.S. Ambassador in Seoul, met Park, first tried to dissuade him, but soon accepted his decision and even agreed to release two divisions of the United Nations Command (UNC) to deal with the demonstrations.[26] On June 22, 1965, one month after Park's travel to Washington by the invitation of President Lyndon Johnson, South Korea, despite the public uproar against it, made the normalization treaty with Japan. In August, the South Korean National Assembly ratified the treaty with most members of the opposition abstaining from the vote.

Before the settlement between South Korea and Japan was finalized, the United States called upon the Park government to undertake another controversial foreign policy initiative. When the Johnson administration urged its Asian allies to contribute to the war efforts in Vietnam in 1965, only South Korea, or Park to be more exact, responded with interest. Both the U.S. and South Korean governments officially stated that the latter's decision to participate in the war was "an expression of Free World solidarity," while they tacitly but clearly understood that it was the combination of political pressures and economic motives on both parties.[27] Along with the public outcry against the decision, opponents of the Park government resisted their nation's entanglement in the conflict,

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[26] State, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963." 26-8.

[27] Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. 137.

raising "a hew and cry in the National Assembly."[28] Even some members of Democratic Republican Party (DRP), Park's own party, expressed concerns about the political risks and issues of national security involved in the plan.

Winthrop Brown, the new U.S. Ambassador in Seoul, made great efforts to change the situation in his meetings with a group of South Korean politicians including the oppositional leader, Yun Poson. The Johnson administration carved out more concrete economic benefits to the South Korean people as an incentive to support the government's decision also with the threat of suspending its Military Assistance Program (MAP) that had been in place since the end of the Korean War. On January 26, 1965, the National Assembly ratified Park's plan to dispatch combat units to Vietnam, again only by relying heavily on support from the DPR. Within the next couple of years, the size of the South Korean military in Vietnam continued to grow significantly following the U.S. demands. By the time the Vietnam War ended in 1973, it was accounted that 310,000 South Koreans, either military or civilians, had joined the war. Brazinsky tells us how Park maneuvered the tricky process:

> The American offer of economic rewards did expedite the dispatch of ROK combat forces, although Park's opposition never supported the action. Park shrewdly included the proposal to send combat troops to Vietnam in the same National Assembly session as the ratification of the treaty normalizing relations with Japan. By doing so, he forced the opposition to spend most of its energy protesting the treaty, leaving scant time to debate the wisdom of sending troops to Vietnam. Thanks to American promises of increased aid, Park's allies in the DRP were united in their support to assist South Vietnam and approved the proposal to do so over the protests of a confused and weary opposition.[29]

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid. 139.

Both the normalization of Korean-Japanese diplomatic relations and the dispatch of Korean armed forces to Vietnam were rationalized by their economic prospects, and as Brazinsky contends, for a regime that "relied heavily on economic development for legitimacy," the trade-offs had "an almost irresistible appeal."[30] The economic benefits were in fact far from insignificant. In return for the settlement of war claims, Japan under the terms of the normalization treaty, started to pour millions of dollars into the South Korean economy including $30 million unconditional grants and an additional $20 million low-interest loans. Trade between South Korea and Japan increased dramatically as Japan, in less than two years after the treaty, became the largest trading partner of South Korea. Likewise, South Korea's exports to Vietnam and sales to the U.S. military between 1965 and 1968 in the wake of its own military involvement soared up to the amount of $402 million.[31] All these visible outcomes outweighed the criticisms that Park, through the same foreign policies, subordinated the will of his people to the imperatives of the United States, Japan, and global capitalism.[32]

On the other hand, the costs of such economic benefits, far from small, were also visible not only in political and social conditions of people in South Korea but in the governmental relations between the U.S. and South Korea. The favoritism toward the United States that had once dominated South Korean popular consciousness most noticeably during the 1960 April Revolution did not last long, and the rise of self-

[30] Ibid. 140.

[31] Ibid.

[32] See Myunghwa Han, *Hanmi Kwangyeui Jeongchi-Kyunngje: 1945-1985 [Political Economy of U.S-South Korea Relations]* (Seoul, Korea: Pyungminsa, 1986).

conscious nationalism particularly among students and intellectuals was palpable as they became increasingly suspicious of the U.S. interest in South Korea.

In addition to the two controversial measures of foreign policy, another problem that caused anxiety involving the U.S. was criminal misconduct perpetrated by American GIs against Korean civilians. While most of the incidents were not publicized and even counted by either South Korean government or the U.S. military authority, one of the few known cases occurred on May 29, 1962, a year after the 1961 coup, in a U.S. military camp near Paju, a rural camptown in Gyeonggi Province. An American lieutenant detained a 29-year old Korean worker and beat him severely. Another lieutenant then dragged the man outside, stripped him of his clothes, and beat him again.[33] Words of the incident spread quickly, adding fuel to public rage. Students in Seoul organized mass protests at the U.S. Embassy on June 8, shouted the slogans, "Agreement First, Friendship, Next!" and "Lynch No, Goodwill Yes!" and called on Washington to work out an agreement that would end extraterritorial rights for American GIs even when they were found guilty of crimes against Korean persons or property.[34]

The problem of GI crimes became a rallying point for students and other progressive groups, particularly dissidents opposed to the Park regime. Understanding that these incidents not simply as tragic acts of individual violence, but rather as a pattern stemming from Korea's military subordination to the U.S., these groups put forth demands for a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), originally promised by Secretary of

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[33] The Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Memorandum for the President: Assault Upon Korean National by Two United States Army Officers on May 29, 1962," (National Security Files, Box 127, June 14, 1962). 1-2. Quoted in Wol-san Liem, "Telling the 'Truth' to Koreans: U.S. Cultural Policy in South Korea During the Early Cold War, 1947-1967" (Ph. D. Dissertation, New York University, 2010). 426.

[34] "Korean Troops Block a March by Students on U.S. Embassy," *The New York Times*, June 9 1962. 10.

State Dulles in August 1953 but repeatedly delayed due to the opposition from the U.S. Defense Department with the claim of "the unique state of suspended hostilities in Korea and the presumably unsatisfactory Korean legal system."[35]Those who called for specific provisions giving South Korea criminal jurisdictions over U.S. troops saw the conclusion of such an agreement was crucial to protect Korean citizens against future crimes and assert national sovereignty.[36] In 1966, after much procrastination, the U.S. and South Korea concluded the first SOFA, only to arouse public dissent in South Korea—it denied giving the host government criminal jurisdiction over U.S. military personnel.

The honeymoon-like symbiotic relationship of the Park regime with the United States turned into a contentious one from the late 1960s, although the two countries managed to maintain close cooperation in regard to national security. The following issues were responsible for the change: Park's retaliation plan against the North Korean acts of armed provocation in the South including the Blue House Raid in 1968; President Nixon's Guam Doctrine of July 1969 with the subsequent withdrawal of the 7th Division of the U.S. Army from South Korea in 1970-1971; reduction of U.S. military assistance to South Korea; and cost-sharing for the U.S. military presence in Korea. South Korea-U.S. relations were strained as tension between the two governments was increasing until it emerged on the surface during the Carter period in the late 1970s.

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[35] State, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963." 571.

[36] Eun Heo, *Migugui Hegemoniwa Hanguk Minjokjuui: Naengjeonsidae (1945-1965) Munwhajeok Gyeonggyeui Guchukgwa Gyunyeolui Dongban [American Hegemony and Korean Nationalism: The Construction of Cultural Boundaries and Their Fissures During the Cold War Era (1945-1965)]* (Seoul, Korea: Korea University Press, 2008). 401.

Unlike the Nixon and Ford administrations which refused to intervene in Korean affairs following Park's 1972 declaration of the *Yusin*[37] system, the Carter administration, upon its inauguration in 1977, displayed an open stance against Park Chung Hee and his *Yusin* system, criticizing the blatant violations of basic human rights in South Korea. In addition to Carter's plan to withdraw the USFK, the heavy-handed pressure exerted by the U.S. Congress over the 1976 lobbying scandal that became known as the 'Koreagate' continued to alienate Park in domestic and foreign affairs. South Korea's relations with the United States in the 1970s began to change with regard to the emergence of a pattern involving government-level friction and internal conflict between the government and the civil society.

Throughout the 1970s, students and intellectuals not only challenged Park's political legitimacy but also denounced his economic policy for relying heavily on foreign capital. Critics regarded Korea's economic development not as a feat that contributed much to enhancing the people's quality of life, but as subordination to the monopolistic capital of the United States and Japan. In response, the Park regime took on a more severe form of authoritarianism. Citing domestic and international insecurity, Park abruptly declared a state of emergency in December 1971. Ten months later, martial

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[37] Just after being sworn in for his third term after his narrow victory over Kim Dae-jung in the 1971 election, Park declared a state of emergency "based on the dangerous realities of the international situation." In October 1972, he dissolved Parliament and suspended the Constitution. In December, a new constitution, the 'Yusin' Constitution, was approved in a heavily rigged plebiscite after a vigorous campaign on its behalf by the heavily censored press. It borrowed the word "Yusin" (維新: Revitalizing Reforms) from the Meiji Restoration (Meiji Ishin; 明治維新) of Imperial Japan. He drew inspiration for his self-coup from Ferdinand Marcos' move a few weeks earlier. The new document dramatically increased Park's power. It transferred the election of the president to an electoral college, the National Conference for Unification. The presidential term was increased to six years, with no limits on reelection. In effect, the constitution converted Park's presidency into a legal dictatorship. In 1972 and 1978 he was reelected without any opposition.

law was proclaimed. The Constitution was suspended, and the National Assembly and all political parties were dissolved. Further political activity was forbidden, and restrictions were placed on other civil liberties, including free speech. At the same time, a series of 'revitalizing' reforms by the government and the new *Yusin* Constitution imposed in November 1972 transformed the presidency into a legal dictatorship.

But the anti-U.S. sentiment in South Korea during the Park era had a strongly elitist character closely associated with Park's autocracy, and ordinary people still continued to maintain a friendly attitude toward the United States. An opinion survey conducted in May 1965 discovered that 68 percent of the 500 respondents from the Seoul area listed the United States as the foreign country they liked the most.[38] In fact, the extent of Koreans' contact with the United States, Americans, and American culture expanded substantially during the same period concurrent with the shift in the U.S. foreign policy toward South Korea with more emphasis on cultural influence.

As mentioned earlier, USFK, as a transnational, cross-cultural institution, was the primary channel through which American cultural commodities had been imported, distributed, and consumed. Also, by sponsoring various kinds of the local entertainment businesses including the military clubs, the USFK had also been the most significant contributor to the development of modern popular culture and the relevant industries in South Korea. At the same time, the American Forces Korea Network (AFKN), through its TV and radio signals that reached the entire country, provided a variety of entertainment shows, dramas, sitcoms, movies as well as news and information programs. Much of its audience consisted of ordinary Koreans who could not find similar kinds of entertainment elsewhere. From the mid-1970s, AFKN became increasingly popular

[38] Kang-Ro Lee, "Critical Analysis of Anti-Americanism in Korea," *Korea Focus* 13, no. 2 (2005).

among college students for another reason: an important source of English education that featured "lively language learning."[39]

The fact that the United States exerted a strong cultural impact on the battered nation of South Korea with its firm control of the nation's political economy does not necessarily lead to the simplistic narrative of global domination and local subjugation. The dynamic combination of global and local contexts often produces different end results, a process of what Roland Robertson calls "glocalization."[40] South Korean popular culture in this period, even exposed to the heavy influence of American culture, transformed into a 'hybrid' in the sense of that defined by Jan Nederveen Pieterse as a "global mélange" of national, subnational, and supranational cultures.[41] According to Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon, the agency of hybridization is "often located on the margin or cutting edge of the nation/state/international system: diaspora, migration, aliens, and cultural brokers."[42] The growth of Korean rock music during the Park era under the influence of US military presence clearly illustrates how this process of hybridization played out at the local level within the particular international context. If the state represented by Park Chung Hee and elite community of students and intellectuals contested over South Korean national identity based on their own concepts of nationalism, the story of Korean rock music also suggests how such hybridized culture from the

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[39] C. K. Hong, "Afkn-Tv Increasingly Popular among College Students for Lively Language Learning," *Dong-A Ilbo*, August 13 1980. 5.

[40] Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time -Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (London: Sage, 1995). 28-9, 38-40.

[41] Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Globalization as Hybridization," in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, *Theory, Culture & Society* (London: Sage, 1995). 45-50.

[42] Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin, "The Birth of "Rok": Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975," *positions* 18, no. 1 (2010).

margin of the society could become an expression of political resistance challenging the dominant discourses of nationhood or national identity too.

***Our Nation's Path*: Park Chung Hee and the Discourse of Anti-Communist, Developmental Nationalism**

Published in March 1962, less than a year after his 1961 military coup on May 16, *Our Nation's Path* by Park Chung Hee is an early manifesto in which Park attempted to, on the one hand, rationalize the seizing of power by force and, on the other hand, establish the ideological basis for his plans to reconstruct South Korean society with his nationalistic visions. In the Foreword, Park appears to be harassed by the thought of "the difficult course of [Korea's] national history" as follows:

> But, I ponder, is there no way for national regeneration? Is there no way to mend our decayed national character and build a sound and democratic welfare state? Is there not some way to accomplish a 'human revolution,' so that our people may stop telling lies, cast away the habits of sycophancy and indolence, and make a new start as industrious workers, carry out social reform, and build a country without paupers, a country of prosperity and affluence?[43]

Park identifies three fundamental problems that South Korea faced at the time in the following imperative statements: "First, *we* must reflect upon the evil legacies of our past history"; "Second, *we* must liberate ourselves from poverty"; "Third, *we* must rebuild a sound democracy."[44] If 'we' and 'nation' are the words that set the tone of the Foreword, the same nationalist rhetoric runs through *Our Nation's Path*. As Gi-Wook Shin observes, Park, throughout the eighteen-year period of his rule of South Korea from

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[43] Chung Hee Park, *Our Nation's Path: Ideology of Social Reconstruction*, 2nd ed., A New Horizon in Asia (Seoul: Hollym Corporation, 1970). vii.

[44] Ibid. viii-ix. *Italic* emphasis added.

1961 until 1979, relied heavily on nationalist rhetoric to "justify both his illegal power taking and his extralegal exercise of the authority" as shown in "national resurrection," "national unity," "national conscience," "national regeneration," and "unification of the nation," to offer a few examples.[45]

Emphasizing 'nationhood' by state government is nothing unusual, far from a singular phenomenon unique to South Korea.[46] Every modern state has used and still uses the term 'nation' for political legitimation, which in turn points to the fact that 'nation' as a concept is "not a fixed entity" but "a project being constantly challenged, disputed, and reformulated."[47] In fact, Park Chung Hee did not simply stress 'nation' in a blank sense but enthusiastically "marshaled nationalist politics" in highly repressive manners through the continuous exercise of state power over people.[48] The government wrote a new version of national Korean history in which military spirit, national security, national

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[45] Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea." 152.

[46] Since the rise of modern nation-states in Western Europe, scholars have argued how to best explain nation and national identity, and the debate has generally navigated two contrasting views, 'constructionist' and 'ethnicist.' The debate has been further complicated by the bulging popularity of nationalism especially in the nations that emerged from colonial domination after WWII. The "constructionist" view is that 'nation,' a concept constructed or "imagined" by nationalist movements, does not have essential value that defines its existence. According to this view, 'nation' does not make state and nationalism but instead, nationalism shapes the character of nation and national identity. See Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed. (London; New York: Verso, 1991); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, and Reality* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, New Perspectives on the Past (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1983); Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, vol. 2, A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). On the other hand, those who advocate "ethnicist" view cling to the essential value of ethnicity in nation, asserting that modern nations and nationalism have extended and deepened the meanings and scope of older ethnic concepts and structures but have not transcended them. As opposed to the modernist frame of nation as a consequence of construction or manipulation, ethnicists propose the view of it as a long-term development that historically locates the proto-nation in primordial times. See Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, Ethnonationalism in Comparative Perspective (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991); Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[47] Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea." 150.

[48] Ibid. 149.

reunification, pride for national achievements, and the importance of economic development took prominent seats. This ratcheting up of nationalism and jingoism had the intended effect of gathering the support of the people behind the national government, and made any move to criticize the regime and its policies is a treasonous act against the nation.[49] As a result, Park, despite the countless and blatant violations of human rights and democratic procedure under his regime, managed to convince the people of South Korea that he was defending their nation.

If Park's notion of nation incorporated both ethnic and political elements, it is important to see how they combined to serve specific claims and purposes. As Shin explained, Park emphatically repeated Korea's long history for more than four thousand years "as a single nation from a single ancestor, Tan'gun," a mythic figure of heavenly descent. In his speeches titled "Let Us Consolidate Legitimate National Identity" and "Let Us Turn the Joy of Liberation into Joy of Unification," Park proudly proclaimed that "we have never given up our pride nor our dignity in being a homogeneous people." He even called North Koreans "our brethren in the north of this great Han race" and argued that "although we are now separated into south and north, we are one entity with a common destiny, bound by one language, and by one history and by the same racial origin. Ideology changes, but the nation stays and lasts."[50]

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[49] Luc Walhain, "From Minjok to Minjung: The Student Movements' Democratizing of the National Discourse in South Korae" (Ph. D. Dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 2005). 1-2.

[50] Chung Hee Park, *Major Speeches by President Park Chung Hee* (Seoul, Korea: Samhwa, 1973). 179, 22. Quoted in Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea." 152.

Throughout his references to 'nation,' Park appropriated the terms *minjok* (ethnicity)[51] and *choguk* (fatherland). *Minjok*, in particular, carried a great deal of legitimacy in that it not only emphasized the common blood but also deployed a close association with Korean nationalistic movements of the late nineteenth century and independence movements under the Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945). The truth is that Korean Communists had been a core force of the nationalist movement for the independence of Korea during the same period contradicts Park's appeal to *minjok* sentiments among Koreans.[52]

To address the contradiction, Park made a sharp distinction of political nation from ethnic nation. Even if both South and North belong to the same nation in its ethnic dimension, the "North Korean Communists," Park vigorously asserted, deviated from the norm of the nation as a political community. Once the North subscribed to communism, an ideology that Park saw as "wholly alien to the tradition and history of our nation," it lost its connection to the national identity. Often demonized as inhumane, evil, and brutal murderers, communists in the North were depicted as at best the traitors or dangerous threats of national identity: "The communists pretend that they and they only are true patriots and martyrs of patriotic devotion. A wolf in the hid of a sheet, indeed! Even their patent catchwords, such as "national unification" and "neutral unification" are merely

[51] Like the term *minjung* (民衆) preferred by pro-democracy anti-Park regime students and intellectuals, 'minjok (民族)' derived from Chinese as a combination word of min (民: people) and jok (族: tribe). Minjok also refers to the Korean "nation," but puts a strong emphasis on the Korean people's sharing of common blood and a common ancestor, Tan'gun.

[52] Luc Walhain, "Transcending Minjok: How Redefining Nation Paved the Way to Korean Democratization," *Studies on Asia* 4, no. 2 (2007). 85.

artful linguistic disguises for their infernal designs for unification, through communization."[53]

It was Park's view that the legitimacy of Korea national identity is in the South held by the Republic of Korea. South Koreans, in this view, should help their "northern brethren" who had been relegated into "mere tools of Communist aggression," restore their unified national identity. In the same speeches quoted above, Park solemnly declared that "we have a historical mission of preserving and enhancing this legitimate national identity" and urged South Koreans to "recognize the honorable duty placed upon our shoulders to reunify our divided territory."[54]

While virulent anticommunism characterized Park's notion of political nation, modernization through economic development also became the master narrative of Park's state nationalism. The famous catchphrase of the Park's regime was indeed "Modernization of the Fatherland." Again, Gi-Wook Shin explains that Park certainly had in mind the Japanese Meiji Restoration (1868-1912), and that Park's "modernization" was conceived as "the prime means to achieve the supreme national goal of unification" rather than just an economic phenomenon."[55] Even the 1961 coup and the 1972 establishment of *yusin* system, in Park's view, were necessary measures to "hasten the day of peaceful unification of our fatherland." Regarding this, Park understood that "the national strength of a country hinges on its economic capability," but he also argued that "a nation's economic power does not necessarily depend entirely on its natural resources"

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[53] Park, *Our Nation's Path: Ideology of Social Reconstruction*. 18-9.

[54] Park, *Major Speeches by President Park Chung Hee*. 180, 57, 165. Quoted in Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea." 152-3.

[55] Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea." 153.

while emphasizing the "degree of ability and will power of its people" as the key determinant of national prosperity. He called for regeneration of national consciousness with "our own strength and wisdom, on the basis of a correct and independent sense of history and national identity."[56]

Little wonder that Park attempted to use history to achieve national regeneration. Often lamenting Korea's historical failure to achieve national unity and modernization and the subsequent collapse of the nation in the face of outside aggression, Park also stressed heroic moments when historical Korean personages strove to save the nation. It is widely known that Park's favorite national hero was Admiral Yi Sunsin who fought the Japanese invasions (1592-1598) led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi during which he sank hundreds of Japanese battleships with his legendary turtle ships (a.k.a. *geobukseon* in Korean). Describing Yi as the "spirit of national salvation," and even the "sun of our nation, without whose presence at such time of national adversity our history would have been darkened," Park insisted that Koreans "link the life of Admiral Yi with our own" so that "the past and the present should be fused into one in terms of the clear-cut nation-saving policy of independence, self-reliance, and self-defense."[57] It is very likely that Park identified himself with Yi when he ordered construction of Yi's statue for public display. The statue was erected on April 27, 1968, a day before the 423rd anniversary of Yi's birthday, and it still stands at the center of Gwanghwamoon Square where the South Korean Government Complex is located with the Blue House nearby illustrating the link between martial manhood and the nation-state.

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[56] Park, *Major Speeches by President Park Chung Hee*. 130, 38, 165. Quoted in Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea." 153.

[57] Park, *Major Speeches by President Park Chung Hee*. 163, 157, 156. Quoted in Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea." 154.

Figure 1 Statue of Admiral Yi Sunsin in Gwanghwamoon Square[58]

Our Nation's Path, Park's own historical work, sheds more light on his ideological re-reading of history. Among the Korean nationalist thinkers during the colonial period was Sin Chae-ho who attributed Korea's weakness to "a lack of military spirit and adventurousness."[59] Like other nationalists, Sin struggled to offer Korea's "true" national history against foreign imperialism, and he turned to the stories of ancient military heroes including Admiral Yi. Liberation of the nation, in Sin's view, would require the reinstitution of a powerful "manly" ethic that radically contrasted with the traditional "effete" and "effeminate" characteristics associated with Korea's Confucian past.[60] The same ideas reverberate through Park's acclaim of Korea's military heroes in

[58] Photo by Ju-Hwan Kim.

[59] Sheila Miyoshi Jager, "Monumental Histories: Manliness, the Military, and the War Memorial," *Public Culture* 14, no. 2 (2002). 390.

[60] Ibid.

Our Nation's Path. In "Rediscovering Manchuria: Sin Cha'ae-ho and the Politics of Territorial History in Korea," Andre Schmid explores how Sin Chae-ho's concept of *minjok* in his historical writings was constructed to incorporate Manchuria into the Korean *minjok*. Schmid then makes an equally intriguing point that it was the Park regime that resurrected Sin, long neglected in Korea's intellectual history as a leading colonial nationalist scholar.[61]

However, unlike Sin who had traced the roots of Korean national history in the military kingdoms of Koguryo and Parhae throughout the regions now located in North Korea and Manchuria, the realities of the national division constrained Park. He had to find the roots elsewhere. Sin's original emphasis on the martial spirit in Koguryo and Parhae was displaced, and instead Silla, one of the ancient Three Kingdoms in the peninsula was given the title role.[62]

If Cold War politics had enforced upon Koreans a dichotomous choice between communist and democratic systems, the irony, I would say, is that Park and his autocratic regime proved the division ambiguous and even fictitious, at least in South Korea. During the 1960s and 1970s, Park and the ruling political elites thoroughly exploited the perception of the communist threat as an excuse for the suppression of democracy. Whoever exercised their democratic right to dissent was automatically branded as a Communist or Communist sympathizer, and treated as an enemy of the nation. Even though Park merged democracy and nationalism and named it as "Administrative

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[61] Andre Schmid, "Rediscovering Manchuria: Sin Cha'ae-Ho and the Politics of Territorial History in Korea," *Journal of Asian Studies* 56(1997).

[62] To Park, this was a perfect scenario or even a legitimate amendment in that Silla had defeated the other two Kingdoms, first Baekje in 660 and then Koguryo in 668. Moreover, Silla's location in the southeast of the peninsula, the home of Park's regional power base as opposed to North Korea's claim of legitimacy over Koguryo added significant force in making the shift.

Democracy" people in in this new Korean-style democracy were not given an active role to participate in the socio-political realm.[63] Instead, they were compelled to work very hard and make sacrifices in order to re-build a strong and powerful nation.

The Park government's discourse manufactured a Korean national identity that expounded "Korean" traditions as a solution to the recovery of ethnonational subjectivity. *The Country*, *the Revolution, and I*, another book by Park published in 1963, makes the point clear:

> I was keenly interested in the increasing powerlessness and breakdown of the spirit of the people. In other words, *Our Things,* Korean Things, *Koreans' Things*, were gradually receding, disappearing. I could not suppress the depth of the anger I felt at the emergence, in their place, of American Things, Western European Things, Japanese Things. The Democratic Party regime might call this a flowering, the development of a modern civilization and society. But clearly this meant that Korea was being lost.[64]

In 1978 at the opening ceremony of Hanguk Jeongsin Munhwa Yeonguwon (The Institute of Korean Spirit and Culture Studies), Park maintained the ethnonational rhetoric while emphasizing that the first and foremost goal of the institute was to "study our traditional culture more deeply and correctly, reestablish historical subjectivity of the nation, revive our ancestors' shining spirit of independence, and thus actively contribute to creating a new culture and promoting the national regeneration."[65]

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[63] Park, *Our Nation's Path: Ideology of Social Reconstruction*. 199-200.

[64] Jung Hee Park, *The Country, the Revolution and I* (Seoul: Hollym Corporation, 1962). 78-9. *Italics* appear a bold in original.

[65] "Hanguk Jeongsin Munhwa Yeonguwonui Baljok [Launching the Institute of Korean Spirit and Culture Studies]," *Dong-a Ilbo [Dong-a Daily]*, July 3 1978. Translation by Ju-Hwan Kim. As of January 2005, the Institute was renamed as The Academy of Korean Studies.

Yet, Park's appropriation of Korean traditional culture in his use of nation (*minjok*) and nationalism (*minjokjuui*) only served to justify his illegitimate regime. By abusing the traditional values such as loyalty, filial relationship, self-sacrifice, diligence, obedience, and sense of duty, the legacy of Park's cultural policy has made extensive damage to Korean cultural heritage. For the same reason, Park's notion of nationalism, claims Woo Young Lee, should be viewed as a representative case of anti-national ideology.[66] Min-Jung Kim also points out that the postcolonial state of Park's regime reproduced the violence of colonialism through the continuous exercise of state power over the people.

For the most part, Koreans who under the colonial power had suffered the "delegitimation and denigration of their national identity," were now forced to show "exclusive allegiance to a version of Korean national identity" forged by the state which imposed "the totalizing nationalist narrative of modernizing the nation" on its citizens regardless of their individual differences or particular conditions.[67] More specifically, the state recycled the authoritarian tradition of both feudal and colonial social relations with eclectic choice of other elements such as patriotism, patriarchy, capitalism, militarism, anticommunism, and pro-Americanism in its sophisticated recruitment of national subjects. The process of reproducing faithful national subjects was mobilized by the enforcement of various ideological apparatuses.

This chapter has illustrated how Park Chung Hee and his regime, representing the South Korean state, reacted to U.S. hegemonic interventions in South Korea by

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[66] Woo Young Lee, "Park Chunghee Minjokjuuiui Banminjokseong [Anitinational Park Chung Hee's Nationalism]," *Yuksa Bipyeong [Historical Review]* 10, no. Autumn (1990). 283.

[67] Min-Jung Kim, "Moments of Danger in the (Dis)Continuous Relation of Korean Nationalism and Korean American Nationalism," *Positions* 5, no. 2 (1997).

producing and enforcing a particular kind of statist ideology of nationalism. The following chapter continues to discuss how dissident intellectuals, notwithstanding government repression, came to fashion an oppositional discourse of national identity as opposed to Park's pro-U.S., anti-communistic, ethnic nationalism. Among others, authors Nam Jeong Hyun and Shin Tong Yeop represent the rise of anti-U.S. *minjung* nationalism with which dissident intellectuals attempted to challenge Park and his authoritarian regime in their calls for liberal democracy. On the other hand, cultural developments in popular spheres also generated alternative discourse of national identity differentiated from those by the state and intellectuals. The story of Shin Joong Hyun and his music represents how the agency of the marginalized sectors played out in reconfiguring the complex and contradictory process of national and political identity formation during this critical period of South Korean history.

CHAPTER THREE

Contesting the Nation (Part II): Nam Jeong Hyun's *Bunji* (1965), Shin Tong Yeop's Poems, Shin Joong Hyun's Rock Music, Minjung Nationalism and Popular Culture

We have been . . . too subservient to international political pressure for the past 20 years. . . . It is a sad irony that Korea, which is proud of its culture and traditions, cannot stand by itself. How long do we have to be afraid of other countries and how long should we be flattering sycophants and how long do we have to borrow from other countries, and where does all this behavior come from? Shouldn't we build our country by our own hands and shouldn't our country's destination be decided by our own efforts?[1]

Korea was the country that was most Americanized and un-Americanized at the same time. Korea was both a cultural melting pot and a cultural Chernobyl in terms of Americanization. Although 'American life-style' began to influence social identity and the sexuality of the urban middle class, which was symbolized in the phrase of 'madame freedom,' it could not exert its full cultural hegemony because the material base of the lifestyle was quite limited. Although it would be an exaggeration to say all of this cultural chaos originated from the US army camps, it holds perhaps half of the story.[2]

In fear of the grimmest kinds of repression by the state, South Korean people during the Park era were reluctant to engage in political opposition activities, and with scarce or no popular support, dissident activists had less chance to pose a serious threat to the dictatorship. The military regime severely limited the freedom of expression by dissolving various kinds of cultural and art organizations. Serious criticism of the United States in literary and artistic works was punished according to the Anti-Communist Law

[1] Jil-rak Kim, "Editorial," *Cheongmaek* (1965). 16-7. Quoted in Kim, "Anti-Americanism in South Korea, 1945-1992: A Struggle for Positive National Identity". 141-2.

[2] Shin Hyunjoon and Ho Tung-hung, "Translation of 'America' During the Early Cold War Period: A Comparative Study on the History of Popular Music in South Korea and Taiwan," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 10, no. 1 (2009). 92.

or the National Security Law. The military dictatorship virtually married anti-communism with pro-Americanism in South Korean literature and arts.

Yet, the widespread sense of disconnectedness and Park Chung Hee's dictatorial rule in the society mobilized a small but significant number of intellectuals who not only challenged Park's political legitimacy but also critiqued the particular path of modernization that he had set in motion. Sharing the growing anxiety over South Korea's perceived neocolonial status, critical intellectuals focused on two prime concerns, "overcoming a colonial mentality and recovering (or creating) historical subjectivity."[3] This manifested in the production of different versions of nationalism that rejected the procapitalist, pro-American premises in the state's official discourse. Among others, authors Nam Jeong Hyun and Shin Tong Yeop are chosen in this chapter to represent the rise of anti-U.S. *minjung* nationalism with which dissident intellectuals attempted to challenge Park and his authoritarian regime in their calls for liberal democracy.

On the other hand, cultural developments in popular spheres also generated alternative discourse of national identity differentiated from those by the state and intellectuals. The story of Shin Joong Hyun and his music represents how the agency of the marginalized sectors played out in reconfiguring the complex and contradictory process of national and political identity formation during this critical period of South Korean history.

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[3] Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007). 5.

Nam Jeong Hyun and the *Bunji* Incident

Nam Jeong Hyun's publication of *Bunji* [*Land of Excrement*] in 1965 marked a significant event in post-division South Korean literary history. About two months after the short story appeared in the March issue of *Hyeondae Munhak* [Contemporary Literature], a monthly literary magazine published in South Korea, Nam was arrested by the government authority and jailed for violation of the Anti-communist Law. When Nam's trial began in 1966, it produced a heated debate between the prosecution and the defense about the nature of the text as well as the role and the degree of government censorship of authors' creative activities. The charge against Nam was that his text intended to provoke anti-U.S. sentiments, anti-government activities, and even class conflict among South Korea population thereby siding with North Korea.[4] Despite the defensive efforts supported by literary critics and civil rights activists to vindicate the charge, the court held in June 1967 found Nam guilty and sentenced him a six-month in prison with probation and additional seven-year prohibition from publishing.[5]

In an epistolary format, the story of *Buni* is narrated by Hong Mansu addressing to his deceased mother. Several days after the 1945 liberation of Korea, Mansu's mother who came out to welcome the U.S. forces with hand-made Korean and star-spangled flags in her hand gets raped on the way by American GIs. Back home, she exposes her defiled body to her son and daughter, Mansu and Buni. Unable to overcome her shame, Mansu's mother refuses to eat and dies in a few days after a convulsion. Upon his

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[4] "7 Years in Prison Demanded Againt Author Nam Jeonghyun ", *Dong-a Ilbo [Dong-a Daily]*, May 24 1967. 3.

[5] Seung-heon Han, "Nam Jeonghyunui Pilhwa, 'Bunji' Sageon [the Government Censorship against Nam Jeonghyun, the Case of 'Bunji']," in *Nam Jeonghyun Dapyo Jakpumseon [Selected Works of Nam Jeonghyun]*, ed. Nam Jeonghyun (Seoul: Han'gyore, 1987).

discharge from the military, Mansu, unable to find a job, begins black-market trading with American goods that his sister Buni obtains from Sergeant Speed, an American soldier she lives with. Buni also ends up in misfortune as she experiences sexual torment by Mr. Speed who often disparages the "lower half of her body" comparing that with his wife's. In resentment of the sergeant's abuse of his sister, Mansu determines to see Mrs. Speed or Mrs. Bitch as he names her, for himself.

By this time, Mrs. Speed leaves the U.S. to make an unexpected visit to see her husband in South Korea. Mansu, not to miss this God-sent chance, tricks Mrs. Speed to accompany him for tour during which he rapes her in a mountain. Learning the news, the U.S. government mobilizes a mass-scale retaliation dispatching "as many as ten thousand missiles and artillery pieces" including a nuclear bomb to destroy the whole mountain where Mansu is hiding. Mansu, who is a direct descendent of Hong Gil-dong, a legendary fictional character of heroic rebel equivalent to Robin Hood, and whose father was a die-hard resistance fighter against the Japanese Imperial Army, would never yield to the threat. When his time runs out, Mansu invokes magical powers of his ancestor with the closing remarks as follows:

> Only ten seconds left. That's right. Now I will take off this running shirt emblazoned with the yin-yang symbol and make it into a glorious flag. I'll catch a ride on the clouds and cross the ocean. With all my heart, I'll drive this magnificent flag into the women sprawled across that great continent, into their glistening belly buttons, into the milk-colored skin I've tasted before. Please believe me. I am not lying, Mother. But your body is trembling, you cannot believe me. It's a shame to see you like that. Please look at me. At these eyes of mind bulging in their sockets. Does it look like this guy is going to die so easily? Hahaha.[6]

[6] Jeonghyun Nam, "Bunji [Land of Excrement]," *Hyeondae Munhak [Modern Literature]* no. 3 (1965). 81.

In contemporary critical perspectives, the narrative of *Bunji* is only a perverted version of racialized and gendered nationalism. The construction of women's bodies as the site of power struggle between imperial and colonial male subjects uncritically reproduces phallocentric orientation in nationalist discourse. The sullied bodies of Mansu's mother and sister are equated with the disgrace of colonial oppression of South Korea, while that of Mrs. Speed portrayed with voluptuous images signifies a materially affluent America as a "heaven on earth."[7] With all its critical flaws, *Bunji*, however, still appears an important text in other respects particularly in its critique of the official discourse of national identity led by the state during the 1960s.

According to Korean literary critic Yun-sik Kim, Nam Jeong Hyun who is often mentioned as a "seminal, if problematic, figure" in the so-called 'division literature' demonstrated "a new understanding of the United States, revealing with a powerful anger its essential character, that of the invader."[8] Another Korean literary critic adds that Nam's work was the product of an era that was the "age of allegory" synchronized with Park's authoritarian dictatorship.[9] Indeed, Nam, in his earlier works, relied much on allegory as a literary means to critique social realities under the Syngman Rhee regime and its fall in the 1960 April revolution. After a short emancipatory moment, the 1961 military coup by Park Chung Hee, however, signaled the return of the dark age characterized by the repressive anticommunist state and its neoimperial foreign sponsors.

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[7] Ibid. 80.

[8] Yun-sik Kim and Ho-ung Chŏng, *Han'guk Sosŏlsa [History of Korean Novels]* (Seoul: Yeha, 1993). 401. Quoted in Theodore Hughes, "Development as Devolution: Nam Chŏng-Hyŏn and the "Land of Excrement" Incident," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 10, no. 1 (Fall 2005). 29.

[9] Jin-young Im, "Kajang Kangnyukhan Usumui Kannal," in *Nam Jeonghyung, Cheon Seungse, "Bunji/"Hwanggu Ui Bimyung" Wae ["Land of Excrement" by Nam Jeonghyun, "Scream of a Yellow Dog" by Cheon Seungse, and Other Stories]*, *Han'guk Soseol Munhak Daegye 43 [Selected Works of Korean Literature 43]* (Seoul: Dong-a Chulpansa, 1995). 557.

During the early 1960s, Nam's works maintained a strong degree of criticism against both the United States and the Park regime while he continued to use satire when addressing sensitive issues. *Bunji,* perhaps the most intensive anti-American novel before the 1980s, refuses to embrace such indirect critique, and instead, Nam, through the voice of Mansu, the protagonist, openly decries the reality in which those who opt for "anticommunism" and "pro-Americanism" without working for the people easily become the powerful in the country seen as patriots. *Bunji* also differs from other novels at least in two respects in the negative portrayal of the United States. First, while Blacks in most stories are the ones who commit all kinds of crimes and misdemeanors against Koreans, the evil doers in *Bunji* are Whites thus attempting to reverse the racial hierarchy. Second, whereas other writers reveal only suffering and frustration of Koreans due to offenses by Americans, Nam portrays confrontation with and retaliation against the Americans thus seeking to focus on the resistance against imperial force.

Emphasizing that Nam deserves more critical attention than he has received, Theodore Hughes observes that Nam's works represent a specific mode of counter-narrative against the dominant discourse of nationalism articulated in Park Chung Hee's *Our Nation's Path* (1962) and *The County, the Revolution, and I* (1963).[10] In Hughes' analysis, 'body' plays an important role. The statist assertion of economic development as a way out from the legacy of Korea's colonial predicaments is invariably framed in a biological trope of 'national body.' In this view, the "health of national body" depends upon its advancement within the world system, "the acquisition of a competitive edge over its capitalist competitors" while this process requires "extermination of communism"

[10] Hughes, "Development as Devolution: Nam Chŏng-Hyŏn and the "Land of Excrement" Incident." 30.

(*myŏlgong*), a pathology that perpetuates the improper past of the nation inhibiting it from restoring its authentic ethnonational identity.

Park's statist anticommunism, according to Hughes, much resembles the national populism of early-1990s Eastern Europe which, Slavoj Žižek tells us, perceives "Communism's 'threat' from the perspectives of *Gemeinschaft*, as "a foreign body corroding the organic texture of the national community; this way, national populism actually imputes to Communism the crucial feature of capitalism itself."[11] On the other hand, Nam attempts to reappropriate the body as site of resistance opposing statist development. By presenting "a series of male bodies that are disfigured, emasculated by the insertion of South Korea into the evolutionary, historicist logic of development," Nam's texts invalidate the statist identification of national health with economic development, recognizing it as at best a "hyperassimilationism" that privileges "the West as normative."[12]

However, Hughes justly points out, Nam's critique of the state's hegemony in body politics fails to take into consideration the same hegemonic notion of the ethnonation as a gendered body. For the most part, "the erasure of woman as a figure for a nation" illustrates how women are "symbolically reduced, in male eyes, to the space on which male contests are waged."[13] In the case of *Bunji*, Mansu's imagination of woman resides outside history, registering her either as an "eternalized, abstract, domesticated" mother or as a subjugated nation. As illustrated in the ambiguous status of Mansu's

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[11] Ibid; Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). 201. Italics in original.

[12] Hughes, "Development as Devolution: Nam Chŏng-Hyŏn and the "Land of Excrement" Incident." 31.

[13] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995). 31.

mother, the inherent contradiction in this mode of gender representation produces "an instability, a clash of symbolic registers, a potential disordering of what Anne McClintock calls "woman as boundary marker"—a moment when woman as mother threatens to subsume the figure of woman as nation."[14] Interestingly, the text reorders these registers for Mrs. Speed in a way that she cannot be a mother, but must always remain as an 'other' nation.

Equally problematic is the notion of masculinity that plays a key role in this narrative by representing the transformative process of colonial subject into ethnonational subject. Following his rape of Mrs. Speed, Mansu, who conceives his behavior as a nationalistic ritual, appears intoxicated by the fragrances of butter, jam, and chocolate he smelled from Mrs. Speed's breasts. When Mrs. Speed flees, Mansu gets frightened as the scene overlaps with the image of his mother also in misery, but he confesses, "My worrying was only momentary—My heart was shaking, I was overwhelmed at the thought that I had held America, heaven on earth in the space of my arm."[15]

Certainly, Mansu's experience with the smells has much to do with his dealing with American commodities in the black market, from which he developed ambivalent attitude toward the United States. Mansu once expresses satiric respect for Americans who created "heaven on earth." At the same time, Mansu's pleasure in conquering Mrs. Speed's body alludes to his own desire for whiteness attached to sexuality, a notion articulated by Franz Fanon in *Black Skin*, *White Mask* (1967): "When my restless hands caress those white breasts," states Fanon, "they grasp white civilization and dignity and

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[14] Hughes, "Development as Devolution: Nam Chŏng-Hyŏn and the "Land of Excrement" Incident." 51.

[15] Nam, "Bunji [Land of Excrement]." 80.

make them mine."[16] Fanon, according to Anne McClintock, brings into play both a "politics of substitution" (the desire to occupy the position of the white master) and a "politics of appropriation" (the seizing, possessing of the white woman) without making a critical distinction between them.[17] As such, Mansu's rape of Mrs. Speed can be interpreted as an ambivalent gesture of counter-masculinism pointed to "somewhere between a parodic inhabiting" of neocolonial violence and the reconsolidation of a hegemonic masculinism."[18]

Mansu's ambivalent counter-masculinism therefore highlights the violence underpinning the Cold War logic of development in the name of the nation best articulated by Park Chung Hee. The force of the United States, with its massive economic aid packages and permanent bases scattered throughout South Korea, transforms the promise of development into a desire for whiteness in this text. While the same dilemma has been found in Asian American texts where the representations of masculine subjectivity often reveal the normative regime of whiteness, the ethnonational body in Nam's *Bunji* is almost lost, evacuated, and even reduced to a waster product.[19] In other words, South Korea becomes a land of excrement.[20] Perhaps it is this violent colonial dilemma that devastated Nam whose authorial career has been substantially weakened as he remained rather inactive after the 1965 trial incident.

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[16] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967). 63.
[17] McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. 362.

[18] Hughes, "Development as Devolution: Nam Chŏng-Hyŏn and the "Land of Excrement" Incident." 51.

[19] See David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America*, Perverse Modernities (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001).

[20] Hughes, "Development as Devolution: Nam Chŏng-Hyŏn and the "Land of Excrement" Incident." 48.

Shin Tong Yeop and the Rise of *Minjung* Nationalism

Compared to the novelist Nam Jeong Hyun, the poet Shin Tong Yeop, notwithstanding his short life span of 39 years (1930-1969), made a more lasting and powerful impact on both intellectual and activist communities in their protests against Park's authoritarian regime. Throughout his even shorter career as a poet for about a decade, Shin's literary world was primarily based on the nationalism. As widely recognized, Shin's nationalism and sense of history stemmed from his acute awareness of Korea's turbulent modern history in the wake of the Japanese occupation, the Liberation, and the Korean War, April 19th Revolution, and the May 16th military *coup d'etat*. During the 1960s, Shin was a staunch champion of 'engagement literature' along with Kim Su-young, another acclaimed poet and literary critic, as opposed to many of his contemporaries' pursuit of 'pure literature.'[21]

A strong sense of history coheres virtually in every line and stanza of Shin's poems. Among the major historical incidents that inspired the poet are the Tonghak Peasant Rebellion of 1894, the March 1st Independence Movement of 1919, and the April 19th Revolution of 1961. The poet's perception of history is always charged with a revolutionary spirit. April, for instance, constantly reminds Shin of the 1960 Revolution that overthrew Rhee Syngman's totalitarian regime at the cost of so many innocent young lives. The poet's profound historical sense and zeal for revolution has often made him write lengthy epic poems including his masterpiece "Kumgang" ["The Kum River"]

[21] Young-chon Yoon, "Hanguk Hyundaesie Natanan Miguk Insik [Perceptions of the United States in Contemporary Korean Poetry] " *Minjok Munhaksa Yeongu [History of National Literature Study]* 36(April 2008).

(1967), one that has some 5,000 verses, where Shin surveys the entire world history in relation to the central theme of the Tonghak Rebellion:

Prologue 2[22]

O the awesome
Power
The joyous meeting

Kongju tomorrow
Suwon the day after
Then the Capital the day after that

O the seizure of
The Capital of the aristocrats
Laden with wrongs
Hardly to be repaid in a thousand years

Liberation of our nation
Liberation of the people

Peasants'
Workers' Heaven and earth

O, this passion that would be naked
O, this great rebellion,
This land of milk and honey,
This land teeming with blossoms and fruits,

This land where
Gaze and laughter intermingle,

Oh, the land where we can be full,
Where father and son can
Love each other.

Merged with Shin's historical sensibility is his dedication to portraying ordinary people's lives. For Shin, history serves either as the theme of the poem itself or as the

[22] Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2005). Translation by Paik Nak-chung. Quoted in Elihu Katz and Michael Gurevitch, *The Secularization of Leisure : Culture and Communication in Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976). 158.

metaphoric stage for revisioning modern Korean history in the light of the oppressed people. While this is why Shin has been called a "people's poet," the people in his poems are those who are not simply the subjects of a particular regime or a political system but who have taken initiative in the making of modern Korean history.[23] Yet, these are those who have existed outside of the political realm, separated from the ruling class or the opposition parties who think in delusion that they are making history. More specifically, the people in Shin's poems are those who suffer from turbulent political and social upheavals but who endure in silence, waiting for a better world or who stand up for justice, fighting for a better society. It is not surprising that in Shin's poems the ruling class is often symbolized as a "slime parasite," "dark cloud" covering the sky, and an "iron jar."[24]

Noting that those in power have used foreign powers in one way or another to justify their oppression, Shin's poems almost always warn of the devastating effect of foreign interference. The poet perceives the oppressed people as the grain of the country and the oppressors as 'empty husks,' which is also part of the title of one of his best-known poems "Keopdaegineun gara" ["Away with the Husks!"] (1967). In this poem, the foreign powers and their weapons are demanded to be removed from the Korean peninsula so it can be reunited in neutrality. Many of Shin's poems, such as "Jongno Oga" ["Fifth Street of Chongro"], "Wae Ssoa" ["Why Shoot?"], and "Joguk" ["Fatherland"] to name a few, decry particularly the United States for its role in the division of Korea and

[23] The Korean Culture & Arts Foundation, *Who's Who in Korean Literature* (Seoul: Hollym, 1996). 450.

[24] Ibid.

the subsequent interventions in the domestic politics while Korean people who are dependent on U.S. aid goods become "decayed with butter, dollars, and Yankeeism."[25]

Away with the Husks![26]

Away with the husks!
Even of April let only the kernel remain
And away with the husks!

Away with the husks!
Let only the shouts at Komnaru Ferry
In the Tonghak year remain
And away with the husks!

Thus once again
Away with the husks!
For here Asadal and Asanyo[27]
Naked to their breasts and even there
Will stand in the wedding hall of Neutrality
And radiating shyness
Boy to one another

Away with the husks!
From Halla to Paektu[28]

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[25] Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*. Quoted in Lee, "Cultural Representation of Anti-Americanism: The Negative Images of the United States in South Korean Literature and Arts, 1945-1994". 148.

[26] Katz and Gurevitch, *The Secularization of Leisure : Culture and Communication in Israel*. 150. Translation by Paik Nak-Chung.

[27] The story of Asadal and Asanyo is a well-known folk tale among Koreans. An ancient historical figure from the period of Three Kingdoms (57 B.C.-668 A.D.), Asadal who was a renowned stonemason of Baekjae built Seokgatap and Dabotap, beautiful pagodas that still stand today at the temple of Bulguksa in Gyeongju, South Korea. According to the tale, Asadal left his young wife Asanyo at home while he went to direct the long project of building the pagodas for Silla. Soon became so immersed in his work, Asadal unknowingly neglected his wife. When Asanyo went to see her husband, she was turned away from the temple because women were not allowed on the grounds at the time. Asadal's wife was directed to Shadow Pond where she would be able to see her husband in the water's reflection. When she looked into the water, however, all she could see was the completed Dabotap with no one else in sight on the temple grounds. In anguish, Asadal's wife threw herself into the pond and drowned. Unknown to her, though, was that Asadal had finally finished Dabotap and was working on Seokgatap. This is why Seokgatap is known as the Shadowless Pagoda because Asadal's wife did not see the pagoda in the pond. When Asadal finally finished the other pagoda, he went to see his wife to learn her death. It's been said that Asadal made a stone structure of sitting Buhda (which is now located near the pond) in order to commemorate his beloved wife.

Let only the fragrant earthen breasts remain
And away with all that metal!

In the early 1960s, American servicemen's frequent shootings of Koreans emerged as a serious problem surrounding SOFA negotiation in South Korea. For instance, on February 2, 1964, a local Korean woman who was collecting cans around a U.S. military base at Tongducheon was shot to death by an American guard. One the same day at the same town, three drunken American soldiers robbed and raped to near-death a prostitute who had been abducted into the barracks. On February 6, at Pocheon, a teen-aged boy was shot to death by an American guard while another was seriously injured. Three days later, at Uijeongbu, a twelve-year-old hungry boy, who was searching a garbage can for food near wire entanglements, was shot and seriously wounded. Similar shootings continued to take place in the month in Songtan and Tongducheon.[29] Regarding the shootings, American military authorities commented that those incidents were "necessary" to protect their equipment, and they warned Koreans not to approach the military bases without good reasons.[30] All these incidents led Shin to express his wrath in "Wae Ssoa" ["Why Shoot"]:

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[28] 'Halla' is the name of the mountain located in the southernmost part of Korea (now in the territory of South Korea) while 'Paektu' is the name of the mountain in the northernmost part of Korea (now in the territory of North Korea).

[29] "United Service Organizations," http://www.uso.org/history.aspx; http://united-service-organizations.co.tv/; ibid; Mark James Russell, *Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music, and Internet Culture* (Berkeley, Calif.: Stone Bridge Press, 2008); ibid; ibid; Roald Maliangkay, "Supporting Our Boys: American Military Entertainment and Korean Pop Music in the 1950s and Early 1960s," in *Korean Pop Music: Riding the Wave*, ed. Keith Howard (Kent, U.K.: Global Oriental, 2006); Hyunjoon Shin, "Reconsidering Transnational Cultural Flows of Popular Music in East Asia: Transbordering Musicians in Japan and Korea Searching for "Asia"," *Korean Studies* 33(2009); Amy Wai-yee Chan, "Preserving Korean Music: Intangible Cultural Properties as Icons of Identity: Perspectives on Korean Music Volume 1/Creating Korean Music: Tradition, Innovation and the Discourse of Identity: Perspectives on Korean Music Volume 2," *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 12, no. 2 (2011).

[30] The U.S. 8th Army Commander asserted that South Korean courts had not taken strong enough measures to deter thieves from entering into the bases while the stolen materials were worth more than $70,000 per

Why Shoot[31]

I don't know
If those twelve-year-oldies really
With their tiny, frozen-up hands
Cut the barbed-wire fence
That drew a line against freedom.

I only know
That the sunny hill over there
Where the doubled barbed-wire
And a dark warehouse now stand,
Used to be a place at least during our childhood
Where the village women with their white towels draped on the heads
Dried bean shells and cotton bunches in the sun
Exchanging the stories of their households.

Don't shoot.
To speak frankly,
We did not lease you
The fertile farmland belonging to the old man Park
And the clear water in the wells of our land
To let you shoot us.

Again, nationalism is the kernel of Shin's poetic world. The primary concern in Shin's poetic imagination is unfailingly directed toward the restoration of Korean cultural identity. While Shin's poems generally express sorrow over the debasement of Korea, they nevertheless end with a hope for and belief in the restoration of national dignity following the end of the madness of greed and cruelty. One may find that Shin's poems invoke a kind of reactionist nostalgia, but in fact such nostalgia is always related to a

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month. In a responding comment, Kim Young-sam, who was the spokesperson of an opposition party, said that human lives could not be compared with such material loss even if it had been worth more than $700,000, ten times the alleged amount, a month.

[31] Hyunjoon and Tung-hung, "Translation of 'America' During the Early Cold War Period: A Comparative Study on the History of Popular Music in South Korea and Taiwan." Translation by Juhwan Kim. This poem was published posthumously in 1975 after the poet's death in 1969, and it was immediately banned by the government with the alleged charge of violation of the Anti-Communist Law.

vision for the future which, according to a Korean literary critic, "far from an unconditional exaltation of Korean history," translates into a utopian vision of a new world built through revolution.[32]

It is important to see that the utopia Shin envisions is fundamentally opposed to the one pursued by the state. Like Nam Jeong Hyun does in *Bunji*, Shin Tong Yeop in his poems identifies Park Chung Hee's modernization as a neocolonial project in the form of developmental autocracy. Instead, Shin sees the paradise in a simple and peaceful agricultural community where, he believes, the truthfulness of Korean national identity belongs to. The quest of Shin as a poet thus has much to do with recovery of lost paradise, an ideal country governed not by military boots or foreign powers but by love and peace, and a unified country of equality and liberty. The poet calls it a "neutral country" where all the iron clubs and weapons are melted in love.[33] It is also a country of equality where the president buys a toothbrush at a local store, where the prime minister stands in the line to purchase an economy class train ticket, where the coal miners read Hemingway, Heidegger and Russell where college graduate farmers live in a villa made of marble, and where the people do not allow any single foreign military base inside the country.[34]

The poet's aspiration for a better world inspires the people to overcome adversities and fight for a better society. One can find in Shin's poems such encouraging phrases as "our faith in liberty," "come daybreak," "daybreak and ascension," and "clear up the clouds and break the iron jars." Shin's aspiration was firmly rooted in his faith in the coming of a better world. The present is a dreary cold winter night, to be sure, but

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[32] Katz and Gurevitch, *The Secularization of Leisure : Culture and Communication in Israel*. 154.
[33] Foundation, *Who's Who in Korean Literature*. 451.

[34] Samuel M. Scheiner and Jessica Gurevitch, *The Design and Analysis of Ecological Experiments* (New York, NY: Chapman and Hall, 1993).

"the spring is already here, putting on her make-up now."[35] The poet therefore urged us to break the ice and sow the seed of hope for fresh buds coming out in the spring. In order to render his hope and passion for a better world, the poet often employed colloquial language (making for difficult English translation). Sometimes he used every day casual expression to inspire the people to revolt. In both cases, the poet heard the subtle nuance and adopted a strategy in accordance with the situation.

From the 1970 through the most of the 1980s, the dominant discourse of anti-military, dictatorial regime in South Korea was the '*minjung*' ideology, and likewise, the literary discourse in this period centered on the theory of national literature. Shin Tong Yeop's works of the 1960s are ground-breaking achievements, considering that the most important task of national literature during the period was framing the ideal of national independence and unification and establishing historical perspective. Developed out of critical self-consciousness, Shin's poetic nationalism highlights people's sufferings under repressive systems working closely foreign powers, the United States in particular, and this provided a foundational basis of the *minjung* movement in its pursuit of creating or recovering historical subjectivity of people. With the notion of *minjung* as historical subjects, Shin's nationalism offered "opposing and alternative meanings to those given by the state," redefining the role of events and persons and the nature of political community.[36]

Although the *minjung* movement matured and became prominent in South Korean politics and social life later in the 1980s, Shin's literary works during the 1960s made a crucial contribution to the development of *minjung* nationalism in questioning and

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[35] Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*.

[36] Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea*. 6.

reevaluating "the most foundational and normative ideological underpinnings of the state."[37] In *minjung* nationalist view, Park Chung Hee and his regime represents a consolidation of "the state ideology of anticommunism and the implied perpetuation of the division of North and South Korea, South Korea's "unequal" relationship with the United States, the priority of economic growth over distributive justice, the attendant subordination of labor, and the politics of claiming or reinventing tradition, among others."[38] A clear example of such *minjung*-oriented ideas of national history and identity is found in Shin's "Joguk" ["My Country"]:[39]

My Country[40]

On a bright
Fall day, some flocked towards the cosmos-lined
Pavement
Waving blind flags—
That was not us.
My country, aren't we here by the Kum River
Cleaning radishes?

In May with its fresh green color
Some, seduced by the noise of the Western banks,
Begging for a pearl nose-ring in the nation's name—
That was not us.
My country, aren't we lying here
Looking up the sky just like the steady Mount Sorak?

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[37] Ibid. 7.

[38] Ibid. 7.

[39]This poem was included in a posthumous collection of Shin's poems, *Who Claims to Have Seen the Sky?* (1979) published on the tenth anniversary of the poet's death. Once again after they banned the publication of *Kumgang [The Kum River]* in 1975, the government authorities made an issue with this publication particularly on this poem "Joguk," but they finally decided to allow it thanks to the efforts of the publisher.

[40] Neil Lazarus, "National Consciousness and Intellectualism," in *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1994). Translation by Paik Nak-chung. Quoted in Katz and Gurevitch, *The Secularization of Leisure : Culture and Communication in Israel*. 162-3.

On a sweltering day
Some went to shoot poor natives—
That was not us.
My country, aren't we here
Fingering newspapers in a lonely train station
Choking down our agony?

On that far and dark winter day
When foreigners came with canons
Drawing a line across the forehead of this land
Some set up separate nations blaming that wall—
That was not us.
My country, aren't we in these blossoming fields of
North and South
Braving the hunger
Plowing the fields?

My country,
We have never
Given our heart to
Others' claws.

Sagacious heart
Clear river flowing inside the stone
We have never
Been swept away by screams
Which come and go over the soaring tower

Husks
Husks fight husks and then
They themselves flow away, dancing

Those sad eyes
I came across on the bus
On a rainy afternoon, the clear river that flows
Deep in our heart, O my country.
The sky inside the stone.
We are here in the shadow of history
Waiting for the Day, silently knitting.

My country,
The deep river breaking and flowing inside the stone
Of our land, O my country.
Here we are also waiting by the Imjin River, silently
Washing the land sullied by armaments
Nurturing visions of the East like springwater.

It should be mentioned that the *minjung* ideology, albeit its efficacy and actual accomplishments in South Korean politics as a form of dissident nationalism, is not, however, without "pitfalls of its own."[41] In their reclaiming of national history and national identity, many of South Korean pro-democratic, anti-authoritarian dissident intellectuals have turned to reinscription of subaltern experience. "The difficulty of gaining access to the sources of subaltern history," says Min-Jung Kim, constitutes the central problematic of the writing of that history. Without such access, those who practice a new historiography also run the "risk of objectifying and essentializing subaltern experience, filling in the gaps, absences, and ellipses with the historians' own epistemological and ideological concerns."[42]

With the lack of 'real' experiences, the distinguished status of intellectuals and their distance from the masses may lead to misrepresentation notwithstanding the sympathetic trope of solidarity. Even the status of dissident intellectuals as socially marginalized 'Other' alienated from the establishment does not necessarily authenticate their pronounced solidarity with the masses.[43] Like many other emancipatory movements in history, the *minjung* nationalist project has struggled with various contradictions and tensions surrounding these issues of accessibility and authenticity. At the very bottom,

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[41] Kim, "Moments of Danger in the (Dis)Continuous Relation of Korean Nationalism and Korean American Nationalism." 365.

[42] Ibid. 365.

[43] Many scholars have addressed the same problematic in their studies of various subaltern groups. Some, like Neal Lazarus, Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Spivak, and Linda Alcoff among others, have expressed general skepticism toward intellectuals' representation of subalternity, a key characteristic of *minjung* in this case. See Lazarus, "National Consciousness and Intellectualism."; Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?*, Fifth ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak? ," in *Marxism and Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Ohters," *Cultural Critique* 20(1991-92).

much of the problem lies in the concept of *minjung*; while it underscores collective experiences of people, it cannot be understood merely as "an aggregate of suffering and oppressed individuals." Moreover, in its claim of subjectivity, *minjung* is supposed to have a rich, complex self-consciousness and autonomous agency while, more often than not, it is still represented by non-*minjung* in terms of class.[44]

Chungmoo Choi's critique of South Korean intellectuals' "Otherizing" in their representation of *minjung* as a discourse of decolonization clarifies the paradox.[45] In a similar vein, Min-Jung Kim further elaborates the critique arguing that the "disenfranchised masses" are often "colonized by dissident representation" through the intellectuals' "hypostatization of the masses," as that in official state nationalism.[46] Kim sees that this (un)desired effect is the consequence of the exclusion of divergent voices by *minjung* nationalists while maintaining a sense of 'separateness' for themselves. In this view, *minjung* nationalism has failed to address adequately what Seungsook Moon describes as "the context of asymmetrical power relations among (national) societies and (intranational) social groups."[47] Kim explains:

> South Korean oppositional intellectuals need to account for a range of other dissonant voices, such as those of women or Korean immigrants in the United States—who are also victims of imperialism and colonialism. . . one of the most disturbing dangers of South Korean dissident nationalist discourse is the possibility that its strong anti-American current, a logical counterpart of its opposition to the South Korean government epic of economic growth (an epic that

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[44] Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea*. 12.

[45] Chungmoo Choi, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea," *positions* 1, no. 1 (1993).

[46] Kim, "Moments of Danger in the (Dis)Continuous Relation of Korean Nationalism and Korean American Nationalism." 366.

[47] Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*. 1.

> confers sole legitimacy on the state) can be wrongly displaced onto Korean Americans/immigrants.[48]

Also, the ideological position of *minjung* nationalism against the United States rejects the political and social situation in South Korea, which has been determined by the history of U.S. interventions. Furthermore, as Min-Jung Kim suggests, it complicates and even contradicts the positions of Koreans as well as Korean Americans/immigrants who, unmistakably, have been exposed to the situation through a complex web of transnational circumstances.[49] From a radical nationalist perspective which focus heavily on the negative aspects of foreign influence, those who subscribe to any "Western" values under these circumstances are likely to be condemned as either anti-national reactionary bourgeois or hopelessly subjugated neocolonial subject. The following case of South Korean rock music, however, does not necessarily match the claims of *minjung* nationalists or the state, both as hegemonic discourses.

Camp Shows, Shin Joong Hyun, and the Creation of ROK

When the Korean War ended, South Korea with the establishment of United States Forces in Korea (USFK) became one of the places where large numbers of American soldiers (GIs) stayed on a permanent basis. The so-called 'camptowns' (*gijichon*) formed alongside more than 150 U.S. military bases all over the country, and they became hotbeds for mass dissemination of American pop culture in South Korea.

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[48] Kim, "Moments of Danger in the (Dis)Continuous Relation of Korean Nationalism and Korean American Nationalism." 367.

[49] Hyung Il Pai and Timothy R. Tangherlini, eds., *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, Korea Research Monograph (Berkeley, Calif.: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California,1998). 88.

Inside the bases were military clubs (estimated at over 270 in their heyday) in which 'shows' for American soldiers developed.[50] They were named the 'U.S. 8th Army show' (a.k.a. 'Mipalgun Sho' in Korean) when the 24th Army Division, the original host of the clubs, that had first entered Korea in 1945 expanded to the 8th Army Corps just after the War. Earlier during the 1950s, the United Service Organizations (USO)[51], organized camp show tours bringing in American entertainers including some big names like Bob Hope, Al Jonson, Mickey Rooney, Errol Flynn, Nat King Cole, Elvis Presley, and even a group of female stars Marilyn Monroe, Debbie Reynolds, and Jayne Mansfield to name a few.[52]

It did not take long for these Americans to be replaced by local Korean entertainers whose role was to fill the high demand from mushrooming bases throughout the country. Not surprisingly, many "hungry" Korean musicians amid the destitution of postwar Korea flocked to the bases to get the "precious jobs."[53] Those who proved competitive were hired by the US military authorities and worked to entertain GIs by playing American pop music. Many of these Korean artists became the pioneers of

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[50] Shin, "Reconsidering Transnational Cultural Flows of Popular Music in East Asia: Transbordering Musicians in Japan and Korea Searching for "Asia"." 93.

[51] "A private, nonprofit organization that provides morale and recreational services to members of the U.S. military," USO was founded in 1941 in response to a request from President Franklin D. Roosevelt to "provide morale and recreation services to U.S. uniformed military personnel. This request brought together six civilian organizations: the Salvation Army, Young Men's Christina Association (YMCA), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), national Catholic Community Service, National Travelers Aid Association and the National Jewish Welfare Board. All these organizations were brought together under one umbrella of USO to support U.S. troops. Roosevelt was elected as its honorary chairman of USO. See the USO official website. "United Service Organizations." Available at http://www.uso.org/history.aspx. Last accessed on May 21, 2011.

[52] Maliangkay, "Supporting Our Boys: American Military Entertainment and Korean Pop Music in the 1950s and Early 1960s."25-6.

[53] Shin, "Reconsidering Transnational Cultural Flows of Popular Music in East Asia: Transbordering Musicians in Japan and Korea Searching for "Asia"." 93.

Korean modern entertainment. Among them was Shin Joong Hyun, who claimed the reputation of being the "Godfather of Korean rock 'n' roll music."

Born in 1938, Shin Joong Hyun, who had lost his mother early in his childhood, spent several years in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, where his father and Japanese stepmother ran a hair salon. Soon after Shin returned to Korea with his family, his father and his stepmother died. Shin moved to Seoul on his own, working in a pharmacy and going to night school. He taught himself to play the guitar, and began giving lessons at a music institute in Jongno. In 1957 Shin, who grew up listening to American pop songs from AFKN radio channel, began playing for the U.S. army in Korea, using the stage name "Jackie Shin," a career he would continue for the next ten years.[54]

Shin's musical talent brought him exceptional popularity within the circuit of American Army clubs where he played jazz standards for the officers clubs, more country music for Non-commissioned officers, and rock for the enlisted men. A big fan of Elvis, Shin, from the early 1960s began to focus on rock 'n' roll music, introducing this new music to his countrymen and women until he "ran afoul of Park Chung Hee and Korea's military government" in the early 1970s. Shin has maintained that U.S. Army bases were where Korean rock was born. "At that time," he recalls, "Korean clubs only played 'trot,' tango, music like that" whereas he most liked to play "Bill Haley's 'Rock Around the Clock,' 'Guitar Boogie Shuffle,' Duaane Eddy's '40 Miles of Bad Road."[55]

So far, the story of Shin Joong Hyun is not unusual from most of his contemporary musicians whose careers depended heavily on U.S. military camp shows, "the cradle of Korean pop musicians." Korean musicians had to learn not only American

[54] Russell, *Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music, and Internet Culture*. 141.

[55] Ibid. 141.

songs and music but also other skills of entertainment such as ‘stage manner’ and ‘showmanship.’ Camp shows cultivated modernity among many Koreans who were ready to catch up with recent developments in American pop. The intensity of such entertainment training was no less than that of military training. The labor market for Korean musicians at US military camp shows was organized by standards and rules set up by the US military authorities. The audition system transformed the system of the Korean entertainment business. A group of special agencies authorized by US military and South Korean governments had exclusive rights to hiring and training local musicians, and they pre-organized show troupes before the audition in front of the US military authorities.

Once the musicians passed their audition and started working for the US military, Korean agencies put them on hard training and tight management, a characteristic of the Korean entertainment business that continues today. The auditions took place every three to six months, and only a small number of participants passed, allowing them to enter the “off limits” U.S. military camps, a ‘forbidden’ foreign area in their country. Money from U.S. military shows was large by local standards. A Korean music critic and scholar estimates that during the 1950s, the income paid to the musicians and their managers who worked for the camp shows amounted to one million US dollars, exceeding the total export revenue during the same period.[56] When the postwar South Korean economy was still burdened by hyperinflation, U.S. camp shows were one of the main sources of earning dollars (the hard currency) for the national economy.

[56] Shin, "Reconsidering Transnational Cultural Flows of Popular Music in East Asia: Transbordering Musicians in Japan and Korea Searching for "Asia"." 93.

That the U.S. military affected significant changes in local music culture, raises the complicated problem of cultural imperialism. Early critics of cultural imperialism, drawing upon the media-propaganda model, attempted to capture the work of globalization as a dominating ideology and force toward a homogenized world system.[57] Yet those who argue against the 'unilateral' or 'unidirectional' model have pointed out that it oversimplifies complex dynamics of cultural interactions between metropole and colony. Alternative models that address the diversity and autonomy of local cultures[58] reveal that local industries and music communities can show 'resiliency' and 'tenacity' in protecting their share of the market from the onslaught of Anglo-American pop imports.[59]

'America' was (and still is) inside Korea as a form of 'US camp village,' and this America was not only imaginary or symbolic, but also 'real.' Even the critics of cultural imperialism acknowledge that the U.S. cultural industries maintain a privileged status in global styles and genres. When it comes to music, American pop remains "the global

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[57] See Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "Media Imperialism: Towards an International Framework for the Analysis of Media Systems," in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed. james Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woollacott (London: Edward Arnold, 1977); Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," in *Transnational Corporations and World Order: Readings in International Political Economy*, ed. George Modelski (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1979); Cees J. Hamelink, *Cultural Autonomy in Global Communications: Planning National Information Policy*, Communication and Human Values (New York: Longman, 1983); Herbert I. Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination* (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976); Sui-Nam Lee, "Communication Imperialism and Dependency: A Conceptual Clarification," *Gazette: The International Journal of Mass Communication Studies* 41(1988).

[58]See Fred Fejes, "Media Imperialism: An Assessment," *Media, Culture and Society* 3(1981); Joseph D. Straubhaar, "Beyond Media Imperialism: Assymetrical Inter-Dependence and Cultural Proximity," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8(1991); Colleen Roach, "Cultural Imperialism and Resistance in Media Theory and Literary Theory " *Media, Culture and Society* 19(1997); W. James Potter, *An Analysis of Thinking and Research About Qualitative Methods*, Lea's Communication Series (Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1996).

[59]David Thornby, "The Music Industry in the New Millennium: Global and Local Perspectives," in *Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity Division of Arts and Cultural Enterprise* (Paris: UNESCO, 2002). Quoted in Kim and Shin, "The Birth of "Rok": Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975." 202.

reference point from which emanates enormous symbolic power."[60] Many national and local pop music forms are made, classified, advertised, and consumed following the conventions of American pop genres, such as jazz, rock, hip-hop, R & B, and so forth. In a similar way that Chatterjee made a distinction between the thematic and the problematic of postcolonial nationalism, what makes the music distinguished from American music is the 'substance' inside the styles or genres, determined by interactions of the global and the local.

In their study of rock music in South Korea, Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin find that the U.S. military's dual role in political and cultural domination makes rock music's entry into Korea "an intriguing test case for the deconstruction of cultural imperialism."[61] The authors note that rock with its "characteristic rebelliousness" has appealed to youth around the world, who often appropriated this Anglo-American genre to "distinguish themselves from the settled norms of national culture." What Kim and Shin suggest becomes clear in their quote of Luciana Ferreira and Moura Mendoza: "Between accusations of being a form of cultural imperialism and exaltation as a libertarian force, rock has become a global 'mediascape,' transmitting diverse meanings. In particular countries, it can appear either as an imitation of imported styles or as a stimulus to the creation of hybrid styles, in which musicians blend elements from local musical traditions and add native language lyrics."[62] That said, the story of Korean rock represented by Shin

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[60] Kim and Shin, "The Birth of "Rok": Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975." 202.

[61] Ibid. 203.

[62] Luciana Ferreira and moura Mendoza, "The Local and the Global in Popular Music: The Brazilian Music Industry, Local Culture, and Public Policies," in *Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization*, ed. Diana Crane, Nobuko Kawashima, and Ken ichi Kawasaki (London: Routledge, 2002). 106. Quoted in

Joong Hyun holds our attention as it provides important details molded by this generic process.

By the late 1950s, camp show music began to find its way to the public audience, and in 1961 Shin formed 'Add 4,' the first rock band in Korea. Three years later, Shin and his band produced their first album, *Pisogui Yeoin* [*A Woman in the Rain*], though it hardly received any attention in the market. It appeared that the band's solid careers at the U.S. military camp shows did not do much to win Korean audiences. It was not until 1968 that things began to change favorably to Shin. That year Shin produced an album for two high school girls who called themselves 'The Pearl Sisters' which turned out a huge success. Over the next seven years, Shin, who himself became a star too, produced a number of hit records usually with his signature "fuzzy guitar style, spacey organ sounds, and a healthy dose of psychedelic."[63]

The shift in Shin's career into a successful producer and rock guitarist was in large part enabled by the Park Chung Hee regime. The state's dedication to "fatherland modernization" through the policy of high-speed industrialization coincided with rapid urbanization, and this in turn facilitated more consumption of Western culture by ordinary Koreans who had no ties with the U.S. military. Prior to the economic takeoff of the 1960s, only two major sources of Western pop were available to the few people who could afford to satisfy their exotic curiosity. One was the AFKN and the other was *umak gamsangsil*, "a kind of music café in downtown Seoul that attracted Western music

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Kim and Shin, "The Birth of "Rok": Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975." 202.

[63] Russell, *Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music, and Internet Culture*. 142.

aficionados."[64] Record players, if they were a common household item in the West, were still a novelty in South Korea, hardly seen in general households except those in the high, wealthy class. The establishment of new radio stations and the creation of three new private broadcasting companies in the early 1960s thus proved pivotal in the growth of domestic music industry in this period. With the aid of the mass media, pop was able to reach out to a larger and larger portion of the domestic audience.

The biggest obstacle against the development of Korean pop music was the government. The relative freedom that Koreans had to indulge in their enjoyment of American popular culture did not last long as the government, in its speeding of centralized economic growth, also began to interfere with the cultural industries. Once the authoritarian regime regarded the influence of Western culture as *jeosok* (vulgar), *twepe* (decadent), and *buron* (potentially subversive), it decided to take a relentless action. In August 1970, the so-called *jangbal dansok* (long-hair crackdown) was enforced by the government. Police randomly stopped young males for a snap inspection. If one's hair was deemed too long, the inspector (police officer or government official), gave him an instant hair-cut on the street. Rock musicians who generally preferred to keep their long hair had no choice but to trim their hair. Women's skirts had to be long enough to cover the knees. The streets of Seoul, according to Kim and Shin, turned into "a theater of the absurd, where police officers, armed with measuring sticks, imposed "the discipline of the body" on the hapless passerby."[65]

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[64] Kim and Shin, "The Birth of "Rok": Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975." 208. The most famous ones were C'est si bon, Die Schöne, and Renaissance, and all of these were equipped with high fidelity audio systems and a log of Western classical and pop records.

[65] Ibid. 216.

Comprehensive censorship of broadcast, performance, film and audio recording was put into practice by the Korean Arts and Culture Ethics Council, first established in 1966 by Park's order, with various subcommittees in operation under its name. Government control on popular music was enforced mainly through '*gayo jeonghwa undong*' (Popular Music Purge Campaign). Although the stated mission of the campaign was to clear up the legacy of Japanese colonialism by wiping out the corruptive *waesaek* (Japanese influence) on Korean popular music, its target extended to any music and songs that sounded 'inappropriate' for whatever reason. Between 1965 and 1975, censors blacklisted a total of 223 Korean songs and 261 Western pop songs. Another feat of this campaign was to promote *geonjeon gayo* (wholesome songs) composed for the purpose of promoting a specific ethic or moral that emphasized "pro-government agenda or rosy picture of the society and the nation."[66] Until the late 1980s, these *geonjeon gayo* were always the last song on an album, a requirement to pass the censorship.

While popular music in South Korea became increasingly politicized, a remarkable event in Shin's career occurred in 1972 near the climax of his fame along with the boom of rock music in the country. Shin received a phone call from the president's office, and he was asked to write a song praising Park and his accomplishments. Shin refused. "I was young and I didn't like the president," Shin recalls and continues to explain, "I was upset he never returned the power to the people, like he said he would when he came to power. I think I did a good thing, not writing that song. If I did, I could never have been here now."[67] Around this time, Shin organized a new band named Yeopjeondul [Brass Coins] and in 1974 released its first album that turned out to

[66] Ibid. 221, 217.

[67] Russell, *Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music, and Internet Culture*. 142.

be a mega hit, selling more than one hundred thousand copies, "ten times more than the standard sales figure for a hit album in the mid-1970s." "Miin" [A Beautiful Woman], the title song of the album, soon topped the chart, and it also signaled that rock had finally reached the peak of mainstream popularity. Equally important as the album's commercial success was the song's unique sound and rhythm, "a hybrid of Western rock and traditional Korean music." Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin write:

> "Miin" had monumental cultural impact. Ordinary people, especially young schoolchildren on the streets, were humming along with the folksy melody and rhyme loosely based on *changt'aryŏng*, the traditional beggar's chant for food. Shin blended this with an apparent homage to Jimi Hendrix, borrowing a motif from "Voodoo Chile" to create the famous guitar riff in "Miin." In addition. Shin gave it a touch of vibrato akin to *nonghyŏn*, a technique widely used with traditional Korean stringed instruments. As a result, the lead guitar in "Miin" sounds like the *kayagŭm* (a twelve-stringed zither), generating a hybrid of Western rock and traditional Korean music.[68]

Within the several months of its release, "Miin" was banned by the government as "too noisy" and "vulgar," a product of "decadent culture." If the government's decision was not really because of Shin's refusal of making a song for Park, a daring act of impudence against the authority of the government in its view, a more plausible hint is that a popular joke at the time was to change the song's lyrics from, "Seeing her once, seeing her twice, and I can't stop looking her" to "Doing it once, doing it twice, I can't stop doing it." Besides the sexual connotations, this twist, it seems likely, reflected a political and social critique against Park's autocratic regime and its repressive actions against the populace which only became uglier. Having extended his term twice, Park in 1972 proclaimed the *Yusin* Constitution that established himself as de facto permanent

[68] Kim and Shin, "The Birth of "Rok": Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975." 220.

president. Given the satirical message in the joke above, one thing is clear for sure; the authorities were not amused. In response, the government with its tightened grip on censorship finally zeroed in on Shin Joong Hyun and the rock band musicians. In 1975, Shin and many other singers and artists were accused of marijuana smoking. Following his arrest, Shin, who already had nineteen songs on the blacklist although the lyrics contained "nothing really controversial: no political message, no social critique, and no sexually explicit language," was inhibited from performing in Korea for years to come.[69]

Two propaganda songs, "Saemaul Norae" [Song of the New Village] and "Naui Joguk" [My Fatherland], best articulated the government campaign for the "revival of national culture" as opposed to "decadent" Western culture. Allegedly written and composed by Park Chung Hee, these two songs were played everywhere --schools, public institutions, and government offices. In particular, "Saemaul Norae," the official theme song of *saemaul undong* [new village movement], blared across the nation day and night, in its attempt to discipline the people to work hard for the sake of modernizing the country: emphasizes hard work, discipline for the sake of national economy. The opening of the song goes, "The early morning bell has rung; it is a new dawn. Let's get up, you and I, and look after our new village. My village is so nice to live in, let us create it ourselves"[70]

Although less frequently played than "Saemaul Norae," "Naui joguk," a musical version of Park's manifesto in his book *Our Nation's Path*, better illustrates the political ideology behind the "revival of national culture." The song is characterized by its solemn tone set up by "blazing horns of the military marching band" followed by "the mixed

[69] Ibid. 221.

[70] Maliangkay, "Pop for Progress: Censorship and South Korea's Propaganda Songs." 56.

choir singing with a lockstep beat and machine like discipline."[71] Its lyrics relies upon the same tropes of Park's nationalism such as "glorious cultural patrimony," "blood and sweat of the ancestors," the martial virtues of *Hwarang*, an elite youth group of Silla, and other references to the imagined historical grandeur of the nation-state. Furthermore, Kim and Shin find, Park's "Naui joguk" written in the style of Japanese *gunka* [war songs], was an "implicit homage to his imperial Kwantung Army origin"

Clearly juxtaposed with Park's "Naui joguk," Shin Joong Hyun's "Areumdaun gangsan" [The Beautiful Land], one of his masterpieces, comes in a vivid contrast with the official discourse of national identity imbued with militarism, antiliberalism, and suspicion of Western popular culture. As in "Naui joguk," "Shin's "Areumdaun gangsan" opens with an admiration of the beautiful landscapes of Korea, but the difference in the song's lyrics and sounds ends up creating fundamentally diverging effects. At the climax of his song, Shin exclaims, "Love is forever, forever. . . . we're all together, together . . . always and forever intimate!" Originally recorded in 1972, the same year "Naui joguk" came out, "Areumdaun gangsan," like many of Shin's songs, was immediately banned by the government. When the song was rerecorded in 1980 after Park's death, Shin further variegated the song's original sound with "a free flowing, polyrhythmic performance." Shin rearranged the song to imitate disco and funk, with horns, female backing vocals, and a synthesizer. Even as he sang about hills, rivers, and trees in the local landscapes, he never lost touch with the global soundscapes that attracted him."[72] Combined with themes of love, peace, and togetherness, "Areumdaun gangsan" creates the image of

[71] Kim and Shin, "The Birth of "Rok": Cultural Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Glocalization of Rock Music in South Korea, 1964-1975." 225.

[72] Ibid. 225.

nation as a "diverse, colorful, freewheeling counterculture utopia set in a native land." Shin's answer to the national culture indoctrination substantially deviates from the fatherland of Park Chung Hee's imagination.

Two important conclusions can be made about the South Korean popular culture during the Park Chung Hee era. First, in relation to U.S.-South Korea relations, the U.S. military base, a powerful institution of cultural hegemony, directly and indirectly nurtured numerous Korean entertainers who made their careers through assimilating the imported styles of American cultural products and in turn injecting them into Korean society. During the 1960s and 1970s, they became major players in the domestic cultural industries, actively contributing to the transformation of local culture with the growing taste for things American. Yet, this should not be interpreted as a one dimensional story in which U.S. hegemony simply dominated South Korean culture during this period. This leads to the second part of the conclusion.

Notwithstanding the accusation of cultural imperialism from the established elite and repression by the Korean military regime, Shin Joong Hyun and other rock musicians, successfully appropriated American rock music to express their concerns and interests in creating a new version of rock or Korean "rok" to use Pil Ho Kim and Hyunjoon Shin's double transcription.[73] The story of Shin Joong Hyun is particularly significant in that it shows how the U.S. military base turned into "an improbable incubator of a fledgling Korean countercultural movement."[74] Deviating from the norms defined and imposed by

[73] According to the authors, 'rok' is a reromanization of the Korean rendering of the English word *rock*. While it makes direct reference to ROK (Republic of Korea: South Korea), the author's intension of using 'rok' is to "underscore the hybrid nature of the musical culture, where the global encounters the local, power blends with resistance, and mimesis turns in to creation." Ibid. 203.

[74] Ibid.

the state, Shin and his music with their growing influence in popular culture came to represent resistance against authorities and dominant discourses of national culture. At the same time, they offered an alternative vision of national identity in a hybridized form, a different sense of nation from that used either by the state or by the elite.

Earlier in the previous chapter, I described how Cold War logics initiated by the U.S. and its dominant presence in South Korea conditioned the discursive terrain surrounding the issues of national identity in both hegemonic and anti-hegemonic modalities. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, Park Chung Hee and his regime, representing the South Korean state, interplayed with U.S. hegemony by producing and enforcing a particular kind of statist ideology of ethnic nationalism based on pro-U.S. anti-communism. The chapter also discussed the ways in which Park actively sought to dominate the discourse of national identity in his pursuit of modernization of South Korea in a form of developmental autocracy.

In this chapter, I argued that some intellectuals like novelist Nam Jeong Hyun and poet Shin Tong Yeop, came to challenge the statist ideology of nationalism with different visions of national identity in a form of ethnic, anti-U.S., anti-authoritarian, and pro-democratic *minjung* nationalism. I also argued that the state and intellectuals were not the only actors in the politics of national identity during the period. Instead, I emphasized the need to include popular culture as an equally important level of discursive formation. The story of Shin Joong Hyun and his music illustrated how popular cultural entertainers also played a role of agent in the development of nationalist discourse during the Park Chung

Hee era. They not only challenged the authorities but also claimed their own versions of national identity "on their own ideological turf of national culture."[75]

[75] Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

Somewhere in the Camptowns: Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown* (2001) and the "Walking Wounded"

Colonialism is a form of violence and domination, a state of mind, a cultural practice, a multivalent discourse, and an ideology of expansion. The relationship between colonialism and nationalism is complex, ambiguous, and multifaceted. Nationalism, on the other hand, simultaneously extends the range and depth of colonialism, offers the most palpable resistance to it, subverts its imperatives and determinations, and serves to reproduce it in subtle and not so subtle ways. Thus the relationship between colonialism and nationalism is ridden with paradoxes.[1]

The Rise of the National Cinema in South Korea

Under the auspices of the United States, South Korea, throughout the Cold War years, quickly became a model of economic success for developing nations. Although cinema was an important medium of sociocultural developments in the postwar South Korean society, government censorship under the decades-long military regimes severely confined artists' imagination and their productions. Even if the traumatic experiences of colonialism, division, fratricidal war, and authoritarian regime followed by repressive military rule explicitly compelled a sense of anguish and misery, the 'nation' in the South Korean cinema especially during the Park Chung Hee era could not sentimentalize its wounds overwhelmed by the state's prerogative that simply "redirected the painful past into vehement expression of anticommunism and spectacular war heroism."[2]

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[1] Wimal Dissanayake, "Nationhood, History, and Cinema: Reflections on the Asian Scene," in *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, ed. Wimal Dissanayake (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Prss, 1994). ix.

[2] Kyung Hyun Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*, Asia-Pacific (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). 15.

The dramatic changes in South Korean politics from the late 1980s toward a liberal democracy coincided with relaxation of the censorship, and this in turn injected a new vitality in the Korean film industry. Imbued with the 'new realism,' Korean filmmakers with heightened social and political consciousness began to incorporate "the *minjung* movement's focus on the exploited masses" into the mainstream productions.[3] Along with the remarkable expansion in the number of production and the range of topics and subjects, this so-called Korean New Wave, as it was dubbed by foreign critics at the time, also coincided with the emergence of Korean national cinema movement.[4]

Passing through the 1990s, a transitional phase, South Korean cinema at the dawn of a new millennium greeted another boon: the emergence of a new generation of directors who, with their hands finally untied from the government censorship, started creating films that marked "a clear break from the past" with phenomenal success both at home and abroad.[5] One may find a significant gap between the productions in the 1980s

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[3] Darcy Paquet, *New Korean Cinema : Breaking the Waves*, Short Cuts (London ; New York: Wallflower, 2009). 21. By 1988, directors were no longer required to submit their scripts to censors at the screen play stage, and a certain degree of social critique was newly allowed. Isolde Standish, "'Korean Cinema and the New Realism: Text and Context'," in *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, ed. Wimal Dissanayake (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). p. 65. Also see Eungjun Min, Jinsook Joo, and Han Ju Kwak, "Korean National Cinema in the 1980s: Englightenment, Political Struggle, Social Realism, and Defeatism," in *Korean Film: History, Resistance, and Democratic Imagination* (Westport; London: Praeger, 2003). The term *minjung* is a Korean word that refers to *the people*, and this word is mostly associated with the pro-democracy/anti-authoritarian, anti-military dictatorship movement in the history of South Korea.

[4] Min, Joo, and Kwak, "Korean National Cinema in the 1980s: Englightenment, Political Struggle, Social Realism, and Defeatism." 57-83.

[5] Jinhee Choi, *The South Korean Film Renaissance : Local Hitmakers, Global Provocateurs*, Wesleyan Film (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2010). Unlike Korean New Wave directors such as Jang Sun-woo and Park Kwang-su, who were involved with political activism and student movements, most in this new group with a few exceptions were not directly engaged in such student activism in the 1980s. Also see Fraces Gateward, "Introduction," in *Seoul Searching: Culture and Identity in Contemporaray Korean Cinema*, ed. Frances Gateward (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007); Choi, *The South Korean Film Renaissance : Local Hitmakers, Global Provocateurs*. Since the mid-1990s, Korean cinema has been enjoying an unprecedented success even surpassing the achievements of its Golden Age, a decade of critical and commercial flourishing that lasted from the mid-1950s to the late

and those in the 1990s. Advocates of the *minjung* movement during the 1980s defied commercialism, aiming to revive indigenous art within mass culture, while producers and filmmakers since the mid-1990s have turned to profitable trends, appropriating formulas and styles of other national cinemas including Hollywood blockbusters. The shift, according to Jinhee Choi, should be attributed to the changing focus of filmmakers from *minjung* (the people) to *daejung* (the mass). Other than that, the post-1990s filmmakers (who are distinctively identified with the era of New Korean Cinema or Korean film renaissance), like their predecessors, continued to revisit the dominant narrative of South Korean society often challenging the legitimacy and stability of the narrative.

At stake is that the 'official' narrative of South Korean modern history takes off from traumatic circumstances of 'colonial' Korea. It has long acknowledged the liberation from Japan not as a self-achievement but as "a gift of the allied forces," especially of the United States. Excluded in the liberation process and the subsequent nation-building, Koreans in this narrative become effectively "delegitimized as valid agents" in their own history just like they did by the Japanese colonization.[6] The official narrative, Chungmoo Choi explains, "not only justified Korea's position as restrained by the sovereign power of the former Soviet Union and the U.S. on the issues of Korean partition, but also is responsible for admitting Cold War ideology as the ruling ideology of both Koreas."[7]

1960s. In the 1990s, new filmmakers rescued the industry from the economic disasters of the 1970s and 1980s, wrenching their screens from the grip of Hollywood. In 2003, for example, local productions made up eight of the ten top-grossing films. The following year, Korea-made films accounted for more than 50% of the total box office.

[6] Choi, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea." 80.

[7] Ibid.

The outbreak of the Korean War and the establishment of the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty at the end of the war, both integral to the official narrative, further alienated South Koreans from the history of their nation with its military and territorial sovereignty relinquished to the United States. Instead, South Korea was given the name of a valuable U.S. ally of in the northeast Asian region for its strategic purposes as a bulwark against Communism. The rivalry between the two Koreas also created imperatives of building an efficient economy in South Korea that required South Korea's political and economic dependence on the United States.

Since the 1990s, films of national narratives have continued to persist on screens in South Korea. While the traumatic historical events aforementioned have become a central element in the dominant fictions of this day, the narratives in these films often focused on "human survival instincts, brave and committed acts of resistance, and intense democratization struggle by the Korean people."[8] The Korean War became one of the most popular historical settings on screen. Unlike those produced in the 1960s where the spectacular war images and anticommunist ideological messages dominated, these new films brought different angles to the national trauma with more introspective insights into the war as an internal conflict highlighting its impact on local communities and families.

Comparing the Korean War films in different time periods, Kyung-hyun Kim observes a significant change in the post-1990s Korea War films, "the erasure of North Koreans as enemies." Kim says, "Dichotomous depictions of the war that simplistically characterized all North Korean communists as villains and all South Korean nationalists

[8] Julian Stringer, "Introduction," in *New Korean Cinema*, ed. Chi-Yun Shin and Julian Stringer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Universith Press, 2005). 3-4.

as virtuous victors had long since become unfashionable."[9] Representations of the North Korean People's Army became generally "absent' in these new films while the main focus shifted to the southern region and the tensions among the local populace in South Korea. Two films, *Joint Security Area* (Park Chan-wook, 2000) and *Welcome to Dongmakgol* (Park Kwang-hyun, 2005), are particularly remarkable in that they not only stage North Korean soldiers as main roles but also portray them as friends not enemies (Figure 1, 2). The fact that both films made huge successes in the market breaking the box office records upon their releases clearly attests to the depth and the range of the changes within South Korean society.

Figure 1 Love develops between North Korean and South Korean soldiers: *Joint Security Area* (2000)[10]

[9] Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*. 79. Some films including *The Taebaek Mountains* (Im Kwon-taek, 1994); *The Southern Army* (Chong Chi-young, 1990), *To the Starry Island* (Park Kwang-su, 1994) dealt with the Communist partisan guerrillas in the South that once had been a "taboo subject."

[10] Chan-uk Pak, *Jsa Kongdong Kyongbi Kuyok [Jsa, Joint Security Area]* (San Francisco: Distributed by Modern Audio (International) Ltd.,, 2000), Videorecording.

Figure 2 From enemies to friends: *Welcome to Dongmakgol* (2005)[11]

The dramatic shift in this cinematic representation should be attributed to the changing dynamics surrounding the discourse of national identity. Ho-Ki Kim identifies two politico-economic factors that changed South Korea's relationships with the U.S. and North Korea during the late 1990s. First, beginning in the early 1990s, the reconciliatory atmosphere between South Korea and North Korea which culminated in the two leaders' meeting in 2000 transformed the South Korean people's perception of the North.[12] The thawing effects of the sunshine policy[13] included 'shrinking hostility' toward North Korea within the South Korean civil society. This contributed to the revision of South Korean national identity that had been defined against the North Korea based on the Cold

[11] Gwang-hyeon Park and Jin Jang, *Welcome to Dongmakgol* (Hongkong: Xin tian di yu le fa xing you xian gong si,, 2007), Videorecording.

[12] Ho-Ki Kim, "Changes in Ideological Terrain and Political Consciousness in South Korea," *Korea Journal*, no. Autum (2005). 128.

[13] President Kim Dae Jung initiated a conciliatory policy toward the North including the provision of economic aid. It is a policy aimed at inducing change in North Korean policy toward the South through conciliation and displays of goodwill, as opposed to a policy of trying to force such change by pressure, display of force, and other hard-line measures.

War binary opposition of the self and the other into "a fluid convergence of North and South."[14]

Second, the 1997 financial crisis also played a pivotal role in changing South Koreans' perception of the United States.[15] While the crisis transformed the South Korean economy from a state-centered model to a neoliberal one, behind this transformation was the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which, in return for its bailout money, forced the South Korean government to liberalize trade regulations and labor market as well as privatize state-owned corporations. All these measures had devastating effects not only on businesses that struggled to survive but also on the South Korean society in general for they also implied rejection of traditional Korean values. It is not surprising that many South Koreans considered the IMF and its measures as international encroachments upon their sovereignty, and this promoted a popular sense of national crisis among South Korean people that resulted in a surge of anti-U.S. nationalism in South Korea.

Among the most contemporary Korean film directors representing the post-1990s group are Kim Ki-duk and Bong Joon-ho, and in this and the following chapters I examine two of their recent works, Kim's *Address Unknown* (2001) and Bong's *The Host* (2006). It should be worth mentioning that these two films, sharply contrasting in many details, have been commonly referred to as anti-U.S. narratives despite the filmmakers'

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[14] Suk-Young Kim, "Crossing the Border to the "Other" Side: Dynamics of Interaction between North and South Koreans in *Spy Li Cheol-Jin and Join Security Area*," in *Seoul Searching: Culture and Identity in Contemporary Korean Cinema*, ed. Frances Gateward (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). 225.

[15] Kim, "Changes in Ideological Terrain and Political Consciousness in South Korea." 128.

objections that such classification is an overstretch.[16] My analysis of these films focuses on how these films reconstruct the national narrative in specific manners including the issues of race, gender, sexuality and space and how they engage the contemporary discourse of national identity in relation to the U.S.-South Korea military alliance.

Nation as the "Walking Wounded"

Address Unknown (*Suchwiin bulmyeong* in its original title), director Kim Ki-duk's sixth production since his surprising debut in 1996 with *Crocodile*, portrays a band of people who live in a rural village near a U.S. military camp in South Korea. The characters in *Address Unknown* represent various aspects of the national trauma that haunt the Korean society, and among them three youth characters, Chang-guk, Eun-ok, and Ji-hum whose stories constitute the main narrative, reflect how the trauma infiltrates into the lives of individuals in a destructive way.

Chang-guk who lives with his mother in an abandoned military trailer is a mixed-blood, half-Korean and half-black born between an American GI and a former camptown prostitute. A social outcast, Chang-guk is subject to daily experience of humiliation and rejection even from his fellow villagers. The way Chang-guk treats his mother is no better than the way he is treated by others. He expresses overt scorn toward his mother and even beats her because she incessantly writes letters to his American father. As the title of the movie indicates, these letters always return with the same stamp, 'Address Unknown.' Chang-guk works as an aid to Dog-eye, a local dog butcher who also treats

[16] Kim once said in an interview that his intention in making *Address Unknown* was not to arouse anti-Americanism but to outline the horrific effects of war on normal citizens. Ki-duk Kim, *Interview with the Director [Kim Ki-Duk: Special Feature]* (USA: Tartan Video, 2005), Videorecording. Likewise, Bong repeatedly asserted that *The Host* is not an anti-U.S. film.

Chang-guk in a harsh manner especially when Chang-guk hesitates to beat the dogs. Despite his detestation of the job, Chang-guk finds no other job available to him and is forced to return soon after his attempt to run away. Realizing that the only way of escape is through the death, Chang-guk after he murders his brutal master kills himself in a motorcycle crash.

Eun-ok, a high school girl who lost an eye in her childhood by her own brother's reckless playing with a wooden makeshift gun, also lives in a dire condition. With the deepest pain inside, Eun-ok always hides the 'disfigured' half of the face behind her hair. While Eun-ok groans dealing with both the physical and psychological traumas, her family including her mother and her brother provides no solace but only exacerbates her despair by being unable to protect her from wrongdoings against her. Eun-ok's struggle meets another frustration when she is raped by two young local bullies from which she gets pregnant. Later, Eun-ok becomes engaged in a sexual relationship with James, an American GI who approaches with a promise to help her to get cosmetic eye surgery. However, Eun-ok's relationship with James ends soon after the surgery when James becomes abusive and tries to tattoo his name on Eun-ok's body. In her violent protest, Eun-ok pokes her new eye with a knife.

Ji-hum, a high-school dropout who works as an assistant painter at a small gallery, suffers constant harassment by a group of local bullies who often take his money by force to buy porno magazines from American servicemen. Shy and timid, Ji-hum never sticks up for himself unless somebody helps. Ji-hum is also overwhelmed by his overbearing father, a self-claimed Korean War hero who, on occasions, boasts the prosthesis on one of his legs as the symbol of his bravery. Finding himself attracted to Eun-ok, Ji-hum

takes his only solace in peeping on her at night through a hole in her bedroom. He tries to approach her a few times with futile results. The worst thing in Ji-hum's romantic dream happens when the same bullies come to rape Eun-ok right in front of his face, and the fact that he failed to make them stop tortures Ji-hum afterwards.

The stories of Chang-guk, Eun-ok, and Ji-hum begin to develop independently just as they seem to live different lives on their own until a scene captures a rare incident of their being together (Figure 3). Ironically, each carries a wound in the eye ambling along with each other. Chang-guk who happened to join Ji-hum in peeping on Eun-ok got a pencil poke in his eye by Eun-ok while Ji-hum, in his retaliation attempt against the bullies after their rape of Eun-ok, mishandled his makeshift gun and fired toward his own eye. Although the next scene shows that they still maintain a certain distance from one another, their connection remains obvious.

Figure 3 Chang-guk, Ji-hum, and Eun-ok walking along with wounds to their eyes: *Address Unknown* (2001)[17]

[17] Kim Ki-duk, "Address Unknown (*Suchwiin Bulmyeong*)," (2001).

Chang-guk, Eun-ok, and Ji-hum's haphazard union highlights a common thread of crippling conditions that all the characters in *Address Unknown* come to face. Interestingly, the scene, illustrated in the captured image (Figure 3), is a graphic reenactment of the 'Walking Wounded,' one of the three overlapping images that Chong-un Kim identifies as the dominant modes of symbolic representation in the postwar Korean literature: "the Walking Wounded," "the Inspired Rebel," and "the Victimized Aesthete."[18] The image of the 'Walking Wounded,' according to Kim, portrays:

> The huddled and uprooted figure dumbfounded by the sense of universal and irrevocable loss; the small people wandering among the ravaged ruins wondering half-seriously where the next meal would come from; the man perplexed by the sudden shift and cleavage in moral ground; the intellectual figure groping for an adequate answer with regard to the condition of man in the face of metaphysical anguish and despair brought about by the war—these are the images of man that populate the fictional works of the period . . . . . They are the *wounded* people, physically or spiritually, or both, and the general tone is largely despairing and apocalyptic.[19]

The "Walking Wounded" also represents a cycle of violence penetrating the lives of individuals, or in Myung Ja Kim's description, "a karmic chain" that dates back to the legacy of the Korean War.[20] In *Address Unknown*, scars and wounds, physical and symbolic, are presented as "mnemonic devices" to invoke the national trauma that is yet to be healed, and they are ubiquitous and thus found in other characters as well like the crippled leg of Ji-hum's father and the tattoo on the body of Chang-guk's mother.

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[18] Chong-un Kim, "Introduction," in *Postwar Korean Short Stories*, ed. Chong-un Kim (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1983). xi-xii.

[19] ibid. xi-xii. *Italic* emphasis added.

[20] Myung Ja Kim, "Race, Gender, and Postcolonial Identity in Kim Ki-Duk's *Address Unknown*," in *Seoul Searching: Culture and Identity in Contemporaray Korean Cinema*, ed. Frances Gateward (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). 246.

Writing about the film, Myung Ja Kim correctly points out, "Without understanding the political and cultural history of Korea, from the period of Japanese colonialism through the Korean War and the neocolonialism of U.S. military forces, it is not easy to understand the deterministic tone underlying *Address Unknown*."[21] It should be worth mentioning that international audience including film critics expressed puzzled reactions to *Address Unknown* when it was premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2001. Their remarks often started with "it is difficult to understand, but . . . ," or "I cannot understand the Korean circumstances under U.S. military, but I could feel the sorrow." [22] After a screening of the movie at the 2001 Toronto Film Festival one reviewer dismissed the film as Kim Ki-duk's "own unfortunate compulsion to maim and kill the characters in ever more lurid ways for lack of anything better to do."[23] Similarly though less harshly, another reviewer disparaged the film saying that "there's no doubt that effects of living through a war are devastating but to cover almost the full range of human depravity in the course of a single movie----the film touches on everything from rape to mutilation and even hints at cannibalism----seems rather a cruel and unusual punishment to inflict on suspecting audiences."[24]

In *Address Unknown*, what might be a grim story of unaccountable tragedies takes on real meanings through the invocation of shared collective memories or lived

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[21] Ibid.

[22] "Venice Film Festival Pays Attention to 'Address Unknown' " UP, August 31, 2001. www.kimkiduk.com. Last Accessed on May 12, 2009.

[23] Jason Anderson, "Best of the Fest," *eye Weekly* September 6, 2001. Quoted in Steve Choe, "Kim Ki-Duk's Cinema of Cruelty: Ethics and Spectatorship in the Global Economy," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 15, no. 1 (2007). 86.

[24] Poonam Khanna, "Address Unknown," *Exclaim!* Setember 21, 2001. Quoted in Choe, "Kim Ki-Duk's Cinema of Cruelty: Ethics and Spectatorship in the Global Economy." 86.

experiences among South Koreans. The opening of the movie unmistakably set up the narrative framework within a specific context of South Korean history: a piece of wood is being cut from an ammunition box on which a U.S. military emblem is written, and it turns into a zip gun, a crude toy weapon. A boy mimicking William Tell fable with the zip gun misfires toward a little girl and hurts her eye. Then the title of the movie comes up with the image of the U.S. military uniform slowly to be cut in by the U.S. national flag being hoisted by American GIs. The camera zooms out the landscape of a rural village surrounding Camp Eagle, a real USFK base in Wonju, Kangwon Province in South Korea. A group of U.S. soldiers are seen on a training running around the village while a jet fighter is taking off the base with a blare. Schoolboys, speaking poor English, buy *Playboy* magazine from an American soldier who is standing guard at the gate of the base.

The figure of the U.S. military with specific locality constructs the spatial setting and defines a geographic boundary of the narrative. The dominant image of the U.S. military in contrast with the subordinate image of the village also invokes the national trauma with many allegories of colonial legacies and neocolonial conditions of South Korea. It is because of this that *Address Unknown* can be projected into a national narrative beyond its locality where the village as a microcosm of the postwar Korean society represents “the poisonous legacy of war” and “a prominent force controlling and shaping individual lives” under the presence of the U.S. military [25]

[25] Kim, "Race, Gender, and Postcolonial Identity in Kim Ki-Duk's *Address Unknown*." 246.

Whereas space, an important discursive axis in this case, is clearly constructed in *Address Unknown*, time, the other axis, is more ambiguous than clear.[26] A brief subtitle at the beginning does indicate the movie's time setting as sometime in the 1970s, but that only increases the temporal ambiguity throughout the running of the narrative without any other cross-references. Still, the problem of temporal ambiguity is effectively resolved by the specific locality. In other words, with the U.S. military at the center and the camptown around it, the geographical setting of the narrative brings up the national history of South Korea including the colonization by Japan (1910-1945), U.S. military occupation upon liberation (1945-1948), division of two Koreas (1948), Korean War (1950-1953), and the neocolonialism of U.S. military forces in South Korea (1954-).

When Japan surrendered to the allies in 1945, Koreans welcomed the liberation only to see the division of their country in half at the 38th Parallel, with Soviet troops entering the north and U.S. troops entering the south. Upon his march into the south, General Douglas McArthur proclaimed on September, 1945 that the U.S. troops were the occupational force and taking over both the functions and property of the departing Japanese government. Even more surprising is that Yongsan Garrison in Seoul, once the headquarters for the Japanese Imperial Army, became the headquarters for the U.S. military while most of U.S. military installations in South Korea simply replaced the Japanese military installations.

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[26] Wimal Dissanayake, *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). xi.

The Nation's Dilemma: Camptowns and *Yanggongju*

The first *gijichon* or camptown erected in 1945 around Bupyong, a small town nearby Inchon, a west coast port city where the first U.S. occupation troops landed in South Korea and where General McArthur launched his famous amphibian surprise attack against the North Korea on September 15, 1950. At first, United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) instituted new laws prohibiting the women trafficking and revoked licensed prostitution.[27] However, the presence of a foreign army still led to an expansion of prostitution, and the first militarized prostitution for the U.S. troops was recorded in 1948 in Pusan, South Korea.[28]

In 1950, when the U.S. troops returned to Korea during the Korean War, camptowns of bars and brothels were established around military bases. After the war, the enactment of the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty led to the permanent installation of the U.S. military in South Korea. A major diplomatic establishment as it was, the significance of the treaty can also be measured by its impact on camptowns that also became a 'permanent' marker of the U.S.-ROK relation ever since. Cynthia Enloe, a leading feminist scholar whose pioneering works have centered on the militarized prostitution within the context of national and international politics points out the significance of gender or sexual connection in this case:

[27] U.S. Military Government Ordinance No. 70 (1946) and Law No. 7 of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (1947).

[28] JT Takagi and Hye-Jung Park, ""The Women Outside" Study Guide," ed. Third World Newsreel (New York: Third World Newsreel, 2009). Page number not identified.

> None of these institutions—multilateral alliances, bilateral alliances, foreign military assistance programmes—can achieve their militarizing objectives without controlling women for the sake of militarizing men. (Enloe's italics)[29]
> A military base isn't simply an institution for servicing bombers, fighters, aircraft carriers, or a launch-pad for aggressive forays into surrounding territories. A military base is also a package of presumptions about the male soldier's sexual needs, the local society's sexual needs, and about the local society's resources for satisfying those needs.[30]

In her widely acclaimed book *Sex among Allies* (1997), Katherine Moon proves that the institutionalized prostitution and camptown-building played significant roles in maintaining the U.S.–ROK joint defense alliance during and after the Korean War. Through the 1960s to mid-1980s, military prostitution in South Korea, despite some ups and downs along with the changes in the U.S. military operation, reached its peak under the auspice of two governments that "sponsored" and "regulated" the system in the name of alliance as a mutual effort to provide entertainment and improve the morale of the troops[31]

Moon's study estimates that by 1997 over one million Korean women have served as sex providers for the U.S. military, but a more recent publication reveals approximately 27,000 women still fill the nearly 180 camptowns in South Korea.[32] Although it is true that Philippines and Japan too have engaged with similar forms of militarized prostitution around the U.S. bases on their soils, it is no exaggeration when

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[29] Cynthia Enloe, "Beyond 'Rambo': Women and the Varieties of Militarized Masculinity," in *Women and the Military System*, ed. Eva Isaksson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988). 85. Quoted in Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*. 11.
[30] Cynthia Enloe, "Bananas, Bases, Aand Patriarchy," in *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain and Shiela Tobias (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990). 20. Quoted in Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*. 11

[31] Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*.

[32] Ibid. 1.; Park, ""The Women Outside" Study Guide."

Bruce Cumings describes the camptown prostitution in South Korea as "the most important aspect of the whole relationship between the United States and South Korea and the primary memory of Korea for generations of young Americans who have served there" considering the system is in South Korea is so pervasive and so central to the U.S. presence.[33]

At this point, the significance of Chang-guk's mother must be addressed regarding her role in the historical context as well as in the narrative structure of *Address Unknown*. Although her name remains unknown in the film, Chang-guk's mother is instantly identified with no difficulty. She is a former camptown prostitute and the mother of a mixed-race son. Instead of her name, she bears a tattoo on her breast that reads, "U.S. Army Captain, Michael," a permanent marker of her identity that gives her another name, *yanggongju* literally meaning a 'Western princess.' Used interchangeably with other monikers, the term *yanggongju*, a highly degrading word in Korean language, refers to the women who work in the system of militarized prostitution, "a system that dates back to the U.S. occupation of Korea in 1945 and continues to this day."[34] Hyun Sook Kim explains the etymology and implications of the term as follows:

> Historically, the term "Yanggongju" has referred to Korean women who engage in sexual labor for foreign soldiers. We need to problematize the social construction of this term, which does not refer to women working with or for Korean men. Used derogatorily, it means "Yankee whore," "Yankee wife," "UN Lady," and/or "Western princess." This epithet, "Yanggongju," relegates Korean women working in militarized prostitution with foreign men to the lowest status within the hierarchy of prostitution. Since the end of the Korean War, this category has been extended to include Korean women who marry American

[33] Cumings, "Silent but Deadly: Sexual Subordination in the U.S.-Korea Relationship"." 170.

[34] Grace M. Cho, "Diaspora of Camptown: The Forgotten War's Monstrous Family," *Womens' Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1&2 (2006). 310.

> servicemen (pejoratively called "GI Brides"). In postwar Korea, the epithet "Yanggongju" has become synonymous with "GI Brides," so that Korean women in interracial marriage are also viewed as "Yanggongju."[35]

The birth of *yanggongju* in Korean cultural memory can be traced back to the early days of the Korean War when U.S. soldiers were reported to have broken into homes, raping young women and girls.[36] As the war progressed, Americans also came to represent survival, and U.S. bases became places where Korean bought and begged for leftovers or sought employment and where women and girls would exchange companionship for American goods.[37] This type of colonial exchange between the colonizer and the colonized is quite common a trope in the postwar Korean literature and films.

A widely known example is *The Silver Stallion Will Never Come* (*Eunmaneun oji anneunda*), director Jang Gil-soo's 1991 film adapted from Ahn Junghyo's 1990 novel *Silver Stallion*. Ŏllye, a poor peasant widow gets raped by American soldiers, for which she and her son Man-sik become ostracized by their fellow villagers. Unable to make a living, Ŏllye joins the brothel district that has been set up near the U.N. base on the other side of the river from the village. The same kind of relationship is found in *Spring in My Hometown* (Areumdaun sijeol), director Lee Kwangmo's 1998 film, that narrates a story of two 13-year-old boys growing up in a small village during the war. Sung-min's father gets a job at U.S. army camp through his daughter's American boyfriend, and the family

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[35] Hyun Sook Kim, "Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation," in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*, ed. Elaine Kim and Chungmoo Choi (New York: Routledge, 1998). 178.
[36] Charles J. Hanley, Sang-Hun Choe, and Martha Mendoza, *The Bridge at No Gun Ri : A Hidden Nightmare from the Korean War*, 1st ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2001). Jon Halliday and Bruce Cumings, *Korea : The Unknown War*, 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988). Quoted in Cho, "Diaspora of Camptown: The Forgotten War's Monstrous Family." 312.

[37] Cho, "Diaspora of Camptown: The Forgotten War's Monstrous Family." 312-3.

gets richer. But Chang-hee's father has been long-lost and his mother can't even afford one meal a day for her children. One day, the boys peep into a deserted mill-house which is unofficially used for prostitution and find out Changhee's mother with an American GI.

Obviously, gender anxieties are a fundamental part of these anti-colonial narratives. Despite the differences in their positionings and specific representations, those female characters who become sexually involved with American soldiers appear as victims sharing the name *yanggongju*. Combined with the metaphors of rape and prostitution, their 'damaged' or 'violated' bodies are directly referred to as the crisis of national identity that is further accelerated by traumatic male characters who are either missing or significantly disempowered in the narratives. What often complicates these women's status and their subjectivity is their being mother and prostitute at the same time. This particular mode of jeopardy is clearly represented by Ŏllye in *The Silver Stallion* and Chang-hee's mother in *The Spring in My Hometown*, both single widowed mothers. The absence of their husbands leads to the predicaments of Ŏllye (Mansik's mother) and Chang-hee's mother, and it is their sons Man-sik and Chang-hee who continue to remind them of their physical contamination with clear sense of guilt and shame.

Similarly, Chang-guk's mother in *Address Unknown* is trapped in between her being a mother and a *yanggongju*. Yet her case is further complicated due to the presence of Chang-guk, a mixed-raced son. More than the source of shame or guilt to his mother, Chang-guk himself renders into yet another victim of the same guilt and shame. One of the most violent scenes in *Address Unknown* (Figure 5) is when Chang-guk tries to remove the tattoo on his mother's breast with knife. To Chang-guk the tattoo on his

mother's breast is the fundamental source of shame deeply associated with humiliation, anger, frustration, and after all his own identity as a *twigi*.

A highly derogatory term too, *twigi* is a slang that refers to mixed-raced person, literally meaning half-Korean and half-foreign. Interestingly, Chang-guk's name already suggests his problematic identity. 'Chang,' if written as 娼 in Chinese character, means 'prostitution' while 'gook' written as 國 means 'nation.' Combined, Chang-guk's name can be interpreted as a 'prostituted nation,' and this meaning is physically enacted by the dark skin color of Chang-guk, for which he cannot be accepted into the mainstream society no matter how desperately he struggles. In fact, the official definition of mixed-race children by the Korean government as "the second and third generation of children born to American military personnel and Korean women after 1950" strongly implies their connection to camptown prostitution and reflects deep seated prejudice against them.[38]

Abused and ridiculed by the town's people, Chang-guk abuses his mother with violence when she causes trouble with the villagers. Before he cuts his mother's breast, a terribly painful and sad work for both him and his mother (Figure 4), Chang-guk bathes his mother with great care as if it is his own body. As a symbolic ritual of purification and authentification of national identity, Chang-guk's act of bathing his mother is a reenactment of the dominant ideologies of gender in relation to colonialism and nationalism.

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[38] Kyung-ah Han, ""The Realities and Problems on the Amerasians in Korea"" (Hyosung Women's University, 1994). Quoted in Kim, "Race, Gender, and Postcolonial Identity in Kim Ki-Duk's *Address Unknown*." 247. GI babies is another common reference for mixed-raced children in South Korea.

Figure 4 Chang-guk removing his mother's tattoo off her breast: *Address Unknown* (2001)

As Nayoung Lee and Changhee Park point out, the body of Chang-guk's mother is positioned as "an embodiment of colonial memory, decolonial hope, or national shame and value" and reproduces the gendered discourse of anticolonial nationalism in South Korea. Also important to note here is that such stereotypical positioning of women reveals an inherent paradox in terms of redefining colonial legacies and national subjects. Lee and Park explain of Chang-guk's act as follows:

> His act seeks to purify her body with the water, symbolizing his desire for purity and authentic national identity. It also represents the national desire for historical memory, unstained by colonization, a memory without history. By cutting his mother's breasts, ironically however, he negates the origin of himself. By negating the origin of his life, he negates the origin of the nation, the nation of sons. Moreover, his decision to commit suicide points to the impossible struggle of hybrid ethnicity to achieve authentic nationhood.[39]

[39] Nayoung Lee and Changhee Park, "Gendered Nationalism in a Postcolonial Setting of Korea: The Cinematic Representation of National Identity in *Address Unknown* (*Suchwiin Bulmyeong*)," *Korea Journal of Communication Studies* 12, no. 5 (2004). 19.

Comparable to the tattoo on the body of Chang-guk's mother is the wounded eye of Eun-ok who, with that particular emblem of the national trauma, also stands for the national crisis under neocolonial conditions. The zip-gun play in the opening scenes indicates that her loss of an eye, even though it is a direct result of her own brother's prank, is closely linked with the presence of U.S. military, a neoimperial force. The complex meanings attached to Eun-ok's blinded eye or the one-eyedness are thus situated in this national context traumatized by the history of the division, the Korean War, and the continuing confrontation between the two Koreas. Eun-ok's body as a neocolonized nation becomes more obvious when Eun-ok accepts to be James's 'sweetheart' in exchange for eye-recovery, which positions her as a little *yanggongju*.

Meanwhile, the Dog-eye's incisive reproach, "Do you want to end up like Chang-guk's mother?" literally echoes the same gender anxiety projected into the status of Chang-guk's mother as a colonized nation (Figure 5). Clearly suggested in the Dog-eye's warning against Eun-ok, *yanggongju* has always been the target of contempt and stigma from the mainstream society treated as "the lowest of the low."[40] The stigma resonates that those who have earned the name by mingling "flesh and blood with foreigners (*yangnom*)" have violated the sacred myth of Korea as 'one people' sharing racial and cultural homogeneity.[41] In this view, camptown prostitutes are Korean by birth but no longer Korean in body and spirit and therefore a living disgrace not only to themselves but also to the Korean people in general.

[40] Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*. 3.

[41] Ibid.

Figure 5 Dog-eye rails against Eun-ok: *Address Unknown* (2001)

In a classist society that highly valorizes family and educational status, the fact that these women were mostly uneducated, poor, and often heads of their families only increases their distinction for discrimination. The dominant ideology is also enhanced by the combinatorial of Confucian morality and patriarchal structure that regards women as secondary in society while imposing upon them a special requirement of physical chastity by which standard camptown prostitutes were impure. Reflecting such racist, classist, and sexist discourse, the name *yanggongju* inevitably relegates to a permanent marker of rejection in Korean society.

The bright red color of the bus where Chang-guk and his mother live in *Address Unknown* stands out in sharp contrast with the grey tone of the village, and it illuminates the existence of Chang-guk and his mother as dangerous presence to the community and therefore further enhances the distance between the village and the bus (Figure 6). Abandoned both by her foreign spouse and fellow Koreans, Chang-guk's mother is forced to remain outside the village with the destruction, poverty, and shame of the war deeply ingrained on their bodies and memories. If the village in *Address Unknown*

represents camptowns, a topographical signifier of neocolonial conditions of South Korea, the red bus clearly indicates Chang-guk's mother and her son's marginalized status as social pariahs even in a place that is already marked as a "barred-zone in Korean society."[42] The only meaningful thing Chang-guk's mother does in this space is writing letters to Chang-guk's father somewhere in the U.S. only to receive them back undelivered with the stamp, 'Address Unknown.' Frustrated, she never stops writing (Figure 7).

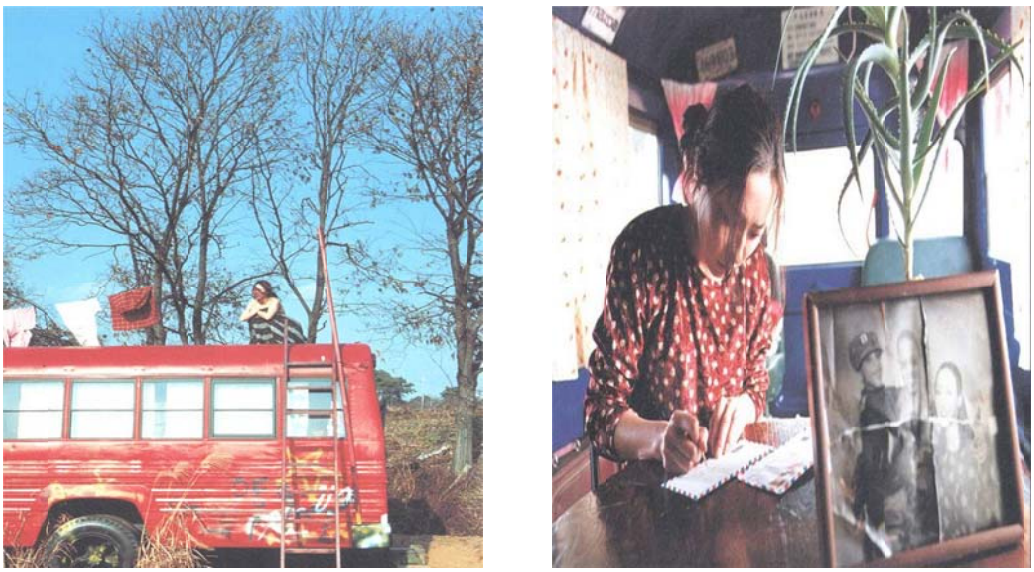

Figure 6, 7 Chang-guk's mother: *Address Unknown* (2001)

Although the figure of 'dangerous *yanggongju*' is found elsewhere in postwar Korean literature and cinema, the specific representation of *yanggongju* as 'a direct threat to patriarchal authority' is a distinctive characteristic of recent productions of the post-1990s. Again, Jang Gil-soo's *The Silver Stallion Will Never Come* (1991) is one of the earliest examples and perhaps the best example. The authority of Old Hwang, a feudal

[42] Kim, "Race, Gender, and Postcolonial Identity in Kim Ki-Duk's *Address Unknown*." 246.

aristocrat and once the venerable patriarch of the village collapses upon the arrival of American soldiers followed by a group of women who self-proclaim themselves as *yanggongjus*. After a few embarrassing encounters with them, Old Hwang determines to meet the women and enforce his decision to expel them out of his village, which only brings him back a further humiliation and irrevocable frustration (Figure 8). Completely disempowered, the image of Old Hwang that captures the moment embodies "the image of an emasculated man"[43] who can barely say anything in response to the vulgar profanities that these women use in their mockery.

Figure 8 Old Hwang (man wearing a traditional hat) confronted by *yanggongjus*: *The Silver Stallion Will Never Come* (1991)[44]

The downward spiral of Hwang's tenure as the local patriarch reaches its bottom when Ŏllye after she joins the *yanggongjus* no longer listens to Old Hwang and even challenges him openly by dismissing his ultimatum to either leave the village or stop

[43] Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*. 80.

[44] Gil-soo Jang, *Eunmaneun Oji An'neunda [the Silver Stallion Will Never Come]* (Seoul: Hanjin Heung'eop 1991), Videorecording.

prostituting (Figure 9). Kyung Hyun Kim says, "This explosion of anger staged by a prostitute directly against an aristocratic patriarch must be remembered as one of the rare moments in Korean cinema that has historically been reluctant to challenge patriarchic authority."[45] The primary conflict in *The Silver Stallion* is "not between the foreign troops and the local village led by the aging patriarch Hwang, but between the two locals, Ŏllye and Hwang."[46]

Figure 9 Ollye rebukes Old Hwang's ultimatum to leave the town or quit prostituting: *The Silver Stallion Will Never Come* (1991)

Nation vs. Gender in *Address Unknown*

A similar kind of tension between nation and gender exists in Address Unknown, and it becomes manifest in Eun-ok's relationship with male characters. For the most part, Eun-ok's relationship with James does not simply reproduce the domination of the foreign male colonizer and the subordination of the local female colonized. Eun-ok's

[45] Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*. 84.

[46] Ibid. 82.

frustration, both physical and psychological, directly comes from the local folks, not the foreign troops. Invariably depicted as incapable, irresponsible, and even exploitative, the local males include Eun-ok's own brother who injured her eye, the local bullies who rape her, and even Ji-hum who loves Eun-ok but, not even able to open his feelings, only enjoys voyeurism of peeping into her room to see her undress.

Anxiously looking for an exit, Eun-ok finds an alternative route in James who seems to be able to help her and indeed helps her get the cosmetic surgery to replace the wounded eye (Figure 10). It is important that Eun-ok approaches James first, and her determination of studying English hard is clearly set to the goal. Unlike most *gijichon* prostitutes who are forced to work within the institutionalized system, Eun-ok, when she agrees to have sex with James, pursues liberty and power at her will. It is far from insignificant that the regular place Eun-ok meets James for sex is her own room at her own house instead of at the brothel. On one occasion, Eun-ok finds her brother stealing James's money and tries to stop him. When Eun-ok's brother starts beating his sister accusing that she and James have a dirty partnership in sex, James knocks him down and says to Eun-ok, "You'd be better off without a brother like that."[47]

James, on the other hand, is in no better conditions. A low-rank American GI to whom staying in a foreign country under the name of global peacekeeper is just pure nonsense, James goes through an endless struggle against disorientation, confusion, and unknown anger. Upon being chastised for not staying on focused (because he was staring at Eun-ok who was passing by), James explodes and starts yelling at his superior that no one can really tell who the enemies are and where they are exactly, and what they are doing is just "bull-shit." Floating like an aimless bullet, an image that clearly deviates

[47] Ki-duk Kim, *Address Unknown* (Los Angeles, CA: Tartan Video,, 2005), Videorecording.

from that of a dominant colonizer, James relies upon alcohol and drug. By all accounts, James represents an equally wretched subject even as a victim who is just mislocated in a wrong place at a wrong time.[48]

The irony is that having a relationship with Eun-ok makes James happy, but it soon devastates him as James becomes hopelessly dependent on Eun-ok even so as abusive that he wants to tattoo his name on her body just like what Chang-guk's father did to Chang-guk's mother. When Eun-ok resists, James, enraged, violently outcries his frustration shouting, "Now that you got your eye fixed, you're just gonna dump me now, huh? You're just gonna dump me now, just like you people suck it all the sweet juice and spit it out. You think I don't know? Go, go! You forgot already all that I have done for you like that. Go, I don't need you!"[49] Once Kim Ki-duk, the director of the film, explained in an interview of the ambivalence in his portraying the images of James and the United States in *Address Unknown*:

> To us South Koreans, the presence of the US military on our soil is something familiar but still uncomfortable. They create many problems, too many, small and big, among which sexual crimes are horrible so that they must be addressed immediately. . . . . Meanwhile, American GIs in South Korea are miserable people too. Given that they are subject to grim realities and devastating conditions of the camptowns that are a de facto area of extraterritorial jurisdiction, what else can they do?[50]

While Eun-ok's body and her female sexuality function as a contested site of dominant ideologies, her relationship with James leads to the shift in her subjectivity.

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[48] Dongyeon Koh, "Images of U.S. Soldiers in Postwar Korean Cinema: From *Hell Flower* (1958) to *Address Unknown* (2001) (Jeonhu Hankook Yeonghwae Deungjanghanun Juhwan Migunui Imiji) " *Korean Journal of American History* 30(2009).

[49] Kim, *Address Unknown*.

[50] Yonsei University Media Art Research Institute, ed. *Address Unknown: The Letter Does Arrive after All Though Too Late*, Cinema and Stare (Seoul: Samin,2002).Translation by Ju-Hwan Kim.

When she accepts to be James's mistress, by which she chooses to forsake the identity imposed upon her, Eun-ok with the change in her physical condition transforms into a colonial subject. Later, Eun-ok decides to injure the new eye and becomes one-eyed again, which not only signifies her will to resist neocolonialism but also brings her back to the national subject. In essence, Eun-ok's eye surgery resemble the story of Pecola Breedlove, a little black girl in Tony Morrison's 1970 novel, *The Bluest Eye*, who yearns for the blue eyes of a little white girl. When this 'impossible' dream comes true in the novel, Pecola is not only given the blue eyes but also a new identity, not the one who suffered racial violence and sexual abuse.

> *It's all over now.*
> Yes.
> *That was horrible, wasn't it?*
> Yes.
> I don't like to talk about dirty things.
> *Me neither. Let's talk about something else.*
> What? What will we talk about?
> *Why, your eyes*.
> Oh, yes. My eyes. My blue eyes.[51]

[51] Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye : A Novel*, 1st Vintage International ed. (New York: Vintage International, 2007). 201.

Figure 10: James promises Eun-ok an eye surgery: *Address Unknown* (2001)

Yet Pecola's mental breakdown at the end of the novel reveals the destructive paradox in her wish for blue eyes because "the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by the evil of its fulfillment."[52] The experience of racial violence and sexual abuse leads Pecola to colonial subjectivity that can also be defined by Du Bois's "double consciousness," a peculiar sense of "always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity." [53] This also manifests itself into 'racial melancholia,' the "deep-seated, intangible, psychical complications for people living within a ruling episteme that privileges that which they can never be."[54] Ironically, Pecola's dreams to recover the split-self would be impossible without destroying herself just as Eun-ok's self-mutilation in *Address Unknown*.

Frantz Fanon has elaborated the same dilemma of colonial subjectivity in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), his two most influential texts in postcolonial studies. In "The Lived Experience of the Black man," a pivotal chapter in *Black Skin*, *White Masks*, Fanon describes the problem of history in the colonial and racialized situation by revealing its underlying subjective dynamics:

> I came into this world anxious to uncover the meaning of things, my soul desirous to be at the origin of the world, and here I am an object among other things. Locked in this suffocating reification, I appealed to the Other so that his liberating gaze, gliding over my body suddenly smoothed of rough edges, would give me

[52] Ibid. 162.

[53] W. E. B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, Avenel: Gramercy Books, 1994). 2.

[54] Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race*, Race and American Culture (Oxford England ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). 7. Quoted in Grace M. Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora : Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). 162.

> back the lightness of being I thought I had lost, and taking me out of the world put me back in the world.[55]

The impulse toward mutual recognition is somehow transformed into an instrument of objectification, turning his body into nonbeing, where the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed him in space and time. Thus the process ends, Fanon explains, in a profound alienation from oneself that then becomes the very terms or categories within which this self as object is ceaselessly reproduced:

> But just as I get to the other slope I stumble, and the Other fixes me with his gaze, his gestures and attitude, the same way you fix a preparation with a dye. I lose my temper, demand an explanation. . . . Nothing doing. I explode. Here are fragments put together by another me.[56]

The double transition of Eun-ok's subjectivity reflects the irony that "Koreans' desperate desire for decolonization cannot be fulfilled by moving in the binary spaces of self and other."[57] Still more important is that the colonial dilemma continues to move along the gender axis. During the same process of Eun-ok's shifting positions, Ji-hum's role as a nationalist slowly evolves too, and Eun-ok's body becomes a contested site of power struggle between two men, James and Ji-hum, or say two nations. When James, shocked by Eun-ok's self-mutilation, a "subaltern woman's masochistic act of violence," gives up tattooing his name on Eun-ok's body and begins running away in fear, Ji-hum,

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[55] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1st ed. (New York; Berkeley, Calif.: Grove Press; Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2008). 89.

[56] Ibid. 89.

[57] Lee and Park, "Gendered Nationalism in a Postcolonial Setting of Korea: The Cinematic Representation of National Identity in *Address Unknown* (*Suchwiin Bulmyeong*)." 20.

now determined to rescue Eun-ok, attempts to revenge the neocolonial abuse by shooting a bow right into the James's penis.[58]

Ji-hum's retaliation, a symbolic act of the nationalist resistance supported by the archery metaphor, nevertheless fails to resolve the dilemma inherent in a gendered nation.[59] Toward the end of the movie, Eun-ok visits Ji-hum who is in police under custody in jail (this is Ji-hum's second time in jail after he had maneuvered into the jail to kill the bullies who raped Eun-ok though he failed). The scene of the two shedding empathetic tears holding their hands suggests "a possibility of reconciliation" between both colonized male and female, also alluding to the "possibility of escaping from colonial legacies through a remobilized national identity."[60] But again, the iron grating of the jail keeps separating the two into different spaces, and the tension remains.

In a ghastly violent way, the ending of Chang-guk's mother reiterates the same gender assumption that intersects the discourse of nationalism and colonialism. Unlike Eun-ok, Chang-guk's mother cannot even try to escape from her colonized status for her body cannot be purified even after the removal of her tattoo by her son. Equally important, the possible recovery through the agency of a male nationalist is no longer viable to Chang-guk's mother after Chang-guk murders Dog-eye, a surrogate figure of both father and husband. After she finds her son's dead body, half-buried upside down in the frozen rice paddy, Chang-guk's mother burns herself inside the bus embracing

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[58] Hye Seung Chung, "Beyond "Extreme": Rereading Kim Ki-Duk's Cinema of *Ressentiment*," *Journal of Film and Video* 62, no. 1 (2010). 104-5.

[59] Archery, a traditional pastime in Korea, signifies the national pride and respect, and its image is in contrast with the traumatic image of the zip-gun. Archery is the sports where South Korea has won the most medals in the Olympic Games since 1948 including 11 gold medals out of 47, the total number of gold medals that South Korea has won.

[60] Lee and Park, "Gendered Nationalism in a Postcolonial Setting of Korea: The Cinematic Representation of National Identity in *Address Unknown* (*Suchwiin Bulmyeong*)." 20.

Chang-guk's body, perhaps the only way she can escape by eliminating both her and her son's bodies.

To borrow Cynthia Enloes's critical analysis of the nationalist models of women, the death of Chang-guk's mother is in fact predestined in that she fails to represent "the nation's most valuable *possessions*," "the principal *vehicles* for national values from one generation to the next," or "*bearers* of the nation's future," but instead proves herself to be "the most *vulnerable* to defilement and exploitation by oppressive alien rulers and invaders" and "the most susceptible to *assimilation* and cooption by insidious outsiders."[61]

In its critique of U.S. neocolonialism in South Korea, *Address Unknown* relies heavily on the gendered discourse of nationalism. When the characters perish one by one with each individual's hope for a better future returned to them unfulfilled, females are invariably relegated to the consistent targets of victimization, brutalization, and betrayal. Due to this, *Address Unknown* ends up rearticulating the gendered premise that the national desire of decolonization requires self-mutilation on the part of women by eliminating themselves or parts of their bodies where the shameful memories and experiences of the nation are inscribed.

Kim Ki-duk, *Address Unknown*, and the Audience

Address Unknown, upon its release in 2001, shocked viewers and critics for the "visceral feel for cruelty" that runs throughout the movie including many "gross-out"

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[61] Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (London: Pandora, 1989). 54. *Italic* emphasis added.

scenes.[62] Far from unusual, Kim Ki-duk's films have received much criticism for his masochistic obsession in his films where he consistently deals with sensational topics such as violence, sex, and death. This has brought Kim both the titles of "a distinctive auteur" and "one of the most controversial directors of our times."[63] Despite his solid international fame, Kim's films rarely enjoyed commercial success at home.[64] *Address Unknown* indeed was a complete failure by that standard with a little more than 10,000 tickets sold during its theatrical run.[65]

Sharply divided, audience reactions to Kim's films have generally focused on the extreme degree of violence and cruelty. Often missing in this criticism is the significance of Kim's films as social critique of the mainstream society whose dominant ideologies, systems, and practices appear to be the main source of the violence in Kim's films. One way to read *Address Unknown* in this context is to see it not only as an anti-colonial national narrative but also as a counter-hegemonic social narrative. Not to mention, it is important to see the how these double narratives intersect each other.

It is widely known that Kim Ki-duk's films are semi-autobiographical. On several occasions, Kim confessed that his own life experience has been a fundamental source of

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[62] Paquet, *New Korean Cinema : Breaking the Waves*. 89.

[63] Ibid. Information is also available at http://www.koreanfilm.org/kimkiduk.html, Paquet's website on Korean films. Last accessed on December 23, 2010.

[64] Kim Ki-duk has won several awards at most prestigious international film festivals in which he was praised for "unique aesthetic, surreal imagery, and sheer poetic beauty." Volker Hummel, "Interview with Kim Ki-Duk," *Senses of Cinema* 2010, no. 19 (2002), http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/19/kim_ki-duk.html#filmo. Last accessed on December 2, 2010.

[65] For comparison, Kwak Kyung-taek's *Friend*, the biggest hit of Korean film in the same year, recorded 2,579,900 for attendance. Among all of Kim's films so far, only two, *Bad Guy* (2002) and *Coast Guard* (2002), sold more than 100,000 tickets. Statistics are available in Korean Film Commission, "Korean Cinema 2001," in *Korean Cinema* (Seoul: Korean Film Commission, 2001). 228-9.

inspiration throughout his filmmaking.[66] If Kim's aesthetics are a rare kind, his life career rejects any commonalities with other filmmakers of his generation in terms of socioeconomic backgrounds. Born in 1960 in a rural village of a southeastern province, Kim Ki-duk grew up in an impoverished family, dropped out of high school, worked as a factory worker, and spent the half of his twenties in the marines.

Never had a chance to get a formal education in filmmaking, Kim's career as a director looks just as heretic. After spending three years in Europe mostly in Paris where he practiced painting on street to make a living, Kim came back to South Korea and started writing scenarios and won a government-sponsored screenplay contest in 1995. A year later at his age of thirty-four, Kim Ki-duk made his debut film *Crocodile* (*Ageo*, 1996), a story about a mysterious man who fishes suicide bodies under the water of Han River for ransom. Within the next ten years, Kim Ki-duk, producing more than a dozen films, became "one of the most celebrated directors in the international festival circuit."[67]

Kim Ki-duk, an outsider by his low, rural, working class background and lack of higher education, has consistently dedicated his concern to marginalized groups of people, often the lowest of the low in society, such as criminals, pimps, prostitutes, petty thieves and gangsters. These subaltern characters that Kim once called "his own people" constitute the main roles in Kim's narrative through whom he dig into the other side of

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[66] Kim revealed that *Address Unknown* in some ways reflects his painful memory of youth associated with Korean history: "When I was growing up in the countryside, I remember many letters scattered on the ground, undelivered because they were sent to the unknown addresses. Most of them were stuck in mailboxes for the longest time until they were swept away by the wind and thrust into the bottom of rice fields or a filthy ditch. Whenever I would see them, I was always overcome with this desire to open them, which in fact I attempted at a number of times. Quite a few contained sad, desperate tales. To me, the three characters in this film are just like the abandoned letters of my childhood. They are the children of an 'era which is yet to be received.' In the desolate plains, Chang-gook has been entirely violated: Eun-ok is halfway to that point; and Ji-hum will rise up, like a weed." Hummel, "Interview with Kim Ki-Duk."

[67] Ibid.

society imbued with alienation, class conflict, destruction, rape, murder, and so on.[68] Those narratives invariably translate into unrelieved social critiques clearly directed at the mainstream society.

Regarding the commercial failures of *Address Unknown* and Kim's other films, Myung Ja Kim contends that the mainstream, still unwilling to shake hands with Kim Ki-duk, keeps on alienating his critiques as "the unspeakable." Kim explains:

> By unveiling the fallacious reasoning of those who seek to marginalize others, the director challenges the ideology and cultural assumptions of middle-class, mainstream Korean society. For Kim Ki-duk, filmmaking is a process of "kidnapping the mainstream into his own space, then introducing himself as a fellow human being who asks to shake hands" (biography). The mainstream does not seem to be willing to shake hands with him, however, as proven by the commercial failure of *Address Unknown* and his other films. Ironically, the very reason he was rejected makes him one of the most important film directors in contemporary Korean cinema. He says *the unspeakable* and touches *the untouchable*."[69]

In *Address Unknown* "the unspeakable" or "the untouchable" revives through the grim realities surrounding the camptowns that most Korean people feel uncomfortable and want to ignore. Using various sensual elements embedded in the narrative, the film conjures up the wretched image of the traumatized nation. The tragedy of Chang-guk's mother and Eun-ok in particular refreshes a painful memory ingrained in the national consciousness: the death of Yun Geumi, a former camptown prostitute brutally murdered by an American GI in 1992. Yun's death, though it was by no means the first case of its

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Kim, "Race, Gender, and Postcolonial Identity in Kim Ki-Duk's *Address Unknown*." *Italic* emphasis added.

kind, drew unusual degree of attention thanks to the news media so that the incident became a pivotal case in the history of anti-U.S. movement in South Korea.[70]

Despite the increasing popularity of unfavorable images of the U.S. especially among younger generations, most surveys during the 1990s have consistently found that the majority opinion among South Koreans still favored alliance over nationalism.[71] According to Jinwung Kim, this view reflects the long-held belief that USFK has served South Korea vital interests by protecting economic prosperity, democracy, and human rights.[72] Although many South Koreans resent the "unnatural effects" of the American military presence and feel ashamed to rely on foreign troops for their national security, they, says Kim, are "so accustomed to American protection" that they tend to regard any changes as "a dangerous betrayal of the ties between the two nations."[73] Even the sexual subordination of tens of thousands of Korean women by "Yangk'I foreigners" is considered as a "necessary evil" that they have had to endure to keep U.S. soldiers on

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[70] The media circulated the gruesome image of the victim—"naked, bloody, and covered with bruises and contusions with laundry detergent sprinkled over the crime site. In addition, a coke bottle was embedded in Yun's uterus and the trunk of an umbrella driven 27 cm into her rectum." Rainbow Center, "Rainbow News Letter," (January 1994). P. 8. Quoted in Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*. 21. Yun's death triggered a huge wave of anti-American protests in South Korea that led to the creation of anti-U.S. military organizations and crime watchdogs like the National Campaign for the Eradication of U.S. Military Crimes, "the first national organization formed to uncover, monitor, and demand official accountability for U.S. military crimes and abuses against Koreans. Katharine H. S. Moon, "Resurrecting Prostitutes and Overturning Treaties: Gender Politics in the "Anti-American" Movement in South Korea," *Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 1 (2007). 130. Although scholars of U.S.-ROK relations have noted that anti-American sentiment in South Korea since the late 1980s is a combinatorial effect of various complex reasons, few other single events have captured the public attention so intensely at the national level more than the death of Yun whose symbolic status has been transformed into a national victim.

[71] An opinion survey of seventy-two Korea experts in America also in which 68.0 percent of respondent were concerned about the rise of anti-American sentiment in South Korea only confirms the still marginalized status of anti-American discourse in the contemporary South Korean society. Jinwung Kim, "Ambivalent Allies: Recent South Korean Perceptions of the United States Forces Korea (Usfk)," *Asian Affairs* 30, no. 4 (2004).

[72] Ibid. 269.

[73] Ibid. 271.

Korean soil, calling it as "a compromise in national pride, all for the goal of national security."[74] Humiliation, as Katherine Moon puts it, is "a price paid by the "little brother in the alliance for protection by the "big brother."[75]

What is remarkable in this view is that still many people see the issue of camptown prostitution as not their own problem but someone else's. If South Korean viewers found little interest in *Address Unknown*, it can be attributed in most part to the alienation of camptown prostitution within the contemporary anti-American discourse in South Korea. In fact, camptown women have been "forced out of Korean consciousness" until quite recently. Katherine Moon offers useful insight into this historical marginalization of camptown prostitutes in Korean society.[76] The "unspoken" reason is that the camptown women colloquially known as *gijichon* women have represented "a limbo-status that South Korea has witnessed since the Korean War and during its rush-attempts at economic development."[77]

The 'limbo-status' of South Korea can be expanded to what Chungmoo Choi describes as the symptoms of 'colonial double discourse' that creates for colonized people "an illusion of living in the same social and cultural sphere as that of the metropolis, while it ruthlessly exercises a discriminatory politics of hierarchy."[78] Living on the same edge of both colonial and (post)colonial borderland, South Koreans, Choi

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[74] Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*., 8-9.

[75] Ibid. 9.

[76] Ibid. 8.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Choi, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea." 82.

explains, have adopted "the logic of modernization which privileges Western culture."[79] Choi continues to say, "For those who adopt such a world view, the lack of material resources to produce it is tantamount to an admission of one's own cultural inferiority. In this subaltern climate, the "postcolonial" Korean elite distinguish themselves as members of the privileged class by meticulously acquiring Western, that is, American culture."[80]

A common reference of American culture in *Address Unknown* is English. Obsessed with her dream to move to 'America,' Chang-guk's mother speaks English to other villagers, which only exacerbates her alienation from fellow Koreans. Also obsessed with English are the bullies who constantly molest Ji-hum often coercing him to speak in English. When Ji-hum fails, they continue to embarrass him and start beating him. Eager to improve their English, the bullies make frequent visits to the base trying to speak to the guards at the gate and buy American porno magazines like *Hustler* and *Playboy*. On one occasion, Chang-guk, finding the bullies harassing Ji-hum, knocks them down not only by force but also by his fluent English. Yet, the most critical message about English comes from Dog-eye who, chastising Chang-guk for not being cruel enough in his dog-butchering job, says, "I tell you it's no good to speak good English. If you do, you have to do whatever they tell you to do. Everything!"[81]

If Kim's critique of the 'colonial double discourse' in *Address Unknown* did not receive much appreciation in the mainstream, one particular strand of critique against the film deserves special attention. Feminist critics have furiously reacted to Kim Ki-duk

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Kim, *Address Unknown*. Translation by Juhwan Kim.

calling him a 'misogynist,' a 'monster', a 'psycho' and a 'good-for-nothing filmmaker.'[82] While much of their critique rests on the violence against women and the issue of agency, feminist critics also stresses the problematic positioning of gendered narrative within a national context. Indeed, this chapter has elaborated how the representation of women in *Address Unknown* reproduces the hegemonic discourse of gendered nationalism although the issue, far from a singular problem of an individual text, must be understood as a conflict/tension between nationalists and feminists, a common dilemma existing in many Third World (post/neo)colonial contexts including South Korea.

As Ranjoo Herr points out, most Third World feminists are suspicious of the nationalism despite the fact that they have frequently collaborated with nationalists in their pursuit of a common goal—national independence from a colonial power.[83] Their skepticism is largely due to the contradictions and complications that nationalisms have historically presented to Third World feminists just as Third World male nationalists have tended to consider feminist agendas secondary and even exploit the feminists only to abandon them in the end after the success of the nationalist struggle. No wonder that most contemporary Third World feminists regard nationalism as "detrimental" to feminism and some even seek to "eliminate nationalism from feminist discourse altogether".[84]

In his study on the growth of nationalist sentiment in colonial India, Partha Chatterjee emphasizes the rise of the 'neo-patriarchy' in the nationalist discourse of the

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[82] Hae-jin Lee, *Kim Ki-Duk, from Crocodile to Address Unknown* (Seoul: LJ Film, 2001). Quoted in Paquet, *New Korean Cinema : Breaking the Waves*. P. 89. Also see the interview in Adrien Gombeaud et al., eds., *Kim Ki-Duk* (Paris: Dis Voir,1998). 113-7.

[83] Ranjoo Seodu Herr, "The Possibility of Nationalist Feminism," *Hypatia* 18, no. 3 (2003).

[84] Ibid. 135. For feminist critiques of nationalism, see Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón, and Minoo Moallem, *Between Woman and Nation : Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999). Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies : Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

nineteenth century colonized India. He sees that patriarchal middle-class family was idealized as "the site of cultural and biological production": an imagined spiritual stronghold of anti-colonial struggle against the material superiority of the British colonizer and the producer of the offspring of the future.[85]

It is not evident that *Address Unknown* articulates the same ideal of neo-patriarchy although the narrative clearly sets up the mode of gendered nationalism. Comparing the Korean War films made in different time periods, Kyung Hyun Kim observes a fundamental difference between the 1960s and the post-1990s. Along with the shift in the ideological focus came a significant change in representation of gender and sexuality. Kim argues that the Korean War films during the 1960s were primarily concerned to revitalize "Korea's masculinity" that was substantially weakened when Korea's military sovereignty along with cultural subjectivity was relinquished to the United States upon the outbreak of the Korean War.[86] On the other hand, the post-1990s films 'demytholized' the heroes by projecting the images of men "who had lost their virility and authority during the war."[87]

In *Address Unknown*, a slight hint of the neo-patriarchal arrangement comes from Ji-hum who, after the deaths of Dog-eye and Chang-guk, emerges to be the only legitimate candidate as a new patriarch of the future. Still, Ji-hum's being under arrest forces him into the limbo status. While being transported to prison, Ji-hum notices the red

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[85] Partha Chatterjee, "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question," in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, ed. KumKum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990). Quoted in Chungmoo Choi, "Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea," in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*, ed. Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (New York and London: Routledge, 1998). 24.

[86] Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*. 79.

[87] Ibid.

bus on fire and escapes to rescue Chang-guk's mother. Once again, Ji-hum remains helpless with nothing to do but watch the bus disappear with Chang-guk's mother inside. In this respect, *Address Unknown* fits in the post-1990s South Korean national cinema that represents the nation's crisis through the characterization of traumatic males. Despite the film's unpopularity, *Address Unknown* added a critical voice to the contemporary discourse of national identity in South Korea where the issue of gender persists. Like in the film, as male authority dissipates, women too are consistently victimized, brutalized, and betrayed.

CHAPTER FIVE

Rescuing the Nation in Capture: Bong Joon-ho's *The Host* (2006) and the "Inspired Rebel"

Like Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown* (2001), *The Host*, Bong Joon-ho's 2006 film (aka *Gwoemul* in Korean title), reconstructs the national narrative based on the troubling conditions of contemporary South Korean society. Unlike *Address Unknown* that received a commercial failure in the market with some mixed reviews from critics, however, *The Host*, an all-time record breaker in South Korean film history, enjoyed an extraordinary success in both popular and critical areas at home and abroad alike.[1]

Following the central narrative of a family's heroic struggle to rescue a little girl nabbed by a freakish amphibian creature mutated into a monstrous carnivore, *The Host*, featured with many spectacles of special effects, much resembles Hollywood-made blockbusters.[2] However, much of the movie's strength derives from satirical allegories embedded in the narrative that are specifically pointed to critique social transformations of South Korea wrought by the Western influence, predictably that of the United States. *The Host*, in this respect, echoes 'modern articulations of Korean nationalism' which, according to Jin-kyung Lee, often depend upon the United States as an antagonistic

[1] *The Host* sold over 13 million tickets in South Korea, approximately 27% of the country's total population. Budgeted by $11 million, the film earned $97 million at home and $5.9 million at abroad. See Darcy Paquet, "'Host' Conquers Fears, Scares up Profits " *Variety* 12, no. March (2007).

[2] The computer generated special effects in *The Host* were produced by The Orphanage , a San Francisco-based company working for Hollywood films.

secondary term, with national identity constructed via the "continual shoring up of the sense of victimhood by Japanese colonialism and U.S. neocoloniality."[3]

In her article, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-ho," Christina Klein similarly contends that the "aura of victimhood" provides "a sense of emotional continuity" to a country that has experienced the traumatic ruptures of colonialism, civil war, foreign occupation, and national division.[4] Yet, *The Host* does not simply replicate the same rhetoric of victimization. Instead, the film reconfigures the structural dichotomy of the oppressor and the oppressed in a self-critical way. Most notably, the film leans toward presenting a positive image of man, "man not as the defeated and brooding figure that is the victim of society and history, but as the positive hero with wisdom and courage who defies the encroaching surroundings."[5] Distinguished from the dominant image of the "Walking Wounded" in Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown*, this specific image articulated in *The Host* reflects the transformation of national consciousness among South Koreans based on their heightened awareness of sociopolitical realities. Again, I insist that the United States Forces in Korea (USFK) has played a profound role in the transformation.

***The Host* and the 'Hybrid Culture'**

[3] Jin-kyung Lee, "Migrant Labor Activism and Re-Configurations of South Korea as a Nation and Transnation." (paper presented as the Association of Asian Studies, SanDiego, 2004). Quoted in Christina Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho," *American Quarterly* 2008. 877.

[4] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho."

[5] Kim, "Introduction."

Since the film's release in 2006, *The Host* has often been compared to classic monster movies such as *King Kong* (1933), *Godzilla* (1954), and *Jaws* (1975) while being praised as "one of the greatest monster movies ever made,"[6] Yet, *The Host* shows significant deviation from conventional monster movies.[7] A "genre-bending extravaganza," as one film critic describes it, *The Host* takes the form of a hybrid genre: a subtle mix of monster, horror, adventure, black comedy, drama, and etc. Another reviewer writing for *The New York Times* attributed the film's originality to this dissolution of genre convention:

> 'The Host' is a loose, almost borderline messy film, one that sometimes feels like a mash-up of contrasting, at times warring movies, methods and moods. Mr. Bong would as soon have us shriek with laughter as with fright. But it's precisely that looseness, that willingness to depart from the narrative straight and narrow that makes the film feel closer to a new chapter than a retread.[8]

Due to the film's resonances with other monster movies, some South Korean film critics disparage *The Host* as "Copywood."[9] Yet Klein, based on her analysis of the film, points out that *The Host* not only embodies Bong's ambivalent relationship to Hollywood genre films in a way that they "bears the marks of the equally ambivalent relationship between South Korea and the United States."[10] Emphasizing the significance of Bong's films for American studies scholars to better understand how transnational dynamics in

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[6] Logan Hill, "Three Steps: The New York Film Festival," *New York Magazine*, October 1 2006.

[7] Paquet, *New Korean Cinema : Breaking the Waves*. 106.

[8] Manohla Dargis, "It Came from the River, Hungry for Humans (Burp)," *New York Times*, March 9 2007.

[9] Mi Hui Kim, "'Copywood' Pix Pay Unwanted Hommage: Practice of Imitating H'wood Movies Is Being Debated," *Variety*(2003), http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117889185. Last Accessed on January, 22, 2011.

[10] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho." 872.

cultural exchanges work in terms of "circulation, appropriation, and indigenization," Klein explains that the value of *The Host* comes from the self-reflective criticism underlying the narrative. In other words, Bong, in his making of *The Host*, does "not simply mimic Hollywood" but "appropriates and reworks genre conventions, using them as a framework for exploring and critiquing South Korean social and political issues.[11] Klein says:

> [Bong] uses global Hollywood's language of genre to tell uniquely Korean stories. In doing so, Bong's films reveal the persistence of the national, and even its reinvigoration, not only amid the global but, more importantly, through the mechanisms of the global.[12]

Relevant to the 'hybrid' nature of *The Host*, Jeeyoung Shin notes that such hybridizing deployment of "appropriation and adaptation of foreign cultural influences" is a key characteristic of contemporary South Korean cinema since the 1990s.[13] Like Klein, Shin sees that young directors who have been deeply influenced by Western cultures and media have been successful in their creative approach to mixing indigenous cultural elements with regional and Western influences. More importantly, Shin adds, this particular mode of hybrid culture has enabled the films to respond critically to both national and transnational issues by providing an important means for their self-definition, "a self-definition that not only distances itself from a xenophobic and moralizing adherence to local cultural 'tradition' but also challenges Western cultural hegemony."[14]

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[11] Ibid. 873.

[12] Ibid. 874.

[13] Jeeyoung Shin, "Globalisation and New Korean Cinema," in *New Korean Cinema*, ed. Chi-Yun Shin and Julian Stringer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005). 57.

[14] Ibid.

The Creation of the Monster in *The Host*

Just like every fictional monster has the story of its origin, the amphibian mutant creature in *The Host* has its own. The opening scenes of the movie offer unmistakable references to its creation in two different parts. The first part begins inside a mortuary at the U.S. Eighth Army base in Seoul where an American officer, disturbed to see the dusty bottles of formaldehyde, orders a Korean staff to empty the unused bottles into the sink. Despite the staff's protest that drain directly streams into the Han River, a major source of drinking water for about 12 million people, the officer insists saying, "The Han River is very broad, Mr. Kim. Let's try to be broad-minded about this."[15] Overlapped by the scene of the bottles being poured into the sink (Figure 1), the second part of the origin story unfolds when a man fishing in the river picks up a tiny odd creature from the water that bites his hand and runs away. Several years later, a businessman commits suicide by jumping from a bridge into the river (Figure 2).

Figure 1 Formaldehyde being poured into the sink: *The Host* (2006)

[15] Joon-ho Bong, *Goemul [the Host]* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Magnolia Home Entertainment,, 2007), Videorecording.

Figure 2 Suicide of a businessman following the IMF crisis: *The Host* (2006)

Beyond their role as a creation myth, the significance of these scenes is that they are based on the real stories in recent history. Just as depicted in the film, in February 2000 Albert McFarland, a civilian mortician working for the US Army at Yongsan base, ordered one of his Korean subordinates to dispose 20 boxes of formaldehyde and methanol down a drain in the center of Seoul. The spill was not revealed until July 2000 when the Korean staff who had executed the order reported the case to Green Korea United, a leading environmental NGO in South Korea. The local news media immediately covered the case seriously, which, combined with some recent cases of crimes and violations by the USFK,[16] drove the public resentment into madness. *Chosun Daily*, the largest newspaper in South Korea also known for its conservative, pro-American stance, released an accusatory editorial in an unusually bitter tone with the title,

[16] Earlier in September 1999, a team of Associated Press reporters broke the news of the so-called '*Nogeun-ri* Massacre' that U.S. troops had killed a large group of South Korean civilians early in the Korean War. Charles J. Hanley, Sang-Hun Choe and Martha Mendoza were awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize in investigative reporting for breaking the story of No Gun Ri. See their book for more details. Hanley, Choe, and Mendoza, *The Bridge at No Gun Ri : A Hidden Nightmare from the Korean War*. In May 2000, American pilots on a drill accidentally dropped bombs in a civilian residential area near *Maehyang-ri* training camp.

"Do They Poison the Potomac?"[17] Another editorial in *Korea Times* echoed the same bitterness asking, "Are Koreans disposable people?"[18]

The opening of *The Host* clearly indicates a historical connection between the birth of the monster and the presence of the U.S. military. The reference to the Han River spill should be situated in the context of anti-U.S. military demonstrations in South Korea at the time. The surge of anti-American tide in South Korea reached its peak in June 2002 when the U.S. military court acquitted two U.S. soldiers whose 50-ton armored vehicle ran over and killed two young middle school girls on a local road. In the following months, anti-American demonstrations staged in various locations at unprecedented scales as termed "the biggest anti-American protests the country has seen in recent years" by a BBC reporter.[19]

On May 4, 2006, a few months before the release of *The Host*, a violent confrontation occurred between the South Korean military and a large group of people who protested against expanding U.S. military base in Pyeongtaek following the Pentagon's recent plans for reorganizing the USFK. The South Korean military was deployed for the first time since the 1980 Kwangju massacre, and the demonstration ended up with over 200 people injured. Anti-U.S. military demonstrations continued in the following weeks. On May 13, 10,000 people staged a candlelight vigil in Seoul to call

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[17] Anonymous, "Editorial: Do They Poison the Potomac?," *Chosun Daily*, July 15 2000.

[18] Anomymous, "Editorial: Are Koreans Disposable People?," *Korea Times*, July 17 2000.

[19] "Korean Anger as Us Soldiers Cleared." Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2497947.stm. Last accessed on Nov. 21, 2010.

for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops. The next day, some 2,000 students marched from Seoul to Pyeongtaek, chanting, "Yankees go home! This is our land!"[20]

The suicide of a businessman in the second part of the film's opening episodes also contains a significant message about the monster's genealogy. In contrast with its first appearance as a tiny creature, the monster, upon its first open attack, appears overgrown suggesting a correlation between the suicide and the monster's growth.[21] As mentioned earlier, the financial crisis of South Korea in 1997 and the bailout by International Monetary Fund (IMF) had devastating effects on the South Korean society. In return for the original $57 billion package, the IMF demanded South Korea liberalization of trade, labor markets, and foreign investments. Following the IMF's initiative to introduce "effective market discipline," South Korean government launched to restructure its economy by cutting down the growth rate, facilitating foreign mergers and acquisitions, opening domestic markets, creating flexibilities in the labor market, and raising taxes and interest rates.[22] With all these reforms, mostly targeted against state-owned corporations, large financial institutions, and conglomerates, South Korean economic model was transformed into a neoliberal one, but the price of the transition was too high as sociologist Walden Bello recounts:

> The IMF has touted Korea as a "success story." However, Koreans hate the Fund and point to the high social costs of the so-called success. According to South

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[20] Natasha Persaud, "U.S. Base Expansion in Korea Sparks Protests," *PSLweb.org*(2006), http://www.pslweb.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=10523&news_iv_ctrl=1701&printer_friendly=1. Last accessed on December 2, 2010.

[21] Hsuan L. Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak," *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media* 51, no. Spring (2009), http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc51.2009/Host/text.html.

[22] Bruce Cumings, "The Korean Crisis and the End of `Late' Development," *New Left Review*, no. 231 (1998). 53.

> Korean government figures, the proportion of the population living below the "minimum livelihood income"—a measure of the poverty rate—rose from 3.1 per cent in 1996 to 8.2 per cent in 2000 to 11.6 per cent in early 2006. The Gini coefficient that measure inequality jumped from 0.27 to 0.34. Social solidarity is unraveling, with emigration, family desertion, and divorce rising alarmingly, along with the skyrocketing suicide rate.[23]

South Korea at that time lacked welfare system or any safety net that could buffer the effects of massive lay-offs and bankruptcies, and the austerity measures imposed by the IMF were literally disastrous to those who lost their jobs and businesses. Suicides in the Han River happened "almost every day," and this 'epidemic of suicides' by unemployed and bankrupt businessmen was often referred to as "IMF suicides" in the newspapers linking the "causes of their despair to the neoliberal structural adjustment under the pressure of the IMF.[24] The businessman's suicide in the movie thus makes a direct reference to the epidemic of Han River suicides following the IMF crisis.[25] In all, the openings scenes of the film, by juxtaposing the McFarland scandal and the IFM suicide, create the narrative context in which the monster is allegorized not only in terms of the neocolonial force of the US military but also in terms of the neoliberal force of capitalism also aligned with the United States.[26]

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[23] Walden Bello, "All Fall Down," *Foreign Policy in Focus*(2007), http://www.fpif.org/articles/all_fall_down. Quoted in Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak."

[24] Joon-ho Bong, *Audio Commentary* (New York: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2007), Videorecording.

[25] A longer account of the suicide has been edited out of *The Host*, and it explicitly points to the victim's bankruptcy and exorbitant credit card debt as motives for his death. Joon-ho Bong, *Deleted News Clips* (New York: Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2007), Videorecording.

[26] Bong is not alone to problematize the logic of the neoliberal globalization. The tensions and phobias generated during and after the 1997 financial crisis have been one of the frequent subjects in contemporary South Korean cinema. Director Park Chan-wook whom Rob Wilson calls "a king of "IMF-noir" (a term coined by Jin Suh Jirn) is perhaps the best known filmmaker in this case. Park's *Old Boy* (2003) in particular dramatized traumatic symptoms of a neoliberal capitalistic society focusing on the issues of class and gender conflicts. See Rob Wilson, "Killer Capitalism on the Pacific Rim: Theorizing Major and Minor

The Han River, Miracle, and *The Host*

The significance of the Han River as the main spatial setting of the film is that it locates the narrative within "a nationally resonant landscape."[27] Running through the city of Seoul, the capital of South Korea, the Han River has played a central role in Korean history from earliest times, and it represents a symbol of national pride and the spirit of South Korean people. The 'Miracle on the Han River,' is a phrase that refers to the dramatic transformation of South Korea from the ashes of the Korean War to a highly developed country today. The Han River represents economic, social, political, and cultural changes in accordance with rapid industrialization, technological achievement, urbanization, modernization, education boom, and successful hosting of the 1988 Summer Olympics and 2002 FIFA World Cup, fast democratization, and globalization.

The role of the United States behind the extraordinary economic growth of South Korea should be acknowledged. The U.S. has directly engaged the creation and preservation of the Republic of Korea: it divided the Korean peninsula into a communist North and a capitalist South (1945), governed South Korea through military occupation (1945-1948), helped Syngman Rhee return and become the first president of the Republic of Korea (1948), waged the Korean War on behalf of South Korea (1950-1953), and sponsored the postwar reconstruction of the South through military and economic aids. The US military presence in South Korea, in particular, proved vital by promising

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Modes of the Korean Global," (Duke University Press, 2007). 127. Quoted in Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak."

[27] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho." 886.

protection from the communist North whose presence by itself has been a fundamental risk factor against the economic development of South Korea.

The irony is that the United States, despite its huge contribution to the dramatic growth of South Korean economy, no longer holds the favorable ground in South Korea if it did in the past. South Korea's relationship with the United States, as Klein correctly observes, can best described as "ambivalent."[28] This is not to deny that official ties remain remarkably secure, and many South Koreans in their gratitude to the United States still maintain friendly views of Americans. Yet, supporters and critics are sharply divided in defining the relationship between the two countries either as "a close alliance" or "neocolonial one."[29] Many analysts have pointed to South Korea's democracy as a source of public anti-Americanism and anti-base sentiment.[30] Long suppressed by authoritarian rule, many South Koreans associate the U.S. with previous non-democratic systems of government and their human rights violations in the interests of maintaining political stability.[31] Klein summarizes:

> While most Koreans felt gratitude for its military and economic support through the 1970s, anger toward the United States for supporting the authoritarian military regime of Chun Doo Hwan (1980-1988) became a key feature of the pro-democracy (1988-1997), as Washington pushed for neoliberal economic reforms that many Koreans saw as benefiting the United States more than Korea. Suddenly, ordinary Koreans, and not just radical students, began to question the terms of their relationship with the United States. Korean ambivalence can be seen today in the mixed responses to the U.S. plan to reduce its military presence in Korean and to the 2007 Free Trade Agreement, with divergent attitudes shaped by both political affiliation and economic class. In the end, the close relationship

[28] Ibid., 874.

[29] Ibid., 875.

[30] See Shin, "South Korean Anti-Americanism: A Comparative Perspective."

[31] Alexander Cooley, "Democratization and the Contested Politics of U.S. Military Bases in Korea," *Journal of International Politics* 10, no. 2 (2005). 209-10.

> between the two countries has produced among Koreans both a pervasive orientation toward the United States in economic and cultural matters, and a deep resentment of the fundamentally unequal terms of that relationship.[32]

A key to understanding the irony can be found in Parks, the protagonist family in *The Host* whose presence also mirrors South Korea's recent history in a different angle. One thing that might go unnoticed about the family is that their means of living suggests an important thing about their past. Preparing the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, the South Korean government launched an ambitious project of remodeling the city under the name of 'beautification campaign' aimed at cleaning-up slums by which many poor working class people were relentlessly forced to relocate themselves. The right to operate a snack booth along the bank of the Han River was the sole compensation provided to residents of the Sanggye-dong slum, a northeast suburb area of Seoul, after their neighborhood was leveled down.[33] Attached with the experience of poverty, dislocation, and marginalization, the lives of the Parks therefore reflect their subaltern class in contemporary South Korean society, those who have not shared the benefits of economic developments.

At the same time, each member of the Parks across three generations is linked with a distinctive period of national history.[34] Hee-bong, the grandfather who runs the snack booth represents an old timer of "the 1960s patriarch who struggled to raise his family amidst poverty."[35] Gang-du, Hee-bong's eldest son who appears to be slow-witted, can be juxtaposed with traumas of the 1970s, the era of harsh dictatorship by Park Jung-

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[32] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho." 875.

[33] *Sanggye-dong Olympics*, a 1988 documentary film by Kim Dong-won based on the stories of dislocated people, features a political satire against the violence of the government.

[34] Paquet, *New Korean Cinema : Breaking the Waves*. 106.

[35] Ibid.

hee that entailed so many cases of human rights violation including torture and killing of political dissidents. Nam-il, Gang-du's younger brother, is a college graduate who used to a student activist and thus identified with the 1980s, an era of democratization movement against the repressive government under Chun Doo-hwan.

Unlike Gang-du and Nam-il, both depicted as underachievers (a useless layout and a chronically unemployed recalcitrant respectively), Nam-joo, Hee-bong's only daughter, is a competitive amateur archer. A perfect candidate for Olympic medalist, Nam-joo, however, has yet to overcome a significant handicap that she often fails to shoot on time. Nam-ju, in this sense, can be aligned with the 1990s when South Korea encountered a transformative crisis along with significant economic, political, and social developments. Finally, Hyun-seo, Gang-du's motherless daughter and the jewel of the Parks who is a middle school student represents the 2000s. Despite the limited focus on her character compared to others, Hyun-seo stands out in all positive ways throughout the movie as she maintains to be reasonable, balanced, and even courageous.

The Han River, Crimes, and the Monster

The significance of the relationship between the protagonist family and the Han River, the primary location of the narrative, can be elaborated in association with the family's struggle against the monster, a Hobbesian leviathan that comes to represent various forms of domination (Figure 3). On its first deadly attack, the monster preys on the hapless citizens who come out to the riverside to enjoy a beautiful summer day, but it takes a particular toll on the Parks after Hyun-seo, the jewel of the family, gets snatched away. When the family mourns the loss of Hyun-seo assuming her to be dead, a special

team of agents dispatched by the government arrives and takes the family away to the hospital where they confine Gang-du into a quarantine claiming that he must have been infected with a deadly unknown virus that the monster carries. That night, Hyun-seo, who happens to be alive trapped in a deep sewer pit somewhere under a bridge, manages to make a phone call to Gang-du, and the Parks, united for the sake of Hyun-seo's life, set in motion to the rescue against all odds.

Figure 3 Monster coming out of the Han River: *The Host* (2006)

As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that the monster is not the ultimate problem that the family has to deal with. While the monster gradually retreats into the background and remains rather inactive for the rest of the movie, the real enemy seems to lie elsewhere though it cannot be simply identified as a single entity. In fact, Parks' plight gets aggravated by various forces that collaborate to stymie the family's search for Hyun-seo. The government continues to mislead Parks and the public as well with the threat of the unknown 'deadly virus.' A news clip confirms that the U.S. sergeant who fought the monster has been diagnosed of a skin infection, and the government declares the Han River area a biohazard zone where it deploys the military to control the citizens'

movements and contacts. The United States and World Health Organization (WHO) announce a policy of direct intervention citing the failure of the Korean government to adequately quarantine the infected." The US Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC) gets involved too in the disinformation campaign about an "Asian flu virus." The police and hospital staffs ridicule the family's pleading that Hyun-seo is still alive and refuse to release them to hunt for her.

As they realize that the authorities have little but contempt for them, Parks begin to move on their own only to encounter similar obstacles. Hee-bong, the grandfather, recruits a group of scoundrels who assist the family to escape from the hospital and provide tools and weapons for which they force him to pay his lifetime savings. A local government official who mistakes the family for fumigation contractors demands bribery as commission charge. In another episode, Nam-il's old friend, another veteran of student activist for democratization, betrays Nam-il. Unlike Nam-il who has been unable to find a job due to his 'radical' career, his friend who "traded in his political idealism for a high-paying job" works for a major telecommunication company located in a high-rise building.[36] While this friend promises Nam-il to help him locate Hyun-seo's whereabouts, his real purpose is to turn over Nam-il to the police in return for the reward, "money that he needs to pay off the staggering credit card debt he accrued in his climb into the middle class."[37]

All these episodes complicate the original trope of the conflict between the Parks and the monster, and moreover, they shift the film's plot from the conventional military

[36] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho."

[37] Ibid. 889.

confrontation with a monster to a more abstract struggle. As the distinction between the monster and the society blurs, the whole process of the Parks' search for Hyun-seo reveals "the deep crime that suffuses contemporary Korean life" beneath the surface of the modern metropolis.[38] The recurring image of the South Korean government as being authoritarian, inept, uncaring and even exploitative toward its own citizens highlights the cruelty in the bureaucratic and capitalist modernity, "the end result of Korea's compressed modernization."[39] In the same way, the mutant creature in *The Host* represents all the monstrous realities lurking in the contemporary Korean society that the so-acclaimed 'Miracle on the Han' has engendered.

As Klein notes, "the deepest crime" that *The Host* uncovers is profoundly entangled with Korea's relationship with the United States.[40] The morgue scene in the prologue, for example, not only profiles a view of South Korea's subordinate status to the United States but also dramatizes "a political posture of subservience."[41] Later in the film, Gang-du is recaptured by the police and quarantined into a mobile facility. Gang-du overhears an American doctor confiding to his Korean American assistant that no virus has been ever detected even in the body of the American sergeant who, contrary to the government's allegation, died of a shock during the operation. The American doctor insists that the virus must be inside Gang-du's brain upon which a team of Korean medical staffs dutifully executes a violent probe into Gang-du's brain searching for the

[38] Ibid. 888-9.

[39] Ibid. 889.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid. 890.

virus. This particular scene critically caricatures Korean people's passive and even willing submission to hegemony of the United States and its catastrophic consequences.

The film's critique on the neocolonial state of South Korean society is already implied in its title. Whereas *Gwoemul*, the film's original title in Korean language, can be simply translated as 'a monstrous creature,' the term 'host' used for international audience encompasses more complex meanings so that they reconstitute the identity of the monster and the nature of its real threat.[42] The name associates various tropes of 'invasion' with the discourse of dominance running through the narrative. The military connotation of the 'host' refers to the presence of the USFK and its key role in securing hegemony of the United States. In another sense, the monster takes the shape of 'a contagious disease' suggesting that South Korea has rendered itself to "a 'host' country to a parasitic United States."[43] A commentator's note spells out the same paradox echoing the critical undertone of neocolonial conditions in South Korea: "Isn't South Korea playing host, arguably against the interests of its citizenry, to the U.S. military and to foreign investors who have no interest in the nation's social fabric?"[44]

In "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak," Hsuan Hsu defines the film as "a satirical outbreak narrative" underscoring the discourses

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[42] An online dictionary defines the noun 'host' as follows: "a person who receives or entertains guests, esp in his own home; a country or organization which provides facilities for and receives visitors to an event; the compere of a show or television programme; an animal or plant that nourishes and supports a parasite; an animal, esp an embryo, into which tissue is experimentally grafted; a computer connected to a network and providing facilities to other computers and their users; the owner or manager of an inn; a great number; multitude; an archaic word for army. See host. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/host (accessed: November 22, 2010).

[43] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho." 890.

[44] Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak." Page number unavailable.

of biosecurity that are at once "nationalist in sensibility and transnational in scope."[45] Hsu argues that *The Host*, by showing how paranoid narratives of epidemiological outbreak mask the neoliberal economic reforms, presents "an incisive critique of the racial, colonial, and liberal presumptions that underlie the outbreak narrative."[46] Over the past decade, a series of biological and environmental threats such as SARS, avian flu, mad cow disease, and the West Nile Virus have raised the issue of public health crisis a prominent issue in debates about international security. Since the Al Qaeda's September 11 attack against the United States in 2001, the possibility of bioterrorism has dramatized the fears of biological epidemics to xenophobic anxieties about the increasingly flimsy borders of nations and bodies. One can also see that biosecurity has become a popular theme in cultural productions like popular nonfiction, novels, and films, often classified in the names of "biothrillers," the "killer virus novel," and the "outbreak narrative."[47]

According to Priscilla Wald who has been studying the cultural representation of contagion in the U.S., the "outbreak narrative" that has been proliferated in the United States since the late 1980s is aimed at reclaiming modernity represented by the U.S. through the triumphs of American public health officials and scientists.[48] The metanarrative in this case takes a generic course of the following example: "an increasingly interconnected world disturbs the lair of an archaic entity, a virus depicted as lying in wait, and thereby brings modernity itself into conflict with a forgotten past, emblematized by a disease against which contemporary technology is (initially)

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Priscilla Wald, "Future Perfect: Grammar, Genes and Geography," *New Literary History* 31, no. 4 (2000). Quoted in Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak."

ineffective: the return of a colonial repressed."[49] Similarly, Nicholas King in "Security, Disease, Commerce: Ideologies of Postcolonial Global Health" emphasizes that outbreak narratives have bolstered global health initiatives by the United States which in fact reflect its economic motives in surveilling and managing epidemiological risks throughout the developing world.[50] A 1997 report by the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine clearly declares, "America has a vital interest and direct stake in the health of people around the globe . . . . Our considered involvement can serve to protect our citizens, enhance our economy, and advance US interest abroad."[51]

At deeper levels, such 'outbreak narratives' enforce racial implications too. While exaggerating both the threat posed by emerging infectious diseases and the efficacy of Western science in treating them, the contemporary discourse of biosecurity in outbreak narratives replicates much of western ideology of race reminding us of what Edward Said has outlined as 'Orientalism' that has provided for the West the ontological and epistemological distinctions between the 'Self' and the 'Other' depending on the 'deep and recurring image of the Other' as mysterious, erotic, dark, and impure and dangerous.[52] That this Oriental 'Other' is often lurking in various figures threatening the

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[49] Wald, "Future Perfect: Grammar, Genes and Geography." 690-1.

[50] Nicholas B. King, "Security, Disease, Commerce: Ideologies of Postcolonial Global Health," *Social Studies of Science (Sage)* 32, no. 5/6 (2002).

[51] Board on International Health, "America's Vital Interest in Global Health: Protecting Our People, Enhancing Our Economy, and Advancing Our International Interests," (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Medicine, 1997). Quoted in King, "Security, Disease, Commerce: Ideologies of Postcolonial Global Health." 771

[52] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). 3.

identity of the West requires a 'Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.'[53]

The history of the United States offers ample evidence of how the elements of contagion, infection, and diseases running through the contemporary outbreak narratives have been employed to racial formation as a discursive basis of discrimination against racial and ethnic minority groups. Robert Lee, in his study of popular representation of Asian or Asian American people in the U.S., finds that Asian Americans, whether immigrants or native born, have been subject to a variety of overlapping stereotypes that label them as "not American."[54] The six dominant stereotypes Lee identified in this case are "the pollutant," "the coolie worker," "the deviant," "the yellow peril," "the model minority," and "the gook."[55] One thing that penetrates these seemingly disparate images is that they all treat Asian Americans as the consummate outsider and alien body that serve no purpose except to threaten the Anglo-Saxon national family in America. In particular, the concept of Asian Americans as 'pollutant' highlights the racialized discourse of national identity in the U.S. that draws on the very idea of Americans as a family.[56]

An important thing to consider in reading *The Host* as a satirical parody of the traditional outbreak narratives is that the emergence and characteristics of the virus in the film are from the outset "extraterritorial in nature" as opposed to their physical location in

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Robert G. Lee, *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, Asian American History and Culture (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).

[55] Ibid. 8-12.

[56]This very concept originated in mid-nineteenth- century California where the increasing presence of Chinese workers was often portrayed as a serious threat to building "a white republic," ibid.2-9.

Seoul.[57] In other words, the alleged symptoms of infection first develop in the body of an American GI as a result of his contact with the monster, the host of the virus created by U.S. toxic waste. The medical examination and the treatment of the American patient occur inside a "U.S. military hospital" with assistance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for further analysis. Throughout the procedure, all information is possessed by U.S. institutions that manage it in secret. A US military physician who appears in a news report bothers to ensure this by saying, "I can't give any of that information without the approval of the U.S."[58]

After repeated failures to confirm the virus, the U.S. authorities deploy a special biochemical solution for detoxification called Agent Yellow. For its namesake, Agent Yellow refers to the Agent Orange, the code name for one of the herbicides and defoliants used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. It is known that the U.S. military from 1961 to 1971 sprayed 20,000,000 gallons of chemical herbicides and defoliants in Vietnam, eastern Laos, and parts of Cambodia in order to defoliate forest and rural land so they could not only deprive guerrillas of cover but also destroy their rural support base and food supply.[59]

The damage inflicted by Agent Orange has turned out much worse than anybody thought at the end of the war. A rough estimate by the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates that about 4.8 million Vietnamese people were exposed to Agent Orange, resulting in 400,000 people being killed or maimed, and 500,000 children born

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[57] Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak."

[58] Chun-ho Pong et al., *Koemul the Host* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Magnolia Home Entertainment,, 2007), videorecording.

[59] Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War : Vietnam, the United States, and the Modern Historical Experience*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985). 144-5; Steven D. Stellman et al., "The Extent and Patterns of Usage of Agent Orange and Other Herbicides in Vietnam," *Nature* 422, no. 17 (April 2003). 681-7.

with birth defects.[60] As a June 2004 article from BBC News reports, the ecological and biological devastation that it caused is still an ongoing matter while "the scourge of dioxin contamination" continues to haunt the victims.[61]

Citizens of Seoul come out to protest the deployment of Agent Yellow at the Han River, a scene that evokes the democratization protests of the 1980s. Despite the protest, Agent Yellow, notwithstanding its being at experimental stage, gets released as scheduled causing a chaos amidst the crowd, one of the most terrifying moments throughout the film. Interestingly enough, the outward appearance of the yellow container, just before it releases the biocide, resembles an earlier image of the monster hanging on the bridge (Figure 4, 5). The implication is unmistakable: the mutant monster and the Yellow Agent are of the same origin.

Figure 4 Agent Yellow on TV: *The Host* (2006)

[60] Geoffrey York and Hayley Mick, "Last Ghost of the Vietnam War," *The Globe and Mail*, July 12 2008.

[61] Tom Fawthrop, "Vietnam's War against Agent Orange," *BBC News*, June 14 2004. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/3798581.stm. Last Accessed on December 12, 2010.

Figure 5 The first appearance of the monster hanging on the bridge: *The Host* (2006)

The 'Inspired Rebel' and the Family

The historical and discursive background of *The Host* opens up a critical space for neocolonial realities in South Korea where the Parks' journey, a daunting, exhausting, and even impossible task, can be located as a counter-hegemonic struggle both against the U.S. and South Korea tied in alliance. It is in the same venue that the Parks' mobilization, as is dramatic from nothing but a dysfunctional gang to a unified troop of rebellion, comes to represent the transformation of national consciousness.

The transition can be best explained by the distinct images of man, the "Walking Wounded" and the "Inspired Rebel" that Chong-un Kim has identified in his analysis of the postwar Korean literature. While the image of the "Walking Wounded" is characterized by the "huddled and uprooted figure dumbfounded by the sense of universal and irrevocable loss," unable to function in the society, and thus relegated into superfluous human beings, one that looms heavily in Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown*, the Parks in *The Host* evolve from that into the "Inspired Rebel," a more affirmative

image of man—"man not as the defeated and brooding figure that is the victim of society and history, but as the positive hero with wisdom and courage who defies the encroaching surroundings" (Figure 6).[62]

Figure 6 Parks and the "Inspired Rebel": *The Host* (2006)

What inspired the Parks to become the rebel still remains an important question, and again according to Chong-un Kim, it can be attributed to heightened social and political consciousness that also relates to cultural awareness. The image of the "Inspired Rebel," Kim explains, emerged out of the turbulence of the sociopolitical arena of the early 1960s when a group of writers began to spell out a new voice shaped by the experience of the April 19 revolution in which the autocratic regime by Syngman Rhee finally collapsed after the massive student protest.[63] Vindicating the spirit of justice and

[62] Kim, "Introduction." xxii.

[63] Ibid. xxiii.

self-rule, that memorable event had instilled them a sense of "self-confidence," "pride," and "awareness of possibility."[64] At the same time, many intellectuals pointed to "the wholesale influx of foreign ideas and way of life" behind the shabbiness of Korean culture of that day, often epitomized in the epithet, "the chewing-gum culture" and saw it as the cause of national plight.[65] This naturally led to a heightened historical consciousness linked with the sociopolitical consciousness.

More recently, the rise of nationalism in South Korea since the late 1980s can be put into the same perspective. Explaining the changing sociopolitical dynamics, scholars have identified various factors, both domestic and international, among which most commonly cited ones are the end of the Cold War, South Korea's transition to democracy, U.S. policy toward North Korea, economic conditions in South Korea, demographic changes, historical legacies, cultural factors, media influence, the Asian financial crisis, and the positions of Korean political leaders.[66]

Throughout this study, however, I emphasize that the role of the USFK in the development of nationalistic discourse within the contemporary South Korean society. As in the cases of McFarland incident and the running of two school girls by tank, some sensational offenses involving U.S. military personnel have provided a critical momentum for anti-American movement in South Korea. Combined with a consistent view of U.S. military presence as the breach of sovereignty, the growing sensitivity

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[64] Ibid. xxii-iii.

[65] Ibid. xxiii.

[66] See Chang Hun Oh and Celeste Arrington, "Democratization and Changing Anti-American Sentiments in South Korea," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 2 (2007). Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea : Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy*, Studies of the Walter H Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006). Katharine H. S. Moon, "Korean Natonaism, Anti-Americanism, and Democratic Consolidation," in *Korea's Democratization*, ed. Samuel S. Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

among Korean population to the problematic nature of the U.S.-South Korea alliance as manifested in the debate over the SOFA resulted in a significant shift in the national consciousness. In their struggle for resolution to historical traumas of exploitation, injustice, and victimization South Korean people have come to appreciate alternative narratives that address the primary agency of South Korea with more powerful images of themselves as a people and a nation.

The trope of the family in *The Host* provides the discursive basis, and it not just serves as a primary metaphor of the nation but also enacts an important subversive strategy of decolonization. If 'nation' can be best understood as an "imagined community," one of the most popular and enduring concepts for an imagined nationhood is 'family,' one that immediately structures nationality as fictive kinship, a common ancestry.[67] For the most part, family is the principal social unit through which the individual can become a national subject, a member of the community through birth, adoption, marriage.

Just as the idea of Americans as a family has reverberated through the history of the United States as an ideological apparatus to maintain the hegemonic status-quo, Koreans have maintained a strong sense of nation based on shared blood and ancestry. According to Gi-Wook Shin, the very notion of 'Korea as a unitary nation of ethnic homogeneity' took root in the early twentieth century when Koreans, faced with imperialist encroachments, sought to show its autonomy and uniqueness. The need to assert the distinctiveness and purity of the Korean nation grew even more important under colonial rule, especially as Japan attempted to assimilate Koreans into their empire

[67] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

as "imperial subjects."[68] Shaped by colonial racism, the theory behind the Japanese assimilation policy was that Koreans and Japanese were of common origin, far from being equal though, with the former always subordinate to the latter. This in fact justified colonialist policies to replace Korean cultural traditions with Japanese ones.[69]

No wonder that Koreans resisted by asserting their unique and great national heritage, and it is still remarkable that thirty six years of Japanese rule did not weaken Koreans' national consciousness but rather reinforced their claim to "a truly distinct and homogeneous ethnic identity."[70] The same sense of national consciousness remained intact after the independence and throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Even today, Koreans maintain a strong sense of ethnic homogeneity based on shared blood and ancestry, and nationalism continues to function as a key resource in Korean politics and foreign relations with both positive and negative potential. Shin cautiously explains:

> Ethnic national identity has been a crucial source of pride and inspiration for people during the turbulent years of Korean's transition to modernity that involved colonialism, territorial division, war, and authoritarian politics. It has also enhanced collective consciousness and internal solidarity against external threats and has served Koreans modernization project as an effective resource. . . Ethnic nationalism will remain an important organizing principle of Korean society. We cannot ignore ethnic national identity or treat it as a mere myth or fantasy. But neither can we remain simply content with its current role.[71]

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[68] Gi-Wook Shin, "Ethnic Pride Source of Prejudice, Discrimination," *The Korea Herald*, August 2 2006. Available at http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20060803000016. Last Accessed on January 12, 2011.

[69] Japanese assimilation policies included changing Korean names into Japanese, enforcing exclusive use of Japanese language in school, educating Japanese ethical system, and requiring Shinto worship, all of which were claimed to benefit Koreans in order for them to achieve equal status with the Japanese. Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

It should be mentioned that the same trope of family as a primary metaphor of nation is often cast as an institution antithetical to the nation too. A "curious paradox" named by Anne McClintock, this is because family "by natural decree" is seen as 'timeless' and 'unchanging' devoid of history and excluded from national power.[72] Indeed, family is commonly spoken of as a 'private' realm, as opposed to the 'public' space of the nation. However, as Ania Loomba correctly observes, in the colonial situation, the division breaks down as the family becomes both "the domain and the symbol of public anti-colonial activity."[73] Colonialism in its violent practices like slavery often broke up and appropriated families of colonized subjects. In such cases, family becomes a symbol of resistance.

In *The Host*, a vivid illustration of the mobilized family into a national struggle emerges during the film's climax when Gang-du, Nam-il, and Nam-ju, the three adult siblings of the Parks, launch their final assault on the monster amid a violent confrontation between the street protestors and Korean riot police. Their rendezvous is dramatic as they were forced to remain separated after Hee-bong, their father, was killed by the monster. Now reunited, the family becomes a powerful force of rebellion making deadly blows, one by one, against the staggering nemesis. Assisted by a homeless man who pours gasoline down the gullet of the creature, Nam-il throws flaming Molotov cocktails. When a bottle slips off Nam-il's hand and smashes at his feet, Nam-ju with perfect timing picks up the flaming cork with her arrow and shoots it right into the

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[72]Anne McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family," *Feminist Review*, no. 44 (1993). 63-4. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather : Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York ; London: Routledge, 1995). 357.

[73] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism-Postcolonialism*, The New Critical Idiom (London; New York: Routledge, 1998). 217-8.

creature's eye setting him on fire (Figure 7). Finally, Gang-du finishes him off with an iron pole sticking it into his mouth.

Figure 7 Nam-ju shooting a fire arrow on the monster: *The Host* (2006)

The image of a young man with a backpack throwing Molotov cocktails is deeply resonant for Koreans. It recalls the recent history of violent street protests that young Koreans have engaged in, from the pro-democracy protests in the 1980s through the anti-globalization and anti-free-trade protests of the early 2000s. Furthermore, the image surfaces "an undercurrent of anti-Americanism," as many of the protests aimed against the United States "either for supporting the repressive military regimes or for pushing a neoliberal economic agenda."[74] On the other hand, the image of Nam-ju holding her bow and arrow takes national overtones signaling to the fact that archery, a traditional Korean pastime, is a sport in which Korean men and women have been dominating in Olympic Games.

[74] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho." 887.

Nation and Gender in *The Host*

That the power of nation is reconstructed through Nam-ju, a female character, cannot be overestimated. As discussed in the previous chapter, the issue of national identity is often complicated by gender representation producing substantial tension within the anticolonial nationalistic discourse. In a different narrative context like *Address Unknown*, the same archery metaphor as a symbol of nation is an exclusively male practice; only male characters including Ji-hum's father and his friends, a group of patriarchs of the village, have the rights to playing archery. Nation in this case is imagined through the legacy of Confucian patriarchy, and the hegemonic gender structure not only contradicts the unity of the nation but also reproduces the violence of colonialism whose effects are then transferred to women and their bodies. In *Address Unknown* Ji-hum's relationship with Eun-ok reflects how this internal cross-dynamics of nation and gender vis-á-vis colonialism plays out in both colonial and anticolonial discourses.

Again, McClintock asserts that nations, despite the nationalisms' ideological emphasis on unity through family trope, have historically amounted to the "sanctioned institutionalization of gender difference,"[75] Similarly, Cynthia Enloe remarks that nationalisms have "typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope."[76] Even Frantz Fanon, whom McClintock regards as a notable case of male nationalist in that he explored how nationalism is implicated in gender power, has acknowledged the masculine paradigm in the course of

[75] McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family." 61.

[76] Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. 44. Quoted in McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family." 62.

(de)colonization. Fanon said, "The gaze that the colonized subject casts at the colonist's sector is a look of lust, a look of envy. . . The colonized man is an envious man. The colonist is aware of this as he catches the furtive glance, and constantly on his guard, realizes bitterly that: "They want to take our place.""[77] In "Algeria Unveiled," the opening chapter of *A Dying Colonialism* Fanon eloquently describes how women, gender relations as well as patterns of sexuality come to symbolize both the cultural 'essence' and cultural 'differences' for both the colonizer and the colonized:

> The officials of the French administration in Algeria, committed to destroying the people's originality, and under instructions to bring about the disintegration, at whatever cost, of forms of existence likely to evoke a national reality directly or indirectly, were to concentrate their efforts on the wearing of the veil, which was looked upon at this juncture as a symbol of the status of the Algerian woman. . . . Converting the woman, winning her over to the foreign values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving real power over the man and attaining a practical, effective means of destructuring Algerian culture.[78]

Despite the positive depiction of female characters, *The Host* still harbors some gender anxieties, if not the same kind as in *Address Unknown*. The most conspicuous characteristic of the family is the absence of mothers. Early in the film, Hee-bong insinuates that his wife, the mother of Gang-du, Nam-il, and Nam-ju, died early when her children were little. Gang-du's wife, on the other hand, has run away shortly after she gave birth to Hyun-seo abandoning her husband and daughter. The same problem of motherlessness extends beyond the protagonist family to Se-ju and his older brother, the

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[77] Frantz Fanon and Richard Philcox, *The Wretched of the Earth / Frantz Fanon ; Translated from the French by Richard Philcox ; Introductions by Jean-Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha* (New York: Grove Press, 2004). 5.

[78] Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1965). 37-9.

two orphan boys whom the Parks run across during their search for Hyun-seo in the sewers near the Han River (Figure 8).

Figure 8 Seju (right) and his brother: *The Host* (2006)

The lack of motherhood plays an important role in the film in that it not only stands for a critical weakness of the family but also generates anxieties that inevitably lead to the crisis of masculinity embodied by the male characters like Gang-du, Nam-il, and Hee-bong, their father. For instance, Gang-du whose apparent nonsense and incompetence are allegedly the symptoms of a neglected child also appears to be emasculated, mentally and physically. Hee-bong recollects, "And this poor boy with no mother. . . he must have been so hungry. Going around, doing 'seo-ri'[79] all the time. Raising himself on organic farms. Whenever he got caught, he'd get beaten up."[80]

In his outstanding study of *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*, Kyung Hyun Kim offers penetrating insights into how the terms of gender have been a critical

[79] Seori is the act of someone stealing farm products like watermelon, Korean melons, cucumbers or sometimes chickens. But in old Korean customs, it was considered to be children's mischievous activities for fun rather than criminal activities.

[80] Pong et al., *Koemul the Host*.

index in contemporary South Korean films in which mesmerizing social changes in recent decades are projected into "traumatic male figures who have lost their virility and authority."[81] According to Kim, the absence or marginalization of mothers in many films is an integral part of the narratives where the effects of the country's rapid industrialization are juxtaposed generally with the disintegration of traditional family and particularly against the endangered male subjectivity or masculinity:

> The absence of the mother is sometimes as crucial to the son as is her presence. That mothers are cast to the periphery in many of these films is hardly surprising given that frenzied postwar urbanization had seriously altered familial relations to a point where "mother," in their traditionally represented form, gradually disappeared from contemporary-milieu fictions. Yet this absence of the mother had hardly nullified her fascinating and spectral presence, which is structured around the male subject's unconscious desire to return safely to his place of origin.[82]

Oddly, the mutant creature in *The Host* comes to be aligned with the missing mother. Though it must be a necessity for the plot, the creature swallows the victims and 'delivers' them to its lair through its intricate, fleshy mouth, which resembles vagina. Hyun-seo who happens to come out alive is joined by Se-ju, and while they remain trapped in the deep lair, the creature does play host to the two children. Even when Hyun-seo attempts to escape, the creature tenderly restrains her without a clear indication of why (Figure 9).

During the climax, Hyun-seo and Se-ju swallowed by the creature again are pulled out of its mouth by Gang-du, a scene that resembles childbirth. A commentator has noted that the creature in this context stands for "an externalization of a model of

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[81] Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*. 6.

[82] Ibid. 6.

motherhood gone awry."[83] Indeed, the creature's maternal features with their implicit association with the shortcomings of a weak family that fails to provide for social reproduction are contextualized by the social crises of the post-IMF era. As mentioned earlier, neoliberal economic reforms led to social instability and rising rates of "emigration, family desertion, and divorce."[84] At the same time, the severe measures to introduce flexibility in the labor market proved "particularly deleterious for women" and therefore corrosive to households and families.[85]

Figure 9 The monster tenderly restraints Hyun-seo during her attempt to escape: *The Host* (2006)

In her book *The Monstrous-Feminine*, Babara Creed claims that the whole notion of the monster as represented in many classic horror films has been constructed in and

[83] Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak."

[84] Bello, "All Fall Down."

[85] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 112.

through gender difference and female sexuality.[86] Creed further argues that man fears woman as "castrator" rather than as "castrated," thus challenging the patriarchal view that conceptualizes women simply as victims.[87] Among other things, the female reproductive body is the prototype of all definitions of the monstrous. The monster in *The Host* certainly connotes the same fear of "the monstrous-feminine." Seen in this context, fighting the monster can be seen as an enactment of punishing the 'bad mother' manifested in the distressed functions of biological and social reproduction.

The battle against the monster reflects the anxieties about masculinity embodied by the incompetent Gang-du, his unemployed alcoholic brother Nam-il, and Hee-bong, the compliant patriarch who dies in a deflating manner after attempting to shoot the creature with an empty shotgun. Combined with their marginalized socioeconomic status, the absence of motherhood that in turn crystallizes into "the monstrous-feminine' exposes them to the crisis of masculinity. The abstract struggle to reassert manhood becomes concrete enough in a violent form of vengeance when Gang-du finally kills the staggering creature by sticking a metal pole into its mouth whose shape still suggests the symbol of female sexuality (Figure 10). This in turn reiterates a broader pattern of gender relations that Kyung Hyun Kim has observed in recent Korean films:

> Identifying the historical trauma as woman's monstrosity is one of the most popular remedies prescribed for male hysteria. The masculine constitution of the woman as the other in the form of volatile, impossible, and threatening in the realm of fantasy rescues the male identity that was awry under the constraints and the frenzy of the socio-political condition. . . . . Through the relegation of the political crisis onto the body of a woman, the male subjectivities in a modern

[86] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, Popular Fiction Series (London; New York: Routledge, 1993). 2-3.

[87] Ibid.

environment are born. The disfiguration of the woman covers up their incompetence and instability.[88]

Figure 3 Gang-du asserting his masculinity by killing "the monstrous-feminine": *The Host* (2006)

After the brutal climax of battle scenes including beating, shooting, burning, and impaling the mother-like creature, the ending of the movie plays out in a completely different mode seemingly offering an alternative resolution to the nation's broken families and ruptured social fabric. On a snowy night, Gang-du, still seated inside the food stand, looks out the window watching for signs of monsters with his shotgun ready next to him. Then he prepares dinner for a sleeping boy, Se-ju whom Hyun-seo tried to protect even at the cost of her own life. Just when the two begin enjoying the meal, a U.S. news channel on TV delivers a congressional report from the U.S. Senate on the final investigation of the virus incident in South Korea. Having no interest in the news, Gang-du, upon Se-ju's urge, turns off the TV to focus on eating, an act Klein reads as their

[88] Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*. 268-74.

refusal of "the hierarchical relationship with the United States" and the inversion of the social relations that the rest of the film has painfully documented.

As Hsu indicates, there are two "substitutions" at work in the film's epilogue: the substitution of Se-ju for Hyun-seo, Gang-du's lost daughter and Gang-du's own transformation "from a narcoleptic slacker into a responsible parent."[89] Running the food stand, ensuring the safety of the family, and also doing traditionally feminized domestic labor, Gang-du performs the roles of both his own dead father and the boy's absent mother. Also changed is Gang-du's hair that was once dyed-blonde but now is in natural black color. The 'weak' family at the center of the film has been expanded and strengthened through an act of adoption, an act that is particularly significant given the fact that South Korea has been one of the biggest suppliers of international adoptees.[90] An immediate aftermath of the Korean War, international adoption that was initially arranged for war orphans and G. I. babies of mixed race has been long maintained by South Korea's liberal transnational adoption policy despite the increasing criticism against the androcentric initiative by the state and its effects on both individuals and society. Eleana Kim explains:

> Adoptees and social activists in South Korea have criticized the state's continued reliance on international adoption as a social welfare policy solution. . . . and its complicity in the perpetuation of gendered inequalities. Birth mothers—often working-class women, teen mothers, abandoned single mothers, sex workers, and

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[89] Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak."

[90] According to the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, between 1953 and 2001 the number of Korean international adoptees amounts to 148,394 among which 99,061 came to the United States. Despite the noticeable decline in the number over the past couple of decades, South Korea, as of 2001, is still ranked at 3rd based on the number of children adopted into United States following China and Russia. Information available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_adoption_of_South_Korean_children; http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/FactOverview/international.html. Last Accessed on Feb. 21, 2011.

> victims of rape—represent the most subordinated groups in an entrenched patriarchy and misogynistic state welfare system.[91]

From this viewpoint, the "mundane yet unconventional" way of domestic harmony reconstructed in the film's epilogue through the acts of adoption, cooking, housework, and child-rearing by Gang-du relieves to some extent the gender anxieties caused by a palpable absence of maternal characters in the narrative and even seems to gesture towards progressive domestic conditions that, according to Seungsook Moon, would be necessary for the reformation of South Korea's masculinized public sphere.[92]

Discourse of Subalternity in *The Host*

Bong Joon-ho, referring to the characters that populate his films, said that they as "real people" are the sort of "people alienated from the system."[93] Obviously, Parks, the main characters in *The Host*, represent "somewhat loser characters who are quite ordinary."[94] That the Parks' lives are entangled with poverty, dislocation, and marginalization highlights the status of subordinate classes or the subaltern. The sociological range of the subaltern is also shaped by the film's geographical setting of the Han River and is also plotted in some other secondary characters including the orphan

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[91] Eleana Kim, "Wedding Citizenship and Culture: Korean Adoptees and the Global Family of Korea," *Social Text* 21, no. 1) (2003). 76.

[92] Seungsook Moon, "Women and Civil Society in South Korea," in *Korean Society: Civil Society, Democracy, and the State*, ed. Charles K Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 2002). 138. Quoted in Hsu, "The Dangers of Biosecurity: *The Host* and the Geopolitics of Outbreak."

[93] www.twitchfilm.com, "[K-Film Spotlight] Bong Joon-Ho Talks 괴물 (the Host),"(2006), http://twitchfilm.com/interviews/2006/07/k-film-spotlight-bong-joon-ho-talks-the-host.php.

[94] Scott Weinberg, ""Tiff Interview: The Host Director Bong Joon-Ho," *Cinematical* 13, no. September (2006), http://blog.moviefone.com/2006/09/13/tiff-interview-the-host-director-bong-joon-ho/. Last accessed on Nov. 28, 2010.

boys, Se-ju and his elder brother, and a homeless man who comes across to rescue Nam-il and joins him in the battle against the monster. The film's focus on the Parks family and various configurations of subaltern identity marked by conflicts both with other subaltern classes and with the hegemonic state presents a view of subaltern struggle within the contemporary South Korean society.

The discourse of subalternity in *The Host* is further implicated by Korean ideas of *minjung* that recurs at crucial junctures in Korean historiography. According to Han Wan-sang, a prominent Korean sociologist and the author of *Minjung Sahoehak* (Sociology of the Masses), *minjung* refers to "the people who are in the 'ruled' position even though they make up the majority." They "co-exist as a united group" although they never come from one single social stratum, but from many groups and strata. *Minjung*, says Han, are "the resistance force who boldly struggle against the unjust political power."[95] Originated in the domain of the 'people' or the 'masses' asserting their sovereignty at moments of resistance, the *minjung* movement, the chief engine of popular rebellions from the Tonghak Revolution of 1894, fueled by peasant disaffection, to the Kwangju student-led democratization protests in 1980 and June 1987 uprisings, has traditionally been viewed as "a form of populist nationalism."[96]

While the contemporary notion of *minjung* implies the same basic premises of power hierarchy, alienation, and resistance within a relationship between the rulers and the ruled or the dominant and the subordinate, Han theorizes the *minjung* broadly as three

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[95] Quoted in Hyung-a Kim, "Minjung Socioeconomic Responses to State-Led Industrialization," in *South Korea's Minjung Movement: The Culture and Politics of Dissidence*, ed. Kenneth M. Wells (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995). 39-59.

[96] Kenneth M. Wells and University of Hawaii at Manoa. Center for Korean Studies., *South Korea's Minjung Movement : The Culture and Politics of Dissidence*, Studies from the Center for Korean Studies (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1995). 1.

distinct groups: economically-, politically- and culturally-ruled people (*kyongjejok, chong-chijok, and munhwanjok minjung)* according to different modes of dominance exerted by elite groups. The first category includes those who, under the various authoritarian forces that held sway over the Korean peninsula—aristocratic, Confucian "yangban*"* classes, the colonial Japanese regime, the dictatorships of the post-war years—were effectively shut out from means of rule, i.e. the bureaucracy and military; the second, those who are excluded from economic networks of production, distribution and consumption; and the third, those who do not have access to "public recognition in the form of honor and prestige", deemed socially inferior to the recipients of advanced education and the shapers of so-called high culture.[97]

Among others, Gang-du, a lead character in *The Host*, stands out as he certainly fits in the categories; financially dependent, politically unaware, and culturally marginalized. A slow-witted, single parent, with a headful of bleached blond hair, an occupation in the lower tiers of snack-food retail, and the inability to effectively negotiate the social terrain outside his circumscribed everyday existence, Gang-du is subject to forces beyond his control or comprehension. At one point in the film, Gang-du, quarantined in a hospital ward and trapped in behind a film of protective plastic curtaining, tries a futile attempt to demonstrate to a pair of public health officials how his daughter may still be alive despite her recent abduction by an amphibian monster. He picks up a cell phone saying, "This is my daughter Park Hyun-seo. My daughter . . . I'm the creature." Putting the phone into his mouth, Gang-du continues, "I ate her. Okay? And then …" Spitting out the phone into a wastebasket, he asserts, "It happened like this."

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[97] Unknown, "Minjung and Monster: Modalities of Subalternity in Bong Joon-Ho's "the Host","(2010), http://jusdeananas.wordpress.com/2010/10/18/minjung-and-monster-modalities-of-subalternity-in-bong-joon-hos-the-host/. Last accessed on January 11, 2011.

Then he concludes with a plea, shaking the basket, "This is a sewer. You don't understand?"[98]

Figure 11 Gang-du at quarantine speaking through a half-transparent plastic screen: *The Host* (2006)

The sequence clearly shows the dilemma in which Gang-du is set at one remove from his interlocutor, and doubly displaced from the audience as he speaks through the half-transparent plastic barrier (Figure 11). Later in the film, Gang-du, again at the mercy of a group of medical personnel, tries to explain to an American bureaucrat his daughter's fate. When asked why he hasn't tried to contact the authorities, Gang-du answers through an interpreter, "Because nobody fucking listens to me." Then he breaks down crying, "Please don't cut me off. My words are words too. Why don't you listen to my words?"

According to Gayatri Spivak, the subaltern consciousness remains in many ways elusive to the praxis of history, or to its "elite" makers and writers, which, despite its attempted recuperation, "is never fully recoverable, . . . is always askew from its received

[98] Bong, *Goemul [the Host]*.

signifiers, indeed . . . is effaced even as it is disclosed."[99] Spivak described the subaltern studies project as "a task of measuring silences" of what a text cannot or refuses to say while the signifying silences, already hidden from privilege, intervene between the academic and the subaltern subject, and the access is mediated through "the texts of counter-insurgency or elite documentation that gives us the news of the consciousness of the subaltern."[100] From this viewpoint, Gang-du's plight, being trapped behind a distortionary screen which disfigures as much as it reveals and thus effectively obstructs modes of articulation both verbally and visually, suggests the irretrievable consciousness, and the silences of the subaltern.

Meanwhile, Nam-il whose character commemorates the iconic figure of the student activist, the slogan-chanting, stone-hurling idealist at the vanguard of numerous protest movements in the postwar era highlights the fundamental cleavage between an authoritarian state and its people, a key agenda in the modern *minjung* movement in South Korea. Deeply ingrained in South Koreans' collective memory, the Kwangju protest of 1980 marked the nadir of that tumultuous postwar period. The brief glimmer of hope for liberal democracy that followed President Park Chng-hee's assassination the previous year was abruptly blown out when Chun Doo-hwan, who had staged a military coup to become de facto head of the army, moving decisively to consolidate his position.

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[99] Gayatri Spivak, "Introduction, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructiong Historiography," in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). 11.

[100] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak? ." 286; Spivak, "Introduction, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructiong Historiography." 11.

On May 17, 1980, Chun declared martial law, shut down universities, dissolved the legislature, and outlawed all political activity.[101] Public anger erupted in the city of Kwangju, capital of South Cholla province and the home state of opposition figure (and future president) Kim Dae-jung. A large group of citizens took to the streets, chanting the slogan of "nation, democracy, and *Minjung*."[102] Chun reacted with appalling violence sending special troops to the city to quell the riots, which provoked a city-wide uprising. Nine days later, after the Twentieth Division of the ROK Army stormed the city, the death toll ran into the thousands.[103]

The evocation of *minjung* solidarity against repression was clearly set against the state, a neocolonial state to be more precise. The tensions which had contributed to the events of 1980 seemed to cut across both political and socio-economic lines, uniting a broad spectrum of the populace, in the name of social justice, against a common enemy, the pro-U.S. authoritarian state. It is the resurrection of this ideological consciousness that Nam-il embodies, a fraught history lurking behind the veneer of the current luxury of wealth and democracy. Chungmoo Choi points out the particular significance of the 1980 Kwangju *minjung* protest in light of South Korea's colonial history and the subsequent subaltern status:

> South Koreans did not awaken to the fact of their own subaltern condition until the popular uprising in Kwangju in 1980 led to a massacre of up to two thousand people by the military, allegedly connived or authorized by the U.S. commander, who led the UN forces. Franz Fanon had already warned that simply transferring the colonial legacy into the hands of the natives might result in the mimicking of

[101] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. 376-7.

[102] Yong Cheol Kim, "The Shadow of the Gwangju Uprising in the Democratization of Korean Politics," in *South Korean Democracy: Legacy of the Gwangju Uprising*, ed. Georgy Katsiaficas and Kahn-Chae Na (London & New York: Routledge, 2006). 113-33.

[103] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. 377-8.

> the colonial discourse by local bourgeois nationalists, because "the national bourgeoisie identifies itself with the Western bourgeoisie, from whom it has learnt its lessons." From this we may infer that the people of the former colony might have assumed a false sense of security created by the hegemonized bourgeois nationalists. This is exactly what blinded South Koreans to the reality of their subaltern status.[104]

Nam-il, who is now relegated into nothing but a 'loser,' bitterly recognizes his lack of prospects: "I sacrificed my youth for the democratization of our country and those fuckers won't even give me a job." However, the image of Nam-il during the final battle against the monster is powerful as the image of the Molotov cocktail inextricably tied to his role within the narrative. Based on Homi Bhabha's theory of politicization for the colonized, Nam-il's empowerment can be attributed to his peculiar subaltern position, "a position to subvert the authority of those who had hegemonic power."[105] Klein makes a similar observation that the climax enacts an alternative version of national identity, in which "Koreanness is expressed via figures of social and economic marginality and failure."[106]

The Host endorses subaltern groups including the Parks, not the agents of the Korean state, as "the morally legitimate embodiment of Koreanness."[107] Also noteworthy is that the family's problems suddenly become their strengths. Just like Nam-il's career as a student activist that has long prevented his finding a job puts him to good use, Nam-ju whose habitual failure to release her arrow on time cost her a gold medal in the national

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[104] Choi, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea." 86.

[105] Homi Bhabha, "Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism," in *Text and Nation: Cross-Disciplinary Essays on Cultural and National Identities*, ed. Laura Garcia-Moreno and Peter C. Pfeiffer (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996). 191-207.

[106] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho." 887.

[107] Ibid.

archery championship demonstrates the value of waiting for the right moment, and Gang-du's lack of intelligence and sensitivity enables him to face the creature boldly running the risk of his own life.

Bong Joon-ho, Audience, and *The Host*

Born in 1969, director Bong Joon-ho grew up in Seoul during the 1970s and 1980s watching a lot of Hollywood films which he "enjoyed greatly" more than anything.[108] Bong, however, saw most of the films not in theaters but on the Armed Forces Korea Network (AFKN), the U.S. military's TV channel, which, to borrow Klein's words, is "a classic example of the interdependence of military and cultural globalization."[109] Raised up in a middle class family with his father, an artist and a professor in graphic design and his mother who is a noted author, Bong attended Yonsei University, one of the most prestigious schools in South Korea where he studied in the Department of Sociology, "a famous hotbed for the democracy movement during the 1980s."[110] After graduating from Yonsei University in the early 1990s, Bong entered the Korean Academy of Film Arts, Korea's top film school, and after spending several years assisting other directors in various capacities, he made his directorial debut in 2000 with

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[108] "The Great Capone Interviews the Extra-Great Joon-Ho Bong! Director of the Super-Extra-Double Great the Host!!," Ain't It Cool News, http://www.aintitcool.com/node/31767?q=node/31781. Last accessed on January 12. 2011.

[109] Mark Russel, "Unlike His Peers, the Director Bong Joon-Ho Likes Ideas and Metaphors," *New York Times* 2006. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/28/movies/28russ.html?_r=1&/r. Last Accessed on November 18, 2010; Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho." 876-7.

[110] Russel, "Unlike His Peers, the Director Bong Joon-Ho Likes Ideas and Metaphors." Another highly regarded and provocative film director Im Sang-soo graduated from the same department at the same time although both Bong and Im said they never knew each other in those days. Director Park Chan-wook, one of Bong's close friends and colleagues attended Sogang University, just down the street, around the same time.

Barking Dogs Never Bite, a mediocre film compared to the two mega hits that awaited him, *Memories of Murder* and *The Host* released in 2003 and 2006 respectively.

Bong, who is known to have great interest in genre film confessed that he was a fan of American film directors such as William Friedkin, Steven Spielberg, Sam Peckinpah, and Francis Ford Coppola, "post classical filmmakers who reinvented Hollywood genres to address the grim realities of 1970s America."[111] Watching their movies, however, enabled Bong to develop a critical sense of Hollywood genres. At the same time, the radical political environment to which he had been exposed while in college influenced Bong who, instead of engaging in violent street protests against the military government and its supporters in Washington, discovered filmmaking where he sought to address the conflict. Bong recalls:

> Since I was young, I've watched a lot of American genre films, and enjoyed them greatly. At the same time, I feel that the conventions have been repeated to the point where they get extremely tired. Or the traditions are law within the genre, so I have a love/hate relationship with them. I think that inner conflict in myself comes out in my films. MEMORIES OF MURDER is a thriller, but we don't catch the criminal in the end. Likewise in this film, THE HOST follows many of the traditions of the monster genre, but at the same time they are being broken down and destroyed, so it is a schizophrenic thing of both following and not following the conventions.[112]

If Bong identifies the schizophrenic setting in his films as his stylistic signature, it also reflects his 'ambivalent' attitude toward the Hollywood films and by extension the influence of the United States. Bong has occasionally acknowledged that he wanted to

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[111] Klein, "Why American Studies Needs to Think About Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-Ho." 877.

[112] "The Great Capone Interviews the Extra-Great Joon-Ho Bong! Director of the Super-Extra-Double Great the Host!!."

"follow the genre conventions" but at the same time "break out and turn them upside-down" in order to open up a space for Korean realities:

> I'll follow the genre conventions for a while, then I want to break out and turn them upside-down. That's where the very Korean elements come in. My generation got inspired by watching foreign movies in the mid-'80s, when Korean cinema was swamped by imports and wasn't in a very good state. It's like you want to be influenced, but you don't want to be overwhelmed.[113]

In a public manifestation of his ambivalent attitude toward Hollywood and the United States, Bong in 2007 joined the protests against South Korea's Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. that forced Korea to liberalize its protective screen quota requiring theaters to show local films at least 146 days a year. Bong, like most Korean filmmakers, regarded the quota as a key factor in the industry's revival and a powerful symbol of its right to defend itself against Hollywood. As Klein observes, Bong's "nationalist protest" against the trade pact with Washington on the one hand elaborates "the combination of conforming and pushing against the Hollywood conventions" in his cinematography while, on the other hand, embodies "a cultural expression of Korea's half-respectful and half-resentful attitude toward the United States."

As mentioned at the beginning, *The Host* turned out to be a mega-hit. With theater owners calling for more and more prints, the film enjoyed the widest release ever (over a third of the nation's 1800 screens) and set a new box-office record with just under 13 million tickets sold. The film was quickly sold around the world, and U.S. studio

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[113] "'The Host' - Bong Joon-Ho Q&A: Time out Catches up with the Director of South Korea's Most Successful Film of All-Time.," *Time Out London*, November 7 2006. Available at http://www.timeout.com/film/news/1514/. Last Accessed on November 19, 2010.

Universal even snapped up remake rights to the picture.[114] The appeal of *The Host* is its powerful storytelling and the excellent visual effects. The substance of the success, however, has much to do with the prevalent concern over the U.S. neoimperial hegemony among Korean population. Implied in this statement is the role of social, cultural milieu as a discursive context that deeply engages the creation and interpretation of specific texts.

As in the movie, U.S. military crimes in South Korea are often juxtaposed with the pervasive pressure of the United States that is believed to threat Korean culture and society. Combined with a widespread fear of "the loss of locally distinctive modes of life," the alleged symptoms involve "the generational divide, the deconstruction of family, and the sense of alienation or fragmentation."[115] *The Host*, in these circumstances, manifests a practice of empirical resistance to the imperial dominance, and the success of the film as an alternative narrative relies on specific discursive strategies that help the audience reconstruct their national and cultural identity in a positive way.

Focusing on shared experiences among Korean people is an important one among the strategies. The McFarland incident that inspired the movie is directly associated with the harsh memories of colonial experience and wars that still haunt Koreans' collective consciousness as a nation. At the same time, emphasis on the family value that frames the narrative fosters 'we-ness' or 'one-ness' among the audience and thus strengthens their collective sense of national identity. This familial connectedness also makes a reconciliatory effect on the generational gap, regional difference and class division within

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[114] Darcy Paquet, "The Bong Joon-Ho Page," http://koreanfilm.org/bongjoonho.html; Paquet, "'Host' Conquers Fears, Scares up Profits ".

[115] Woongjae Ryoo, "Reconsidering Globalism: A Korean Perspective," *Kaleidoscope* 3(2004). 21.

contemporary Korean society. Equally important is to see how *The Host* as a national narrative challenges the discursive basis of imperial discourse in a specific form of racialized, gendered, and fetishized discourse of the U.S.[116]

Address Unknown* and *The Host

Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown*, the opening movie at 2001 Venice Film Festival, has been generally recognized by film critics but failed to achieve public welcome. By contrast, Bong Joon-ho's *The Host* premiered at Cannes Film Festival in 2006 to enthusiastic audiences then went on to break box-office records within several weeks after its release. Again, differences between the two films are fundamental and critical to explaining the contrasting results. One can easily see that despite their common elements as narratives of a political, social satire and a touching melodrama, *Address Unknown* is an extremely tragic narrative whereas *The Host* is a fairly comic one. Behind this simple comparison lurk much more complex dimensions surrounding the texts within the contemporary discourse of anticolonial nationalism in South Korea particularly in the face of U.S. military domination.

A meaningful way to address the complexity is to focus on the basis of subversive strategies upon which the discourse of decolonization is both conceptualized and materialized in each narrative of the films. The discourse of decolonization, according to Chungmoo Choi, cannot safely rest on "the self/other formula of the anticolonial discourse," although the two share a certain common property in their causal

[116] Said, *Orientalism*.

relationship.[117] For instance, locating the decolonization on the ground of national sovereignty alone buries "the intractable ambiguities of the postcolonial subject position with split loyalties."[118] An oversight of constant slippage in the binary opposition of self/other thus renders into "a colonization of consciousness," whose symptoms are, in a sense, "a product at once of assimilation and of separatism."[119]

Anticolonial discourses that draw upon the Manichaean struggle often reproduce the contradictory colonial double discourse with the same formula of self/other inverted, which inevitably legitimizes "internal displacement among a colonized people culturally, socially, and psychologically."[120]

Despite some value in that approach, those who advocate the strategic formula of binarism as the basis for the discourse of decolonization such as Abdul JanMohamed tend to gross over multiple, complex, and even ambiguous subjectivities of the colonized. The same dilemma exists in Kim Ki-duk's *Address Unknown*. While presenting the neocolonial conditions of South Korea under the dominating force of the United States, *Address Unknown*, like I have mentioned elsewhere, reiterates the universalizing hegemonic narrative rooted in the gendered discourse of nationalism and thus fails to incorporate multivalent subjectivities of colonial subjects especially those of women.

Again, an experimental portrait of such complex subjectivity is suggested in the case of Eun-ok, but even then, she remains unable to escape the fraternal discourse of nationalism. The tragic ending of the story with the anxieties still unknown and

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[117] Choi, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea." 79.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid. 82.

[120] Ibid. 80.

unrelieved only assures that *Address Unknown* fails to offer an alternative vision for decolonization, which invokes Antonio Gramsci's image of an interregnum, a space of crisis: "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."[121]

On the other hand, Bong Joon-ho's *The Host* successfully incorporate Homi Bhabha's notions of colonial mimicry and ambivalence, which despite JanMohamed's criticism as dissolving "the conflicting relationship between the colonizer and the colonized," nevertheless can be more productive in that they allow the possibility of "self-reflective criticism."[122] The possibility becomes manifest in *The Host*, which, by transcending or integrating the inflexible rigidity of self and other, rescues the nation, the colonized subject, from "the trap of being a victim" while avoiding slipping into "self-glorification."[123] Yet again, tension still exists after the rescue without the presence of females at least in a physical sense.

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[121] Antonio Gramsci, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London,: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971). 276.

[122] Choi, "The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea." 79.

[123] Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

We Are Here Because You Were There: Heinz Insu Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996) and the Cold War Epistemology

Historically, Asian Americans have been seen as metonyms for Asia and forcibly distanced from US national culture, which defines the citizenry—that is, who can be American—as well as which histories and experiences can be brought in and which must be left at the door. They could respond to the frequent exhortation to go back where they came from, "We are here because you were there." But Americans still do not learn much about the US' role in Asia, and what is learned about American wars is invariably that it displays American valor. Perhaps the Korean War is not much mentioned in world history classes because American heroism could not be easily extrapolated from it. All that can be said has been that Americans, unable to save all of the Korean people from Communism, worked valiantly to rescue the prostitutes and adopt the orphans. In the aftermath of the Korean War, the prostitutes and orphans are finally speaking back from the imperial center . . . .[1]

It is hardly questionable that the Korean War (1950-1953) in the wake of the division and militarization of the Korean peninsula by the United States and Soviet Union has had a dramatic and profound impact on Korean migration to the United States. Once Ji-Yeon Yuh, the author of *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown* (2002), a groundbreaking study on the camptowns and Korean military brides in the U.S., has stated that, among all groups, military brides with their mixed-race children and adoptees constitute a crucial part of Korean migration to the United States, even in the present, while they both are traceable to the Korean War and its continuing consequences. Yuh then stressed that the

[1] Elaine Kim, "Roots and Wings: An Overview of Korean Litearture, 1934-2003," in *Korean American Literature*, ed. Yong-Key Kim-Renaud et al., *The Sigur Center Papers #20* (Washington, DC: The George Washington University: 2004). 12.

post-1945 Korean diaspora into the U.S. is mostly a "refuge migration" developed out of cold war geopolitics present within the peninsula.[2]

In *Ends of Empire* Jodi Kim similarly contends that post-1945 Korean immigrants in the U.S, whether they are military brides, military sex workers, or transnational adoptees, are mostly "gendered racial bodies that emerge out of the Korean War."[3] Despite their enormous significance, the stories of Korean military brides, especially those from camptowns and their mixed-race children, have long suffered a forced silence either by themselves or by others. It is only very recently that a remarkable increase occurred in the works of Korean American writers, filmmakers, artists, and scholars that highlight the issue of camptown prostitution in South Korea, particularly the lives of the women servicing or married to American soldiers and their biracial children.[4] In her 2004 survey of Korean American literature, Elaine H. Kim, a leading scholar in Korean and Korean American Ethnic Studies who had once lamented the missing voices of Korean military brides and their mixed-race children in Korean American writings, noted this advancement with excitement. Kim explains its significance:

> What most Americans know about Korea has been told from the point of view of a U.S. military member or a missionary, about prostitutes, beggars, and orphans, many of them mixed race children, never speaking but always spoken for and

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[2] Ji-Yeon Yuh, "Moved by War: Migration, Diaspora, and the Korean War," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8, no. 3 (2005). 278.

[3] Jodi Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*, Critical American Studies Series (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). 161.

[4] These recent works represent various genres including novels, poems, memoirs, documentary films, multimedia performances, and scholarly works: Myung Mi Kim's "Into Such Assembly" (1989) and "A Rose of Sharon" (1989), Diana S. Lee and Grace Yoon Kyung Lee's *Camp Arirang* (1995), J. T. Takagi and Hye Jung Park's *The Women Outside* (1996), Heinz Insu Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996), Katharine H. S. Moon's *Sex among Allies* (1997), Chang-rae Lee's *A Gesture Life* (1999), Ishle Yi Park's "Saewoomtuh Flower Shop" (2000), Don Lee's "Domo Arigato" (2001), Nora Okja Keller's *Fox Girl* (2002), and Ji-Yeon Yuh's *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown* (2002), Grace M. Cho's *Haunting the Korean Diaspora* (2008), just to name a few.

> about, souls being saved by the civilizing missions of neocolonialism and evangelism. No doubt they would have found it difficult to imagine that one day the voice of the native, having returned to the imperial center, might speak back—in English—from its very different positionality.[5]

In this chapter, I turn to Korean American cultural production in an attempt to locate what Kim calls "the link between America's imperial presence over "there" in Korea and the gendered racial "return" of the Korean subject over "here" to the imperial center."[6] Among the emerging voices is Heinz Insu Fenkl. This chapter mainly discusses Fenkl's 1996 novel *Memories of My Ghost Father* (1996), focusing on the details of U.S. imperialism and their social, cultural effects on the people within the landscape of camptowns in South Korea. An autoethnographic novel, *Memories of My Ghost Brother* provides a unique narrative of camptown life in which the author reveals "the unsettling intersection between Cold War epistemology and Korean America's own admitted knowledge about the conditions of possibility for its post-1945 formation."[7] Fenkl, through the narrative, makes visible the "imperial and gendered racial formations" in the camptown geography as the liminal space between the U.S. Cold War imperialism and the South Korean client-state. In so doing, he also makes palpable "the significant trace of the erasure and retrieval" of post-1945 Korean America although the author can do so only in "fragments" not because of his inability but because of "a broader problem of Cold War knowledge."[8]

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[5] Elaine H. Kim, "Myth, Memory, and Desire: Homeland and History in Contemprary Korean American Writing and Visual Art," in *Holding Their Own: Perspectives on the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States*, ed. Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Heike Raphael-Hernandez (Stauffenburg: Verlag, 2000). 80.

[6] Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*. 144.

[7] Ibid. 161.

[8] Ibid. 145.

A Historical Overview of Korean Immigration to the United States

According to the 2000 U.S. census data, at least more than one million ethnic Koreans were residing in the U.S. as of April 1, 2000.[9] A more recent survey by the South Korean government reports that as of January 2011, the United States is home to the second largest Korean diaspora population in the world only after China.[10] Historically, the migration of Korean people into the U.S. falls roughly into three different time periods.

The first large wave began in 1903 with the arrival of 56 men as immigrant laborers who also brought their families including 21 women and 25 children. On December 22, 1902 this group of pioneers sailed across the Pacific en route to Hawaii aboard the SS Gaelic and landed in Honolulu on January 13, 1903.[11] Some seven thousand Koreans moved to Hawaii to work on the sugar plantations until 1907, although in November 1905 the Korean government discouraged further emigration after hearing

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[9] U.S. Census Bureau, "Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 " http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_00_SF2_DP1&prodType=table. Last accessed on June 24, 2011.

[10] "Jaewoedongpohyunhwang (Current Status of Overseas Compatriots)," ed. South Korea: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Seoul2010). Available at http://www.mofat.go.kr/consul/overseascitizen/compatriotcondition/index6.jsp?TabMenu=TabMenu6#. Last accessed on Mar. 14, 2011.

[11] Wayne Patterson, *The Korean Frontier in America: Immigration to Hawaii, 1896-1910* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988). Earlier in 1882, the United States made a treaty with Korea (at the time the Kingdom of Chosun) through the gunboat diplomacy. Named as the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, this treaty, the first one Korea made with any Western power, had a provision pertaining to the immigration of Koreans to the United States. R. R. Krishnan, "Early History of U.S. Imperialism in Korea," *Social Scientist* 12, no. 11 (1984).

about the hardships suffered by its people on the plantations.[12] Still, about one thousand "picture brides," several hundred students, and some political exiles entered the United States prior to 1924 when the U.S. Congress passed legislation barring immigration from Asian countries.[13]

Another migration of Koreans to the United States resumed in 1945. More than fourteen thousand Korean people found residence in the U.S. until 1964. Noteworthy about these people is the gender ratio of these new migrants; they consisted of one male out of 3.5 females whereas the earlier immigrants had the ratio of ten males to every one female.[14] In addition to the striking reversal of sex ratio, these newcomers were quite different from their predecessors in terms of demographic characteristics; the majority (about 77%) of this group consisted of wives and children.[15]

Upon the U.S. military intervention in the Korean War, American soldiers stationed in Korea brought Korean brides, arranged adoption of war orphans to American homes, and sponsored students to come to the United States. Between 1951 and 1964, approximately 6,500 brides, 6,300 adoptees, and 6,000 students relocated themselves to

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[12] The labor demand on the Hawaiian plantations after a series of anti-Chinese labor immigration laws and frequent strikes by Japanese laborers had encouraged plantation owners to look for alternate sources of immigrant labor from Asia. Eui-Young Yu and Peter Choe, "Korean Population in the United States as Reflected in the Year 2000 U.S. Census," *Amerasia Journal* 29, no. 3 (2003). 3-4.

[13] Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1984). 40. The Immigration Act of 1924, or Johnson–Reed Act, including the National Origins Act and Asian Exclusion Act limited the annual number of immigrants who could be admitted from any country to 2% of the number of people from that country who were already living in the United States in 1890, down from the 3% cap set by the Immigration Restriction Act of 1921, according to the Census of 1890. It superseded the 1921 Emergency Quota Act. The law was aimed at further restricting the Southern and Eastern Europeans who were immigrating in large numbers starting in the 1890s, as well as prohibiting the immigration of East Asians and Asian Indians. Congressional opposition was minimal.

[14] Ibid. 49-52.

[15] Eui-Yong Yu, "Korean Communities in America: Past, Present, and Future," *Amerasia*, 10:2 (1983), 23.

the U.S.[16] While the Korean War dramatically transformed the future of U.S.-South Korea relations, it immediately made an impact on the shape of the postwar Korean diaspora as the above three groups, military brides, children adoptees, and students, have constituted a significant component of Korean migration to the United States ever since. By the late 1980s, the number of Koreans who have immigrated to the U.S. as adopted children or brides of American servicemen since the war reached more than 100,000 respectively.[17]

The third wave of Korean immigrants was initiated by the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, and it still continues today. The 1965 immigration law, known as the Hart-Celler Act, abolished discriminatory quotas based on racial and national origins. The law permitted the admission of immigrants into the United States on the basis of their skills according to a labor certification program. More importantly, the 1965 immigration law established that spouses, unmarried minor children, and parents of the U.S. citizens could enter as 'non-quota immigrants' without any numerical limit. This new provision has had diverse effects on immigration from various countries, but its impact on the volume and composition of Asian immigration to the United States including those from South Korea has been dramatic.[18]

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[16] Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation*. 49-52.

[17] Daniel Booduck Lee, "Marital Adjustment between Korean Women an American Servicemen " in *Koreans in America: Dreams and Realities*, ed. Hyung-chan Kim and Eun Ho Lee (Seoul: The Institue of Korean Studies, 1990). 102.

[18] Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, Twayne's Immigrant Heritage of America Series (Boston: Twayne, 1991). 146. The Asian share of total immigration to the United States increased from 7.6 percent (1961-65) to 27.4 percent (1969-73), equaling the European share (27.3 percent in 1969-73) for the first time in the American history of immigration. Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation*. 53.

The so-called 'chain migration' began as most Korean wives of U.S. servicemen under the family reunification provision of the law petitioned for their parents and siblings to immigrate who, once they became naturalized as U.S. citizens, would do the same thing. Since 1970, close relatives of the permanent residents, or citizens, have become an overwhelming majority of the Korean immigrants coming to the U.S. By the mid-seventies and eighties, Koreans became the third largest group entering the U.S., trailing only the Mexicans and Filipinos.[19] The yearly volume of Korean immigration soared up from 2,165 in 1965 to 30,917 in 1977. The peak year of Korean immigration to the U.S. was 1987, a year before the 1988 Seoul Olympics, as the year marked the migration of 36,000 people. Korean immigration to the U.S. has gradually fallen off ever since.[20]

One study estimates that military brides are responsible, directly and indirectly, for bring forty to fifty percent of all Korean immigrants since 1965.[21] Kyeyoung Park's 1997 study of Korean immigrants in the U.S. leads to the same conclusion that the postwar Korean migration to the U.S. has been predominantly woman-led and –centered, in large part because of war brides, military wives, and nurses who have come, naturalized, and sponsored their kin under family reunification immigration clauses.[22]

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[19] Yu and Choe, "Korean Population in the United States as Reflected in the Year 2000 U.S. Census." 5.

[20] Yoon-Sik Kim, "Centennial of Korean Immigration to America," *Korea Times*, January 6 2003. There is wide-spread consensus, however, that the actual number of Korean Americans might be close to two million, considering those not counted in the census data, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

[21] Daniel Boo-Duck Lee, "Korean Women Married to Servicemen," in *Korean American Women Living in Two Cultures*, ed. Young In Song and Alilee Moon (Los Angeles: Academia Koreana, Keimyung-Baylo University Press, 1997). 97. Quoted in Yuh, "Moved by War: Migration, Diaspora, and the Korean War." 278.

[22] Kyeyoung Park, *The Korean American Dream: Immigrants and Small Business in New York City*, Anthropology of Contemporary Issues (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

To summarize, the history of Korean immigration to the United States can be studied in three parts; (1) the early labor immigration of predominantly male laborers to the Hawaiian islands (1903-1905) and their "picture brides" (1910-1924); (2) the beginning of the post-Korean War refuge migration by a large number of young women and children through international marriage and adoption in addition to a small number of professional workers (1951-1964); and (3) the surge of camptown migration by a large number of military brides and adoptees followed by their families and relatives since 1965.[23]

The Sociocultural Landscape of Camptowns in *Memories of My Ghost Brother*

Based on his autobiographical memoirs of an 'Amerasian boy'[24] growing up in a camptown in the 1960s, Fenkl's narrative gives an intimate account of the camptown world positioned at the interstice between U.S. military life and Korean civilian life. Narrated by Insu/Heinz, the author and the protagonist of the novel, the story traverses

[23] Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*. 41.

[24] In its original meaning, an *Amerasian* is a person born in Asia to a U.S. military father and an Asian mother. Colloquially, the term has sometimes been considered synonymous with Asian American, or to describe a person in the United States of mixed Asian and non-Asian ancestry, regardless of the circumstances. The term was coined by writer Pearl S. Buck and was formalized by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Many people were born to Asian women and U.S. servicemen during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Wikipedia, "Ameasian," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amerasian.Accessed on June 2, 2011. The official definition of *Amerasian* came about as a result of Public Law 97-359, enacted by the 97th Congress of the United States on October 22, 1982. According to the U.S. Department of Justice and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) , an *Amerasian* is: "[A]n alien who was born in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, or Thailand after December 31, 1950, and before October 22, 1982, and was fathered by a U.S. citizen." U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "I-360, Petition for Amerasian, Widow(Er), or Special Immigrant," ed. Department of Homeland Security. The Amerasian Foundation (AF) and Amerasian Family Finder (AFF) define an *Amerasian* as: "Any person who was fathered by a citizen of the United States (an American servicemen, American expatriate, or U.S. Government Employee (Regular or Contract)) and whose mother is, or was, an Asian National Asian." Amerasian Foundation -Giving Amerasians a Voice, "Amerasian Definition," http://amerasianfoundation.org/amerasian-definition/.

different time periods from Insu's birth through his becoming a school age up until the time when his family leaves for the U.S. Like the narrator who is born between a Korean mother and a German American father, Sergeant Heinz Fenkl, the central characters of the novel are mixed-race children of Korean women and American GIs.

Illustrating the lives and experiences of the military brides and their mixed-race children, Fenkl, the author, challenges popular assumptions about their existence in both Korea and the United States. From Cold War American perspective, these people, especially those who immigrated to the United States, have been invariably registered as "undesired index, reminder, and literal offspring of America's protracted military presence," which often contradicts "the Manichaean narrative of American benevolence."[25] The dominant discourse of patriarchal nationalism in South Korea, on the other hand, has figured the military brides and their mixed-race children as "traitors who consort with foreigners." This reflects the view that has long regarded the existence of camptowns and the people inside as "unwanted reminders to the Korean nation-state that its sovereignty is circumscribed by U.S. military authority on Korean soil."[26]

By giving names, faces, and histories of the people who have been generally shunned in both societies, Fenkl's narrative complicates such easy stigmatizations, exposes the chaotic realities of the camptown life, and shows how the people, if they appear perverse or pathological, are themselves symptomatic of a "perversely imperialistic and militarized collective social architecture undergirded by racialized and

[25] Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*.

[26] Ibid.

gendered taxonomies of domination."[27] Through a variety of tropes, symbols, and narrative techniques embedded at multiple levels, *Memories of My Ghost Brother* cleverly reconstructs post-/neocolonial landscape of South Korea. At the very beginning of the story, Insu's family moves into a house built by a Japanese colonel during the Japanese occupation. After his stay in Korea where he allegedly "tortured and murdered tens of thousands of Koreans for his amusement," the colonel was sent to "Burma, then to defend Iwo Jima against the Americans. When he lost the island to the U.S. Marines, the colonel committed *seppuku*[28] in his bunker on Mt. Suribachi.[29]

One of the most crucial and fiercest battles during World War II, the U.S. invasion of Iwo Jima signifies the collapse of Japanese Empire, and the victorious image of U.S. Marines' flag-raising atop Mount Suribachi has been one of the most treasured icons of U.S. military history.[30] The ghost of the Japanese colonel in the novel, one of many haunting figures that continually visit young Insu, looms as a powerful symbol of lingering Japanese colonialism in Korea. At the same time, the house's "unlucky turn of the fortune" associated with the owner's fate also resonates through the stories of the

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[27] Ibid.

[28] 'Seppuku' (a.k.a. 'hara kiri') whose literal meaning comes from its component characters 切腹 ('cut' and 'belly') refers to a form of Japanese ritual suicide by cutting open one's belly or abdomen. Originally reserved only for samurais as part of their bushido honor code, seppuku was used voluntarily by samurais who choose to die with honor rather than fall into the hands of their enemies (and likely suffer torture). It was also practiced as a form of capital punishment for samurais who had committed serious offenses or had any reasons that had brought shame to them. The ceremonial ritual, which is usually part of a more elaborate ritual and performed in front of spectators, consists of plunging a short blade, traditionally a tanto (短刀) into the abdomen and moving the blade from left to right in a slicing motion. One of the most known cases of seppuku is that of Saigo Takamori, the Meiji leader, in 1877 although, it has been claimed, his story might have been fabricated. For more on the death of Saigo Takamori, see Mark J. Ravina, "The Apocryphal Suicide of Saigo Takamori: Samurai, Seppuku, and the Politics of Legend," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69, no. 03 (2010).

[29] Heinz Insu Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (New York: Dutton, 1996). 5.

[30] The image was from the photography taken by Joe Rosenthal, and it has been heavily reproduced not only in the U.S. but throughout the world.

Korean War and the military domination of the U.S. in South Korea. A wealthy Korean merchant who bought the house at cheap price "by agreeing to spread the colonel's ashes in the rock garden" was then killed during the Korean War by American soldiers who mistook him for a Chinese spy. Next, war refugees encountered an untimely fate in the house: "Many died there from disease and starvation."[31]

By the time Insu's family moved into the house, there were also other occupants including Mr. Hwang who had "inherited" the house after the war and a family of Korean repatriates from Nagasaki—a couple who had a son suffering birth defects.[32] Following the same fortune, the house, still with the colonel's ashes spread in the garden, is now occupied by those who are linked by the histories of colonialism, Japanese and American, and the consequences of wartime atrocity.

The historical connection of this spatial context of the narrative to post-/neo-colonial Korea is further expanded when Insu's family relocates to Tatagumi, a Japanese-named neighborhood bordering ASCOM (Army Support Command) within the area of Camp Market. Located in Pupyong near Inchon, the city famous for General Douglas MacArthur's amphibious landing on September 15, 1950 during the Korean War, Camp Market is one of many U.S. military installation in South Korea that were originally constructed by the Imperial Japanese Army. During the 1930s, the site of Camp Market was a logistics base for supplies coming through the port of Incheon. Like with Yongsan Garrison, the Camp Market area was handed over to the U.S. occupation troops in 1945. After the Korean War, the area became a logistical base for the U.S. Marine Corps until

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[31] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 5

[32] Ibid. It is implied that the "rubberhand" of the couple's son is linked to radiation from the fallout from the American atomic bomb detonation.

1963 when it was given to the U.S. Army which established ASCOM, a central logistical base for the United States Forces in Korea (USFK).[33]

In *Memories of My Ghost Brother*, the image of the black train that takes daily supplies across a rail bridge into ASCOM dramatizes the irony of the colonial succession for the train is "a steam engine left by the Japanese and now operated by Koreans working for the U.S. Army."[34] The mutual imbrication of the postcolonial and the neocolonial is also reflected in the occasional use of pidgin language by both Koreans and American GIs. Words such as *mama-san* (mother), *papa-san* (father), *boy-san* (boy), *baby-san* (baby), *ainokos* (love child), and *t'aksan* (a lot, many) are the examples although these, once the author explained elsewhere, are only "indexical" of the entire vocabulary that relies heavily on words of Japanese origin.[35] Among them, *t'aksan* is an example of Japanese that became GI pidgin although it was not used commonly by Koreans communicating with each other. Similarly, words like *skoshi* (a small space of time), *mira-mira* (miracle), *debuchan* (a cute, fat chick), *slicky* boy (a little thief), number 1 (good), number 10 (thousand, very bad), *honcho* (a manager or leader) and *gook* (communist of Asian origin with particular connotations of the Vietnam War and the Korean War) are the terms of mixed origin used by GIs including Sergeant Fenkl, Insu's German American father.

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[33] Most of the land and facilities for ASCOM was closed and turned over to the Korean government in 1973. Only the Camp Market area was not turned over and remains a small logistical base for USFK in Incheon. Today Camp Market is composed of 34 warehouses over a combined total of 852,495 square feet of storage space to store goods and supplies for USFK facilities. The Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office as well as the Army Air Force Exchange Service distribution and bakery is based out of Camp Market to provide approximately 600 civilians work at Camp Market with the vast majority of them being Korean contract workers. Korea, "A Profile of Usfk Camps in Seoul."

[34] Heinz Insu Fenkl, "Images from a Stolen Camera: An Autoethnographic Recursion," in *The Transnational Korea: Division and Diaspora* (Korean Studies Institute: University of Southern California, 1995). 7. 8.

[35] Ibid.

Like most Korean people who were, during the Korean War, forced to migrate to cities and camptowns following the GI bases, Insu's family, which includes Insu and his mother, his aunt and uncle and their cousins, had been displaced by the U.S. military intervention and came to reside in the camptowns. Even after the war ended, they had to remain in the camptowns to survive, not knowing that they would be further displaced and impoverished within the same location. Like their country was desperately seeking recuperation through the economic support of the United States, they soon became hopelessly dependent on the camptown economy.

The U.S.-South Korea military alliance and the installation of U.S. military bases throughout South Korea gave rise to a 'secondhand America' for those who came to reside in camptowns. During the post-war period, there was high demand for American goods in South Korea, and the consumption of American goods, a special luxury exclusively enjoyed by the middle- or upper-class, was largely possible through the camptown network. The livelihood of camptown residents therefore depended partly on their participation in acquiring, redistributing, and selling the goods. The illegal underground market was ever expanding thanks to the American commodity fetishism in South Korea, a recurrent theme in this novel. To support the family, Insu's mother trades goods that she buys from ASCOM in the black market without her husband's knowing of it.

Gannan, one of Insu's female cousins who came to her aunt in search of work in Pupyong to help out her poor family, ends up working at a club in ASCOM. Insu's mother introduces Gannan to a "yellow-haired GI" who would come to Insu's house and

spend the night in her room.[36] Heinz's happiest memories of his cousin Gannan include the food stuffs that she brings him from her trips onto the U.S. military base. To young Insu, Gannan's work at the NCO (Non-commissioned Officer) clubs is glamorized by the special snacks she brings home. Gannan's difficult experiences at the NCO Club are softened by Insu's enjoyment of the Fig Newton cookies she carefully packages away in napkins while trying to pick up GIs. Gannan's ability to provide for her cousin and to supply food and money to her family solaces her difficult job in the camptown.

The desire for American-brand cigarettes is another example of American commodity fetishism. One of Insu's jobs is to obtain and distribute the American cigarettes to his uncle, Hyongbu. Even the *chaji*-dogs[37] or hot dogs become a coveted item in that its consumption conveys association with vicarious access to U.S. imperial might; to obtain them is to be affiliated with American status, wealth, and power. The name "*chaji-dog*" (Korean slang for "hot dog") ridicules the phallic shape of the American food, and yet its popularity among Korean characters in the novel suggests its association with a dominant, namely American, set of tastes.

An individual's consumption preferences, Pierre Bourdieu explains, are directly related to his or her social status corresponding to the amount of social or cultural capital.[38] The "competition for luxury goods," says John Eperjesi, is "one dimension of the struggle to impose the dominant principle of domination."[39] In *Memories of My Ghost*

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[36] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 13.

[37] *Chaji* means penis in Korean.

[38] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).

[39] John R. Eperjesi, *The Imperialist Imaginary: Visions of Asia and the Pacific in American Culture* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press : Published by University Press of New England, 2005). 232.

Brother, the desire for and consumption of American-associated products, including foods, cigarettes, fashions, and so many, is directly related to the class stratifications within the camptown space. American-associated ice creams, cookies, cigarettes, media, and literature are coded higher-class, and the consumption patterns among Koreans mirror their desire to elevate class status alongside or under the Americans, which in turn structures the Americans as the highest-class group within the camptown.[40]

Young Insu, encapsulated in this landscape which is 'the only world' he knows, is forced to negotiate "a complex and often shifting hierarch of race, gender, class, and culture that emerges in the shadow of the American empire."[41] When Gannan becomes pregnant, the white GI refuses to marry her for which Insu's Emo (Aunt) laments over her niece while recalling, ". . . before the war we lived well there. . . . If there were only as many plots of rice as there used to be, she could stay in the country."[42] Unable to give birth to or abort an illegitimate biracial child, Gannan commits suicide by hanging herself from a thick branch of a chestnut tree. Observing the deep frustration of his own family upon Gannan's death, Insu reacts to harbor naïve hopes of becoming "a dark-haired GI" so he can make everyone in the family happy including himself:

> Emo's sadness made my heart feel heavy. I promised to myself that when I grew up and became *a dark-haired GI*, I would make lots of money and buy everyone everything they wanted so they would be happy always. We would have servants so Emo wouldn't have to work in the kitchen; Mahmi could stop going to the PX to buy things for other people; Hyongbu would have his American cigarettes and whiskey. And my father, by then, would surely be a great general with white hair and a beard instead of only his short yellow hair. He would tell me wise things

[40] Perry Dal-nim Miller, "The Military Camptown in Retrospect: Multiracial Korean American Subjectivity Formation Along the Black-White Binary" (M. A. Thesis, Bowling Green State University, 2007). 44.

[41] Kim, "Myth, Memory, and Desire: Homeland and History in Contemprary Korean American Writing and Visual Art." 81.

[42] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 14.

> and we would kill many enemies together. . . . I would be a GI. I could go to America to see the many, many PX's, NCO Clubs, and *all the tall people in green with their sharp, pulled-out noses*.[43]

But the realities Insu encounters everyday within this circumscribed world of the camptown are far from his hopes and slowly disillusion his fantasies. Insu who once firmly believed that there was "something grand and magical about America" and was himself "thirsty to drink in the source of that mystery," slowly becomes disheartened along his own experience of racism, violence, and deaths behind the mystery.[44] For instance, Insu, on his first day at Seoul American Elementary School, witnesses the bare logics of racism displayed on stage. The U.S. Army bus that takes him to the school is visibly segregated by racial hierarchy with white GIs sitting in the front half of the bus and the some Korean women and their mixed-race children, KATUSAs[45], and black GIs in the back half.

Things turn out no better in school. Insu has to forsake his Korean name and gets punished for speaking with other Amerasians in Korean, their first language while being treated as inferior to other American students. During recess, Insu feels a bitter sense of alienation as he stands by himself watching the American children playing together. In order to pretend to be doing something, he takes "drink after drink" of water at the water fountain, and walks back and forth "to keep from crying."[46] Insu only becomes happy again when he meets James, his half Korean-half black friend during the lunch time. On another occasion, Insu overhears his mother talk with Changmi's mother and another

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[43] Ibid. 19. *Italic* emphasis added.

[44] Ibid. 92.

[45] KATUSA is the acronym of Korean Augmentation Troops to the United States Army.

[46] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 100.

apprentice about American soldiers:

> "He's a kind man. I can't imagine I would find anyone better than him."
> "But why does it have to be a Black GI?" said the young voice.
> "There are plenty of handsome white men you could catch."
> "Oh, you don't know anything," said Changmi's mother, rather impatiently. "Black men are much nicer to women. And you have to decide, before you start, whether you're going to date the Black or white GIs. They won't let you date both."
> "Who won't?"
> "The GIs, the women – what does it matter? The white bastards won't touch you once they see you with a Black man. They think the color comes off on you or something. And the women who go with Black men won't associate with you if you go with a white man."[47]

During the most 1960s, camptowns in South Korea were a racially segregated space. Even in the 1990s there were reports of self-segregation and Black-White conflict among U.S. military personnel in the camptowns.[48] Korean entrepreneurs who were running their businesses in camptowns obeyed American racial policing as a matter of economic survival. Meanwhile, the practice of racial segregation within the camptowns and the resulting discrimination against African American soldiers created racial tension between black and white servicemen, South Korean authorities under President Park Chung Hee promoted anti-discrimination in the camptown facilities to match the forced desegregation of the U.S. military. According to Katherine Moon, however, the primary reason for the South Korean government to pursue the measure was that it saw the militarized prostitution as critical to the national interest both in economy and security.[49]

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[47] Ibid. 210.

[48] Heldman, "Itaewon, South Korea: On the Town with the U.S. Military." Available at www.kimsoft.com/korea/us-army.htm. Last accessed on Nov. 1, 2010.

[49] Following the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine that was directed to the reduction of U.S. troops in South Korea, the Park government afraid of further reduction effected significant changes in foreign and

Moon argues that this policy of anti-discrimination resulted in an increased regulation of camptown women's bodies and work practices by the camptown business owners, management, and government officials.[50]

In "Patriarchy is So Third World," Nadia Kim, after her interviews with Korean and Korean American women, asserts that Korean women are more likely than their male counterparts to have positive views on American soldiers. Kim then discovers that Korean women's reference point with regard to the U.S. military is 'whiteness' despite the fact that black and other nonwhite soldiers have also been stationed in South Korea.[51] This implies that Korean women, to a certain degree, have internalized the notion of 'whiteness,' or to be more precise 'white masculinity' as superior to that of non-whites including Koreans, an example of the intersection of race and gender in U.S. military hegemony in South Korea. Susan Um, one of Kim's interviewees who was twenty-nine-year-old at the time of the interview, made a significant remark:

> . . . I thought wow, white men looked pretty good, and even the black men did too . . . the army men who walked by back and forth. So I wouldn't say that I felt that I definitely had to marry a Korean person. When I was little—at that time, I was in my first year of junior high school—I spoke the very basics of English with them . . Even at that point I didn't have any prejudice toward them whatsoever so when I was little, I used to dream about what it would be like if I married a white guy (laugh)![52]

One important factor that influences Korean and Korean immigrant women when

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domestic policies at various levels including the so-called "Clean-Up Campaign" of camptowns. Moon, *Sex among Allies : Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*. 58-83.

[50] Ibid. 128-9.

[51] Nadia Y. Kim, ""Patriarchy Is So Third World": Korean Immigrant Women and "Migrating" White Western Masculinity," *Social Problems* 53, no. 4 (2006). 526.

[52] Ibid.

they consider marrying white men is the long history of military marriages between Korean (or other Asian) women and white men. These marriages have also signaled white men's desires for Korean women. Indeed, some of the Seoul informants in Kim's study proudly mentioned, "Korean women are the most attractive East Asian women" while many of those also responded that "white men were more attractive than Korean men."[53] Kim sees that Susan's desire for a white husband was shaped by white masculinity's hegemonic position over nonwhite masculinities. Although Susan believed that she was positively depicting black GIs, she, by saying "even" black men looked good, clearly indicated that blacks stand below whites in terms of masculinity.[54]

Memories of My Ghost Brother also illustrates what Jodi Kim describes as the "perversity of America's racial taxonomies." Kim argues that the long-persisting dominant discourse of race "newly transforms" once it is transplanted overseas in military uniform. As in the novel, the effects of this newly transformed racial ideology, often in disguise of America's mythic promise turn out to be "grotesque."[55] One mother kills her half-black son while another wants to bear one at any cost in order to marry American husbands and move to the U.S. It turns out that Insu's mother did the same thing before she married Insu's father. She gave up her own son for adoption knowing that Heinz, her new future husband who is ashamed even of his own mixed-raced son, did not want to raise a child from another man, a child whose name was Kuristo[56] from

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*. 166.

[56] The name 'Kuristo' is certainly not a traditional Korean name, and it rather sounds like a Japanese name, which suggests his father might be Japanese. At the same time, the pronunciation of the name is exactly same as that of Jesus Christ in Korean. Once Insu asks his American father about Kuristo, and Heinz tries

whom the "ghost brother" of the title came from.

Some of Insu's mixed-race friends and their mothers do manage to escape to the mythic America where they encounter yet another "unlucky turn of the fortune."[57] After Jani's GI father dies in Vietnam, his widowed mother finally finds another 'yellow-haired GI' to marry her and makes it to Minnesota in the summer of 1970. But Jani dies of leukemia just before his twenty-second birthday. When Changmi's mother finds herself a black GI, he turns out to be impotent, and Changmi's mother, afraid that her husband might abandon her at any time, maneuvers to have a baby from another GI who looks like her husband. James, whose father is a black American GI, dies mysteriously around when his mother manages to find herself a white American GI before she finally goes to America. Insu's family eventually leaves for America because Insu's father does not want his son to be raised and educated improperly among "heathens," "barbarism," and "pagan ceremonies."[58]

A White Father and a Mixed-race Son

The relationship between Insu and his father, Sergeant Heinz Fenkl, is quite noteworthy in that they both hold an ambivalent attitude toward each other while projecting oneself into the other. Insu's ambivalent attitude toward his father resonates through his recollection of the images of his father's hand. In one of the rare happy anecdotes, Fenkl, Insu's father, takes his son on his eleventh birthday to ASCOM to buy

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to convince his son that it is just a dream, "a bullshit dream." When Insu continues to insist with the name Kuristo saying, "But he saved us," Heinz indeed relates the name to Jesus Christ saying "He saved us all." Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 258.

[57] Ibid. 5.

[58] Ibid. 239.

him a book as a gift with a hand-written note on it. The moment his father hands the book to him, Insu notices the visible difference of his father's hand compared to the size and color of his own: "I remember the size of my father's hand as he grasped the book by the spine and opened it to make the inscription. I remember the size of my smaller, darker hand as I received the book and opened it to look at the inscription, barely legible to me."[59]

The other image of his father's hand comes from a strikingly different mode in a terrifying situation. It is the one that smacks Insu in his face for dropping a clump of rice on the floor and picking it up to smear it against the table: "Again I remember the size of his hand, that bright white palm twice the size of my face. I had dropped a clump of rice on the floor and picked it up to smear it against the lip of the lacquer table in the customary way, to be cleaned up later, and he had slapped me so hard I had fallen sideways onto the floor."[60]

Insu's relationship to his father is fundamentally complicated by his multiraciality and Korean inculcation. Insu, once imagining himself as a "dark-haired GI," becomes clearly conscious of his uniqueness phenotypically and racially disidentified with 'yellow-haired GIs' including his very own father. Insu begins to mark the GIs as the "tall people in green with their sharp, pulled-out noses," a decidedly foreign presence in Korea. As a younger child who socialized almost exclusively among Koreans, Insu comes to associate whiteness with otherness and non-normative physicality. This is also why Insu compares the white children and GIs he meets to the goblin of Korean folk tales.

On the other hand, Insu's imagination can only navigate within the confinement

[59] Ibid. 62-3.

[60] Ibid. 63-4.

of camptown world, which in turn shapes his desire to be a GI without any other role models as a way of escape from unhappiness and impoverishment. This is because, Insu, as Jodi Kim explains, "does not yet realize that the presence of the GI, the privilege figure of deliverance in his fantasy, is in many ways the index of—rather than the solution to—his family's loss."[61] Ironically, it is from his own father that Insu earns the first-hand experience of "the charged racial logics through which America's military occupation of and violence in Korea and other parts of Asia."[62] In his role as an American GI, Sergeant Fenkl assumes a persona inaccessible to Insu. Noting the camaraderie between his father and another fellow GI who is also a Vietnamese veteran, Insu remarks:

> I could not imagine my voice joining with my father's the way Jonesy's did. I could not imagine how I would ever understand their secret language of knowing glances and inside jokes. That was something that only yellow-haired soldiers do. I would forever be tainted by a Koreanness that would make the words "gook" or "dink" sound strange coming from my lips, like the word "nigger" spoken by a Black GI to anyone but his brothers.[63]

Although he married a Korean woman, Sergeant Fenkl, displays extreme scorn toward Korean people and their culture deriding it as heathen, barbaric, and pagan. Even when he first saw his son Insu after his birth, Sergeant Fenkl became angry, held his son as "a piece of wood," or "a rifle stock at present arms," "turned bright red from the shame of having a mixed-blood child," and "walked home in a foul mood" after he handed his son back to Insu's Emo.[64] When Insu and his mother visit Fenkl at Camp Casey, Insu's father, "not at all happy," later told his wife that "having his men see his Korean wife

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[61] Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*. 163.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 253-254.

[64] Ibid. 63.

undermined his authority."[65]

Intertextuality between the *Memories of My Ghost Brother* and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901)

A critical angle that offers significant insights into the relationship between Insu and his father is in the book that Insu's father buys him for birthday present: Rudyard Kipling's 1901 novel *Kim*. Far from a random choice, this book out to be essential to the narrative of *Memories of My Ghost Father*, and it discloses much of the unspoken about Insu's father as well as his relationship with his son. Sergeant Fenkl, a serious admire of *Kim*, occasionally makes allusions to *Kim* through which he tries to pass his fatherly message down to his son. Insu, however, can hardly understand what his father mentions, either "the remarkable coincidences" or "the ironic resonances" between his father's life and the text.[66] This is because Insu does not read the book until the fourth anniversary of his father's death contrary to his father's belief that he already did.

Kun Jong Lee's comparative analysis of *Memories of My Ghost Brother* and *Kim* offers valuable insights into how Fenkl, the author, critically transforms his narrative based on the adventures of a white boy in colonial India in *Kim*. According to Lee, *Memories of My Ghost Brother* is "an Amerasian rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*" in which Fenkl seeks to resurrect the native voice silenced by colonial discourse in order to highlight the dilemma of Asian women and their biracial children.[67] What defines Fenkl's

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[65] Ibid. 131.

[66] Ibid. 63.

[67] Kun Jong Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim," *Journal of American Studies* 42, no. 02 (2008). 317. 320.

rewriting and his critique is then the troubling legacy of the U.S. military presence in Korea as part of the centuries-old Western imperialist project in Asia.[68]

The intertextuality between Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* and Kipling's *Kim* can be traced back even before Insu's father buys the book for his son. Insu remembers that when he was seven years old, his father, who had just returned from his first tour of duty in Vietnam, took him to the Yongsan Garrison in Seoul. When they reach the edge of the parade field of the U.S. 8th Army Headquarters, Insu's father puts his son on "astride the howitzer to take a quick picture." Without answering to his son's question of what he had done in Vietnam, Sergeant Fenkl suddenly exclaims, "You're sitting on top of Zam-Zammah!" and continues to say "Thy father was a pastry cook!" Responding to Insu's repeated questions in bewilderment, Sergeant Fenkl adds "some sort of riddle" quietly saying, "I was a red bull on a green field." Later his father's mentioning something about "The Great Game" only increases Insu's puzzlement.[69]

The riddle that Sergeant Fenkl plays with at Yongsan Garrison is in fact a direct reference to *Kim* based on the three key images from the story: "Zam-Zammah," "a red bull on a green field," and the "Great Game." Rather than a passing remark, the riddle turns out to be a significant thread connecting the stories of British colonial India and U.S. neocolonial South Korea. When Kim, the title hero of *Kim*, appears in the novel, he sits himself "astride" on a huge iron cannon called "Zam-Zammah." Kim, an orphaned white boy, is then playing a king-of-the-castle game with his Indian friends at Lahore Museum. Defying the "municipal orders," Kim stands on the platform where the cannon is displayed and repeats the popular belief: "Who hold Zam-Zammah, that 'fire-breathing

[68] Ibid.

[69] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 127. 132.

dragon,' hold the Punjab, for the great green-bronze piece is always first of the conqueror's loot."[70] As if to legitimize the victorious revilement of Kim who kicks off his native friends, the narrator says in a simple but solemn manner: "The English held the Punjab and Kim was English."[71]

By positing Insu astride on an American howitzer so he can take a quick photo, Sergeant Fenkl tries to project certain images of Kim including his own Korean American son. The location of the American howitzer in the Yongsan Garrison adds its significance as a contemporary version of Zam-Zammah that was once regarded as "a powerful talisman for victory" with "divine powers."[72] Yongsan Garrison, the heart of the United States Forces Korea (USFK), has been "the site of a bitter legacy of foreign invasions and occupations and is still the prominent symbol of Korea's neocolonial status."[73]

An anonymous commentator who himself is an American GI stationed at Yongsan says, "If you want to put the location of Yongsan Garrison into perspective, imagine a

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[70] Rudyard Kipling and Zohreh T. Sullivan, *Kim : Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Criticism*, 1st ed., A Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002). 3.

[71] Ibid. 3.

[72] William G. Tierney and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *Representation and the Text : Re-Framing the Narrative Voice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997). 44. Quoted in Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 320.

[73] Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 321. Located in the heart of Seoul even close to the Han River, Yongsan has been used as a military area even before the Imperial Japanese Army constructed a military compound during the colonial period. During the thirteenth century, the area was used as a garrison for the occupying Mongolian Army as well. Later in the late sixteenth century, Yongsan fell to the Japanese Army during the Hideyoshi invasion of Korea. Prior to the Japanese colonization of Korea in the 20th century, the area had been used by the Chinese military as well who set up a headquarters in the Yongsan area in 1882. Even in 2011, Yongsan Garrison still remains an extraterritorial zone exempt from the legal jurisdiction of South Korea, which is the reason why many Koreans have mixed feelings about the U.S. troops at Yongsan Garrison. In 2004, the U.S. and South Korean governments agreed to relocate the Yongsan base, a major source of anti-U.S. sentiment among Korea, to Pyeongtaek, 70 kilometers south of Seoul, as a key part of the U.S. reshuffle of its troops in South Korea.

630 acre foreign military base in the middle of Manhattan in New York."[74] Similarly, some Koreans have expressed the idea in a self-derisive statement that "those who rule Yongsan are the masters of the [Korean] peninsula."[75] Just as Zam-Zammah under British control justified the British occupation of Punjab, the howitzer in the Yongsan Garrison proclaims the neoimperialist presence of the United States in South Korea. Both Zam-Zammah and the Yongsan howitzer remind the native of their neocolonial status every day: "They fired deafening blanks out of the howitzer each day when the flag came down, and everything stopped to listen to the bugler play the sad taps music."[76]

The image of "a red bull on a green field" also registers an imperial discourse in Sergeant Fenkl's mission in South Korea.[77] In *Kim*, 'a red bull on a green field' is first mentioned by Kimball O'Hara, Kim's father when he, in opium-led delirium, predicts the future of his son: Kim would be attended by "[n]ine hundred first-class devils, whose God was a Red Bull on a green field."[78] In *Kim*, "the great Red Bull on a background of Irish green" turns out to be "the crest of the Mavericks," a fictive Irish regiment in the British Army in which Kimball is the color sergeant of "the finest Regiment in the world."[79] Overlapping himself on the image of "riding a red bull on a green field," Sergeant Fenkl instantly identifies with Sergeant O'Hara.

In fact, these two white sergeants, Sergeant O'Hara and Sergeant Fenkl, share

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[74] Korea, "A Profile of Usfk Camps in Seoul."

[75] Yong-shik Choe, "Yongsan to Be Turned into Mammoth Park," *Korea Herald*, January 19 2004. Quoted in Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 321.

[76] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 127.

[77] Ibid. 127.

[78] Kipling and Sullivan, *Kim : Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Criticism*. 4.

[79] Ibid. 70. 4.

striking similarities. Both serve the interests of the empires that subjugated their own countries: an Irishman in the British Army (O'Hara) and a German refugee immigrant from World War II in the U.S. Army (Fenkl), which makes their (neo)colonial agency "ambivalent" at best. Both married native women in the colony, one to a former nursemaid in "a Colonel's family (O'Hara) and the other to a Korean woman who lives in the "house of the Japanese Colonel" (Fenkl). Both named their sons after themselves, Kim for Kimball O'Hara and Heinz (Insu) for Heinz Fenkl. Furthermore, both white sergeants stationed in Asia are "displaced men par excellence in times of colonialism and neocolonialism."[80]

While he is stationed in South Korea, Sergeant Fenkl leaves Korea twice for the Vietnam War which he calls the "Great Game."[81] The term 'Great Game' refers to the imperial contest between Britain and Russia for hegemony in the Middle East and Central Asia mostly during the 19th century.[82] The Anglo-Russian imperial struggle transformed into the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Sergeant Fenkl's identification of the Vietnam War with the Great Game is thus reflected in the continuity of the western imperialism in the Cold War era.

In 1968, what is known as the Tết Offensive occurred in Vietnam when the North Vietnamese Army together with the Vietcong in the South broke the cease fire agreement

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[80] Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 322.

[81] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 132.

[82] The term 'Great Game' was coined by Lieutenant Arthur Conolly, a British intelligence officer. Conolly worked for the British East India Company as a captain of the Sixth Bengali Cavalry during the 1830s and until in 1841 when he was captured in Bukhara on a rescue mission to free his fellow British officers and executed by Nasrullah Khan, the Emir of Bukhara. Carolyn Ellis, "Evocative Ethnography: Writing Emotionally About Our Lives," in *Representation and the Text: Re-Framing the Narrative Voice*, ed. William G. Tierney and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997).

during the Tết celebration[83] by attacking over a hundred towns, cities, and military installations in the South. Unlike most GIs, Sergeant Fenkl volunteers for a second tour of duty in Vietnam, seeking "retribution" for his American comrades killed by the 'gooks.'[84] If the Tết Offensive turned out to be the most important turning point throughout the two decades-long military conflict, its impact on camptowns in South Korea was also significant in a different way:

> The mood among the GIs in Korea became think and black, full of hate for Asian people and tense with the fear that the North Koreans might invade. The GIs were afraid to stay in Korea, but even more afraid that they might be shipped to Cam Ranh Bay to join some counteroffensive against the North Vietnamese. Houseboys and prostitutes were beaten more frequently; there were more fights in the club.[85]

As Kun Jong Lee justly points out, Sergeant Fenkl must have believed in a bright future for his son while reading Kim's achievement in the Great Game of intelligence-gathering and counterespionage.[86] That is, Insu, an Amerasian boy, could achieve much more success for the American empire in the new Great Game than Kim once did for the British Empire. If Kim, a white boy, had the ability to go native and pass for an Indian, which served him fairly, his son Heinz (Insu), a half-white and half-Asian boy, would have far more advantages to become a secret agent for the American empire with much

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[83] Tết, a shortened name of Tết Nguyên Đán, is the first day of the year on a traditional lunar calendar and the most important Vietnamese holiday. Both North and South Vietnam announced on national radio broadcasts that there would be a two-day cease-fire during the holiday.

[84] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 132.

[85] Ibid. 131-2.

[86] Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 338.

less chance of being questioned about his racial and national allegiances.[87]Little wonder that Sergeant Fenkl envisions a military career for Insu in Asia; he hopes that his son will study in "the US Military Academy" and go to "Nam with [him] sometime."[88]

If it is likely that Sergeant Fenkl assumed his son Heinz as "an ideal descendant of Kim," it is very likely that Heinz, contrary to his father's "wishful thinking," cannot be a future Kim.[89] Lee points out that no matter how "burned black as any native," fluent in Hindustani, and versatile culturally, Kim cannot always pass for a native Indian due to his physical difference as a white boy.[90] For the same reason, in a country where ethnic or racial homogeneity is a crucial issue, Heinz's immediately noticeable biracial phenotype signifies at best "his divided loyalties."[91] Before his transfer to an American school at Yongsan, Insu starts going to a Korean school run by a local Catholic church where he learns the bitter lesson that he looks uncommon, unfamiliar, unnatural, and after all 'un-Korean,' all included in the meanings of 'twigi,' a derogatory name attached to mixed-race children in Korea:

> I entered the classroom, changed into my slippers, and sat down where I found a space on the floor among the other children. Everyone just stared at first. . . they talked loudly enough for me to her: "Stupid." "Look, he's holding his book upside down." "He's a half-wit if he can't read yet. Something's wrong with his head. Like Rubberhand." "His father's an American soldier. I saw him. He's big and scary like a long-nose goblin. His hair's all yellow and he has fur on his arms."

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[87] Ibid. 338.

[88] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 221. 128.

[89] Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 338.

[90] Kipling and Sullivan, *Kim : Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Criticism*. 3. Quoted in Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 338.

[91] Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 338.

> No one would play with me during recess, so I went down to the rice paddies and sailed twig boats by myself until I saw everyone leave the school. Then I went home.[92]

Insu experience on his first day in the American school therefore brings him to a painful realization that he cannot pass for either a Korea or an American, a deep sense of otherness out of belonging 'nowhere.'

Insu/Heinz: An Amerasian's Racial, Ethnic, and National Identification

Notwithstanding his rejection from both Koreans and Americans, Insu nevertheless maintains a strong attachment to his Koreanness, an important fact that challenges the popular notion of split ethnic identity attached to mixed-race Amerasians. Even if his father consistently denounces Korean culture and traditions as "barbarism and the pagan ceremonies," Insu, spending most time within his mother's universe, develops a natural affinity for his Korean half and even feels comfortable in his mother's spiritual world of animism, shamanism, ancestor worship, and Buddhism.[93] As he grows up, Insu shows little, if any, interest in his father's Great Game, which is why he does not want to read *Kim* until after sixteen years. Although he once anticipated learning something "mysterious," "grand," and "magical" about his father's world, Insu's experience with GIs and at school teaches him "very little" other than traumatizing his otherness. Instead, Insu finds himself more attracted to his mother's game, black-marketeering. Noting that his mother seems "much happier," "more beautiful," and "younger" when she does the game without her husband's presence, Insu also learns "how to get by, without her, in

[92] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 76.

[93] Ibid. 239.

[his] father's world."[94]

On weekends and holidays, Insu travels with his mother to ASCOM where she buys American goods at the Post Exchange (PX) and the Commissary to sell them to "a Yankee goods vendor at the Hollywood market near Pagoda Park." He comes to know all the black-marketeers, gamblers, "waitresses at the military clubs," and "prostitutes and husband-seekers," lining up outside the gates of ASCOM. Insu also makes his own money through small-time peddling in the black market. He sells "fourteen pounds of M&M's at twice their price" to a Korean storekeeper and takes orders for "Alka-Seltzer, Hershey bars, and Wrigley's chewing gum." He also buys "tool boxes for Mr. Fatso and Mr. Chong, a pair of blue jeans for Mr. Panji Lee, and Philips Milk of Magnesis for Mr. Paek" at Yongsan.[95] All that Insu does, therefore, has little to do with his father's Great Game in serving the interests of the American empire but has most to do with the interest of his own survival as an Amerasian on the periphery of the American empire.

Along with his haphazard education from his mother, Insu comes to enjoy spending time with Hyongbu (his aunt's husband), who, in return for American cigarettes that Insu brings for him, teaches a story to his young nephew. The character of Hyongbu as a storyteller plays an equally significant role in the development of Insu's ethnic consciousness. While Hyongbu's retelling of Korean traditional folktales performs a symbolic ritual of ethnic initiation for Insu, its dominant mode is anticolonial resistance in a form of oral history by the native. During the 1960s and 1970s, Korean oral literatures were intersecting with U.S. imported Western classical literature, and the modernization of South Korea was concurrent with the hegemony of European and U.S.

[94] Ibid. 92, 121.

[95] Ibid. 121. 183.

literature. Not to mention their original contents, the narrative forms of Hyongbu's stories deviate from Western narrative conventions such as linear sequencing and punctuation with a neatly packaged thesis. This often makes Insu ask "[W]hat's the meaning of the story?" after the story ends.[96] Still, Insu prefers the narratives from Hyongbu's storytelling to those of Dumas, H.G. Wells, and Rudyard Kipling from the books that his father brings him.

In one chapter, Hyongbu tells Insu the story of the Ginseng Hunters. A famed ginseng hunter, alleged as one of Hyongbu's uncles, is punished by cosmic forces for digging up the wrong ginseng and becomes deadly ill. His wife tries in vain to nurse him back to healthy. She strives and prays so diligently for his recovery that a mountain spirit, moved by her wifely devotion, advises her how to find the cure for her husband. Desperate to get the cure, she endures such tribulations as mass rape by goblins, and commits such transgression as grave-robbing and corpse desecration. She cuts the leg off of a corpse, which makes it reanimate and chase her back to her house. In the end, the corpse's leg turns into an excellent and very valuable ginseng root and heals the wife's husband. Confused about the meaning of the story, Insu asks::

> "The story was more about the wife than your uncle," I said. "What does it mean?"
> "You always ask me what it means," said Hyongbu. "And I always try to explain to you that the meaning of the story is in the story. If I could tell you what it meant, I'd just tell you the meaning and throw the story away, wouldn't I"
> "but with Aesop's Fables, there's a message at the end."
> "Aesop? What kind of name is that?"
> "Greek, I think. I read some of his stories in a book."
> "Well, professor Aesop can eat my shit. And you can wipe my ass with the pages of your book. We tell stories because they're meant to be told. Just remember the story, and you can worry about the meaning later, understand?"
> "All right, Hyongbu. It was a very good story. I liked it."

[96] Ibid. 199.

> "Whether you liked it or not doesn't matter to me. Fuck it. Bring me a drink of cold water."[97]

It is easy to see that the tale simply replicates male hegemony foregrounded in the dominant discourse of Confucian patriarchy in Korea given that the subtext of the story highlights the power of wifely devotion and sacrifice, emphasizing an ideal role of woman. When Insu comes back with the cold water he requested, Hyongbu reaffirms the masculinist gender ideology in his warning to Insu not to do too much of the feminine-coded domestic work: "Be careful. . . .You keep fixing refreshments and carrying trays, and your balls will fall off." At the same time, Hyongbu's frequent sexual references is also related to the character of Hyongbu who sharply contrasts with the stereotypes of hypomasculine Asian man as imagined and represented in American popular culture.[98] Far from being servile, appeasing, and asexual, Hyongbu remains the opposite of the stereotypes, and many of his lessons to young Insu prescribe a code of masculinity much closer to the patriarchal definition dictated by American dominant culture.

Toward the end of the narrative, Insu, on his way to the DMZ[99] to see his father, stares out the window finding an ordinary picture of rural landscape, quiet and peaceful. Gazing at the familiar Korean faces and scenery wistfully, he concludes that he "belong[s] out there." Suddenly, his pleasant thought is disrupted by the grim picture of camptowns with horrific images of sex, violence, crimes, death, and abuse. In this

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[97] Ibid. 227-8.

[98] Ibid. 228.

[99] DMZ is the acronym of De-Miltarized Zone. A strip of land running across the Korean peninsula along the 38th degree parallel that divides the North and South Koreas, the Korean Demilitarized Zone established in July 27, 1953 by the Armistice Agreement has been serving as a buffer zone between the two Koreas. Contrary to its meaning, however, the Korean DMZ still remains one of the most heavily militarized zone on the planet.

dichotomized world, GIs, Insu thinks, are foreign intruders "whose boots and tanks trod the earth of [Korea] to bitter dust." [100] Watching his white father and his fellow GI sing the "Angry Alpha Song" together only intensifies Insu's determined dissociation with the white GIs whose "secret language of knowing glances and inside jokes" he would never understand.[101] A brief conversation between Insu and the bus driver who takes him back to Yongsan should not go unnoticed:

> "Last stop," he said to me in English. "You wake up now. Yongsan."
> "Thank you, *ajoshi*," I said to him in Korean.
> "What were you doing coming back from Panmunjom so late?" he said without surprise. "You're not old enough to be a GI yet."
> "That was my father who brought me to the bus," I said. "He's the sergeant of the Honor Guard."
> "You must be proud then."
> "Proud?"
> "He's in a dangerous place doing a good thing for our country."
> "He hardly ever comes home since he's been stationed up there," I said.
> "Where do you live?"
> "ASCOM"[102]

***Memories of My Ghost Brother*: An Anticolonial Korean American Autoethnography**

> In autobiographical narrative performances, the performer often speaks about acts of social transgression. In doing so, the telling of the story itself becomes a transgressive act—a revealing of what has been kept hidden, a speaking of what has been silenced—an act of reverse discourse that struggles with the preconceptions borne in the air of dominant politics.[103]

Autoethnography is a form of critique and resistance that can be found in diverse

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[100] Fenkl, *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. 248.

[101] Ibid. 253.

[102] Ibid.260.

[103] Linda Park-Fuller, "Performing Absence: The Staged Personal Narrative as Testimony," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 20(2000). 26.

> literatures such as ethnic autobiography, fiction, memoir, and texts that identify zones of contact, conquest, and the contested meanings of self and culture that accompanies the exercise of representational authority.[104]

It is not easy to categorize *Memories of My Ghost Brother* because the narrative mixes fact and fiction inextricably. Even Fenkl, the author, has called his work variously, an "autobiographical novel," a "displaced ethnographic narrative," an "autoethnography," and an "interstitial work."[105] Historian Paul Spickard, who has been focusing on the study of mixed-race, explains that a proliferation of multiracial autobiography in the 1990s is in part a product of an increasing self-awareness of mixed-race identity and access to modes of public expression.[106] The increase in publication and the popularity of multiracial autobiography also reflects increasing consumer desire for non-stable or hybridized narrations of identity, with the multiracial subject as the "acme of a postmodernist era."[107]

Similarly, Michael Fisher has argued that "ethnic autobiography" as a combined literary genre of autobiography and ethnography should be recognized as a model of postmodern ethnography.[108] Fisher describes that contemporary autobiography, based on the autobiographical technique of "self-representation that is not a fixed form but is in constant flux," explores "the fragmented and dispersed identities of late-twentieth century

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[104] Mark Neuman, "Collecting Ourselves at the End of the Century," in *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing*, ed. C. Ellis and A. Bochner (London: Alta Mira Press, 1996). 191.

[105] Lee, "Heinz Insu Fenkl's Memories of My Ghost Brother: An Amerasian Rewriting of Rudyard Kipling's Kim." 318.

[106] Paul Spickard, "The Subject Is Mixed Race: The Boom in Biracial Biography," in *Rethinking 'Mixed Race'*, ed. David Parker and Miri Song (London: Pluto Press, 2001). 76-77.

[107] Ibid. 94.

[108] Michael J. Fisher, "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: Unibersity of California Press, 1986). 4. Quoted in Catherine Russell, "Autoethnography: Journeys of the Self," in *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999). 276.

pluralist society." It is in this context that ethnic autobiography as an "art of memory" also serves as protection against the homogenizing tendencies of modern industrial culture.[109]

Meanwhile, Mary Louise Pratt suggests reading 'autoethnography' as an oppositional mode asserting, "If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations."[110] The significance of Heinz Insu Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* as a Korean American autoethnography becomes self-evident. As a reflection onto his own childhood, Fenkl's narrative suggests the instability and danger in which multiracial subjectivity is cultivated in the camptown geography, and the difficult choices that the people especially women and children confront in terms of individual and familial economic survival.

Fenkl's narrative is also illustrative of Korean racial-ethnic subject formation as a negotiation among hierarchies of race, class, and gender in the camptown space. In *Memories of My Ghost Brother*, Insu and other Amerasian characters assume what I would call 'situational racial identities' that subordinate them to the other social actors in any given context. For the most part, the story articulates a harsh critique of the socio-political forces that lead to the formation of camptown geography surrounding U.S. military bases in South Korea. At the core of this critique is to expose how the impoverishment of colonization, war, and neocolonial regimes create a difficult and

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[109] Fisher, "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory." 4.

[110] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008). 9.

impossible world for children born into them.

In his book *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (2007), David Halberstam, an American Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author, says of the Korean War: "Over half a century later, the war still remained largely outside American political and cultural consciousness."[111] Halberstam continues that the common reference of the war as "The Forgotten War" is indeed an apt title for "Korea was a war that sometimes seemed to have been orphaned by history."[112] Although the U.S. national narrative disavows the fact of American military, economic, and cultural colonization of South Korea since the end of World War II, the Korean War, in Elaine Kim's words, "shaped the most intimate aspects of material and psychic life for tens of millions of Koreans, including millions of Korean Americans, touching even those born long after the armistice or living on distant continents." Displaced and dislocated people have migrated to the very imperial center that disrupted their lives. But Korean immigration emerges directly from that war, though both movements are opaque to most Koreans.[113] The U.S. military intervention in South Korea should be located in this transnational, transracial, and transcultural context, still in effect.

Various cultural productions of recent by Korea Americans, who are finally speaking back from the imperial center, offer what Jodi Kim describes as "an unsettling hermeneutic of the Korean War."[114] Rather than seeking "a naïve or wholesale retrieval"

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[111] David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War*, 1st ed. (New York: Hyperion, 2007). 2.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Kim, "Roots and Wings: An Overview of Korean Litearture, 1934-2003." 13.

[114] Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*. 145.

as the desired or even possible corrective to historical and narrative erasure, they understand the war as "a complex problem of knowledge production" as opposed to a close-ended historical episode.[115] The Korean War, in this view, is not only an object of historical investigation but also an "epistemological *project* generating a certain Cold War knowledge that attempts to foreclose alternative or "nonaligned" knowledges."[116]

What this project can and should do first is to ask what it means to want to represent or remember a war that has been forgotten and erased in the American popular imaginary, but has been "transgenerationally seared into the memories" of Koreans and Korean Americans and is experienced anew every day in a still-divided Korea. Entailed in the questioning is the "painful" dilemma of a "double injunction" inevitably related to the paradox in post/neo-colonial consciousness. In other words, most Korean American subjects in cultural productions have been subjected to internal and external conflicts between forgetting and remembering their colonial/neocolonial status. If they want to forget, it could mean that they opt to become "assimilated Americans." If they try to remember, it is likely that they end up being "gendered racial Korean immigrants and postimperial "exiles".[117]

It is in the same sense that Fenkl's narrative in *Memories of My Ghost Brother* structures the subjectivity of Koreans in the U.S. in terms of the imperial abjection generated by the United States' military occupation of South Korea. Fenkl's novel recalls these experiences within Korean America as narratives of loss, figured in the multiracial subject, a loss which consumption of American cultural products and migration to the

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid. 145-6.

United States cannot mitigate. Reflecting on his work, author Fenkl once explained how the experience of displacement at various levels, spatial, temporal, and psychological, has been a shaking personal trauma to him whose family history is wrought by displacements if not all in the same way.

Born in a town near Prague, the author's father Heinz Fenkl, who was a Czech, was displaced during his childhood when Germans annexed the Sudetenland and was soon himself absorbed into a German later becoming a Hitler Youth. After World War II, his father served in the Labor Service, which was a German contingent in black uniforms working under the U.S. Army during the reconstruction. In 1952, his father came to the U.S. to work on a dairy farm before he joined the U.S. Army and was sent to Korea where he met his mother. Just as in the novel, his father served two tours of duty in Vietnam and was the sergeant of the honor guard at Panmunjom in Korea's Demilitarized Zone. He returned to the States after a few more years of service in Germany and worked in various states before his retirement and died of an Agent Orange-related cancer.[118]

The life of Fenkl's mother was also full of displacements even before she married his father. During the Korean War, Fenkl's mother, a little girl at the time, traveled around the country being "shuttled from relative to relative after the deaths of her parents." The major displacement in her life was being isolated, both physically and emotionally, as she had to move to Washington State, then Germany, then various states to follow her American GI husband after their marriage. Even when she returned to Korea, Fenkl's mother existed in a "luminal space" in terms of her gender role in the family and her "odd" relation to Korean culture, which Fenkl believes was "due to her mixed marriage,

[118] Fenkl, "Images from a Stolen Camera: An Autoethnographic Recursion." Page number unidentified. Available at http://heinzinsufenkl.net/autoeth.html. Last accessed on April 15, 2011.

her long absence from her homeland, her American citizenship, and her past experience as a black marketer."[119]

One of the best examples of these complex intertwined displacements in the novel is the episode about a stolen camera described in Chapter 4 entitled "Image from a Stolen Camera." A grown up narrator, reflecting on a photo in a family album, remembers an incident in which he, young Insu and Jani, one of his best friends who is also a bi-racial GI kid, participated in the theft of a camera from a naïve GI. Like the aforementioned steam engine running to the ASCOM, the Japanese-made Pentax camera in the hand of an American GI represents the ironic succession of colonialism through the U.S. military occupation of Korea after the displacement of the Japanese colonial government. The camera, "a tool used for "capturing" images [of Koreans] by "shooting" them through a lens," is stolen by the children whom the GI intended to be the object of his gaze.[120] Then the stolen camera gets sold and goes through different hands with no one knowing where the stolen camera will finally end up being.

The children who steal the camera are the "marginalized urchins" hovering camptowns, a luminal space between the U.S. military installation and the Korea town. In a way, the theft of the camera by these children represents an empowerment of the boys who, in Fenkl's words, are "ironically more savvy to the ways of the world than is the naïve GI."[121] Meanwhile, Insu learns that the boy who originally set up the stealing plan deceived him and Jani by not paying their due money. Years later, the picture that Insu

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[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

and Jani had taken with the GI right before the other boys stole it comes back to Insu's hand, but it brings him the news that Jani has died of leukemia after he moved to America. Fenkl's reflection on this episode is worth considering:

> Tracing the ultimate causality of the camera theft illuminates the intricate network of relations among the actors in the narrative, a set of relations that plays out like a diagram of the food chain—fish eaten by increasingly larger and meaner fish.[122]

Fenkl continues to ponder, "The meanest or most desperate fish in this microcosm might be the mother of one of the young boys who might have been the one who ordered the camera and unwittingly set everything in motion."[123] The image from the camera, through a series of displaced ownerships, ultimately comes full circle to its very subjects, but the ownership of that subjectivity is forever lost, displaced both spatially and temporally. After all years of the absence, what remains are the "unreliable resonances of memory and nostalgia." It is perhaps in this context that Fenkl named this episode of the stolen camera "a displaced ethnographic narrative"[124]

Fenkl who is also a professionally trained anthropologist has insisted that the narrative of *Memories of My Ghost Brother* is based on his authentic experiences. For instance, the episode of the stolen camera discussed above is "almost entirely true" , to borrow Fenkl's own words. [125] In an interview with a college magazine, the author more firmly established that *Memories of My Ghost Brother* could have been simply called 'a memoir' "because everything in it is true." Though he admitted that there is the usual

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[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

condensation or rearrangement of chronology, but as for the events or stories in the novel, Fenkl recalls, "they all happened in exactly the way they're told." Even the stories the uncle characters tells the young Insu are very similar to the stories his uncle used to tell him when they were both in Korea.

Fenkl also described that the book's evolution is so linked with his as its creation has been "a long and interesting process," which at times has been difficult due to the personal nature of the material.[126] In a similar note, Carolyn Ellis emphasizes the utility of autoethonography to sociological analysis stating, "A story's validity can be judged by whether it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is authentic and lifelike, believable and possible; the story's generalizability can be judged by whether it speaks to readers about their experience."[127] Fenkl explains why he turned to writing an autobiographical fiction in the following:

> Coming from a background in which my parents, my siblings, and I embodied significant aspects of recent Korean history, I wanted to justice to what I knew intimately, to the material for which I could provide insight based not only on my connection, but my ability to simultaneously disengage and theorize about it. Unfortunately, the field of anthropology was not the place for me to do this if I wanted to communicate to a large audience, and so, with the intellectual equipment provided by anthropology, I turned towards autobiographical fiction through which I believed I could reach both anthropologists and a general public. My reasoning was that whereas the public might not be inclined to read a work of interest to anthropologists, anthropologists, by their very nature, would be inclined to read a work whose themes they deemed relevant to their endeavor.[128]

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[126] Piya Kochhar, "The Making of a Novel: Piya Kochhar Interviews Heinz Insu Fenkl," *Spectator* (Unknown). *Spectator* is an independent journal of news and opinion produced by undergraduates at Vassar College. The interview is available at http://heinzinsufenkl.net/spect.html. Last accessed on December 4, 2010.

[127] Ellis, "Evocative Ethnography: Writing Emotionally About Our Lives." 133.

[128] Fenkl, "Images from a Stolen Camera: An Autoethnographic Recursion." Page number unidentified. Available at http://heinzinsufenkl.net/autoeth.html. Last accessed on April 15, 2011.

In her essay "Empire is in the details" originally arranged as her 2005 presidential address to the American Ethnological Society, Lutz Catharine Lutz voices an emphatic call for more ethnographic attention to the study of empire among anthropologists. Lutz asserts that anthropological approaches to human practice with the discipline's "standard tropes of person-centered, contextualized understanding" can not only "rescue the understanding of empire from the celebratory, sensational, and antisociological approaches of popular culture" but also help to question "the singular thingness that the term *empire* suggests."[129] In more specific terms, ethnographic works, by identifying "the many fissures, contractions, historical particularities, and shifts in imperial process," can expose "the costs of empire on human bodies and social worlds, the vulnerabilities of empire to erosion or eviction the insights and alternatives that antiempire activists have been working on."[130] As Lutz most correctly observes, it is often "only in the details" that the many "dilemmas, contradictions, and vulnerabilities of empire" become "visible."[131]

A Korean American autoethnography, Heinz Insu Fenkl's *Memories* of *My Ghost Brother* offers penetrating insights into such details of social effects of American imperialism within the landscape of U.S. military camptowns in South Korea. They show how the U.S. Cold War military intervention in South Korea has transposed American racial ideologies onto the liminal spaces between the U.S. imperial presence and the South Korean client-state in a highly gendered context. Its results include multiple generations of racially mixed Koreans and Korean Americans, whose presence points to the link between America's imperial presence over "there" in Korea and the gendered

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[129] Catherine Lutz, "Empire Is in the Details," *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 4 (2006). 593.

[130] Ibid. 598.

[131] Ibid. 607.

racial "return" of the Korean subject over "here" to the imperial center." Written by an Amerasian, Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother*, in many ways, represents the ways in which contemporary Korean American writers seek to address the troubling intersection of the Cold War epistemology and Korean America's own knowledge about the conditions of possibility for its post-1945 formation.[132]

[132] Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*. 161.

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