

Framing the Nation:
Nation Building, Resistance, and Democratization in Korean Photography, 1945-2008

by

Jung Joon Lee

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for
the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of
the dissertation requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Professor Geoffrey Batchen

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Professor Kevin Murphy

Date

Executive Officer

Professor Anna C. Chave

Professor Peter Hitchcock

Professor John Tagg

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSTIY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT

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Advisor: Professor Geoffrey Batchen

This dissertation examines photography in Korea since 1945, focusing on the medium's relation to the processes of nation building, civic resistance, and democratization. The dissertation evaluates a number of types of photograph, ranging from war photographs to family portraits to art photography. These assessments are informed by the ways in which photography has articulated, and in turn been shaped by, social, political, and technological shifts in Korean society. Korea's history since 1945—a history of liberation, war, nation building, and civic struggle against authoritarian military governments—parallels the culture's development of photography and its various practices. The relationship between photography and nation building and photography and democratization is thus crucial to the history of both the nation and the medium: photography does not merely re-present Korean life; it is an integral part of it. The investigation is organized chronologically, following the progression of South Korea's social and political development and treating the distinct formative periods in the nation-building process as backdrop and cultivator for the photographic works that emerged from each era.

The history of photography in Korea since 1945 is the history of the struggles and trials of a society functioning under ideological conflict, state control, and a culture emerging from

normalized militarism. This dissertation argues that the photographic practices that have developed since independence are fundamentally about the relationship between the state and the people. An understanding of this relationship, and how photography articulates it, is dependent on understanding the socio-political progress of the nation and how these photographic practices have become specifically Korean. The dissertation provides an understanding of this progress.

With the sharp increase in interest in “national photography” since the turn of the millennium, issues of subjectivity have become even more apparent. Embracing the importance of interdisciplinary methodologies, this dissertation emphasizes issues of subjectivity and power dynamics as part of the produced knowledge and contextualizes Korean photographic practices within the historical significance of nation building, civic resistance, and democratization.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION OF KOREAN LANGUAGE

Throughout this dissertation, I follow the Revised Romanization of Korean System in effect since 2002 for transliterating the Korean language. This System is commonly, and officially, used in South Korea. Considering its consistent use in South Korea, Korean names and words will be transliterated according to the Revised Romanization of Korean System, rather than the McCune-Reischaur system commonly used in North America. Names that have already been provided with Roman alphabet transliteration will be respected as provided. In case of inconsistent transliterations of the same name, I use the most recent version of the transliterations.

As the last name precedes the first name in Korea, most names will be transliterated in the order of the last name and first name, with a few exceptions involving commonly known cases. For example, for Syngman Rhee (이승만), the Western order has been used more commonly, and therefore I will transcribe his name accordingly; on the other hand, Kim Jong-il is a commonly used transliteration of 김정일, the name of the Leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), while Jong-il Kim should be the Westernized transliteration of his name. It has become more common for the U.S. media and scholarly texts to put the last name before the first name when transliterating or saying East Asian names, such as in the case of Kim Jong-il. However, to maintain the bibliographical format of the Chicago Manual of Style, author names are listed in footnotes in order of the first and then last names regardless of their origins.

All translations of the Korean language are the author's unless otherwise noted.

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This project began to take shape around 2007. I became more certain about the project as photographs of the Candlelight Vigil against the neoliberal turn in the new administration in South Korea in June 2008 began to spread online. Without the mentoring and advice of my committee members, I could not have looked so closely into the protesters' faces and listened to their voices. First and foremost I would like to thank my dissertation advisor Geoffrey Batchen, who provided initial encouragement and sustained support for my project. He was so generous with his time while at the Graduate Center, engaging with me in critical and constructive conversations, which often sparked my interest in various issues of photography discussed in the dissertation. I am particularly grateful for his offer to remain my advisor after his departure to the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, in 2010.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Abstract</u>	iv
<u>Note on Transliteration of Korean Language</u>	vi
<u>Acknowledgement</u>	vii
<u>List of Illustrations</u>	xii
<u>Chapter One: Introduction: Toward a History of Korean Photography</u>	1
Historiography of Korean Photography	7
Histories of National Photography: An Overview of the Literature	14
Beyond the “Irresoluble” Contradictions of a History of National Photography	24
Timeline of Major Historical Events in Korea since the Late Nineteenth Century	29
A Brief Overview of the Field of Contemporary Korean Art Photography	31
Thematic Outlines of Chapters	35
<u>Chapter Two: Photography and the Contentious Memories of the Korean War</u>	39
Discourse on War Photography and Collective Memory	43
Collective Memory of the Korean War in South Korea	54
“Bundled Photographs” and Collective Memory of the Korean War	57
Photographs of War Orphans: “Individual Photographs” as an Alternative to “Bundled Photographs”	63
Korean Photographers in the Korean War	69
Limb Eung Sik and <i>Saenghwaljuui</i> Realism	73
The Annual “Discovery” of Korean War Photographs	90
<u>Chapter Three: Baby and Family Photographic Portraiture of Korea</u>	95
Photographic Portraiture of Family: Major Academic Approaches	97
Historical Background and Significance of Family Portraits	102
Brief Introduction to the Development of Photography Studios in Korea	107
Photographic Portraiture of Rites of Passage	112
The Hundredth-Day Portrait: Origin & Historical Significance	118
The Gender-Differentiated Practice of <i>Baeg-il Sajin</i>	122
The ‘Conventionalization’ of <i>Dol Sajin</i>	131
Changes in the Dol Sajin, 1990s-Present	133
Family Photographic Portraits with Grown-Up Children	138
Seeing the Other Side: ‘Alternative’ Family Portraits by Lee Seon-min and Kim Oksun	141

<u>Chapter Four: Photographs of Civic Resistance in South Korea: 1960, 1987, and 2008</u>	149
Photographs of Ideological Conflicts and Civic Resistance from 1945 to 1960	151
Emergency Measure and Photography under Military Censorship	162
The Photograph of Lee Han-yeol and its Iconicity	168
Perceptual and Experiential Changes in the Photographic Practice of 2008 Candlelight Vigils	183
The Potentiality of Social Movements Using Social Network Services	195
 <u>Chapter Five: The Militarized Nation and Camptown Photographs</u>	 200
The Discourse and Silencing of Camptowns and Camptown Prostitution	202
Camptown Prostitution and the Narrative of Emasculated Nation: Kuwabara, Burri, & Kang	210
<i>Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin</i> : “Commemorative” Photographs of Dongducheon	220
Issues of Archiving and Reproduction of Camptown Sex Workers’ Photographs	228
Camp-Townscapes	239
Spring in the Reserve Army	247
 <u>Conclusion</u>	 252
 <u>Appendix</u>	 258
 <u>Bibliography</u>	 260
 <u>Illustrations</u>	 304

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

Chapter Two

- Figure 2.1 Margaret Bourke-White, South Korean man defecting from the communist guerrillas reunited with mother, 1952
- Figure 2.2 Lim In-Sik, Explosion of Hangang Iron Bridge, June 28, 1950
- Figure 2.3 Max Desfor, Flight of Refugees across Wrecked Pyongyang Iron Bridge, Dec. 4, 1950
- Figure 2.4 Roger Fenton, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, Crimea, without cannonballs on the road, 1855, salt paper print
- Figure 2.5 Roger Fenton, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, Crimea, with cannonballs on the road, 1855, salt paper print
- Figure 2.6 Eddie Adams, General Loan executing a Vietcong, Saigon, 1968, gelatin silver print
- Figure 2.7 Harrell Fletcher, Installation view of *The American War*, Artpace, San Antonio, 2005
- Figure 2.8 Harrell Fletcher, Installation view of *The American War*, Artpace, San Antonio, 2005
- Figure 2.9 Harrell Fletcher, Reproduction of Ron Haerberle's My Lai Massacre, The War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, from *The American War*, 2005
- Figure 2.10 Harrell Fletcher, Reproduction of My Lai Massacre wall text, The War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, from *The American War*, 2005
- Figure 2.11 Limb Eung-Sik, *A War Orphan*, *Taepyungro*, Seoul, 1950
- Figure 2.12 Orphan girl in Incheon after the Incheon Landing Operation, September, 1950
- Figure 2.13. Wang Xiao Ting, The Battle of Shanghai, the Second Sino-Japanese War, August, 1937, Shanghai
- Figure 2.14 Orphans at a military chapel with ministers, 1951-3
- Figure 2.15 Marines helping out an Orphanage in Pohang, 1951-3
- Figure 2.16 Limb Eung Sik, *Woomulgil Busangeungyo* (Path to a Well, near Busan), 1933
- Figure 2.17 Limb Eung Sik, *A Sunny Place*, 1935, gelatin silver print
- Figure 2.18 Limb Eung-Sik, 구직(求職, gujik, seeking a job), 1953, Seoul, gelatin silver print
- Figure 2.19 Limb Eung Sik, *Restricted Area*, 1951, gelatin silver print
- Figure 2.20 Gustave Courbet, *The Artist's Studio (L'Atelier du peintre): A Real Allegory of a Seven Year Phase in my Artistic and Moral Life*, 1855, oil on canvas, 359 x 598 cm
- Figure 2.21 Gustave Courbet, *The Stone Breakers*, 1849, destroyed. oil on canvas, 160 x 260 cm
- Figure 2.22 Lee HyoungRok, *Shijang* (Market), 1957, gelatin silver print
- Figure 2.23 Lee Kyung-mo (이경모), Damyang City, Jeonlanamdo province from *Report on Yoesun Riots and Korean War*, Feb. 1951, gelatin silver print
- Figure 2.24 Sung Doo-Kyung (성두경), a photograph from *Report on Seoul in the Korean War*, 1951, gelatin silver print
- Figure 2.25 Choi Min Sik (최민식), *Gyungnam Eonyangjangteo* (경남언양장터, Gyeonam Eonyang Market), 1965
- Figure 2.26 Chung Beom Tae (정범태), *Gyeonggi Godeunggunbeopjaepanso* (경기고등군법재판소, Gyeonggi Military Supreme Court), 1961
- Figure 2.27 John Rich, War Orphans, Korea, 1951-52, Kodakchrome, © Yonhap News Agency
- Figure 2.28 John Rich, Soldiers at the Korean War, 1951-52, Kodakchrome, © Yonhap News Agency

Chapter Three

- Figure 3.1 Bmy Thalamas, Portrait of a family, 1850, daguerreotype, applied color
- Figure 3.2 Photographer unknown, Portrait of a woman from the royal family of Joseon, c. 1900
- Figure 3.3 Portrait of a member of the Royal Family, c. 1880, ink on paper
- Figure 3.4 Gukjeon Sajingwan (studio), portrait of a family, c. 1900-1910, gelatin silver print
- Figure 3.5 Studio unknown, Portrait of the writer Lee Gwang-su's family and friend, 1929, gelatin silver print
- Figure 3.6 Jo-il Sajingwan, 60th birthday banquet, c. 1920s, gelatin silver print
- Figure 3.7 Cheonyeondang Sajingwan, portrait of a family, c. 1930s, gelatin silver print
- Figure 3.8 Dol portrait, photographer unknown, c. 1950s, gelatin silver print, © Hong Mi-suk
- Figure 3.9 Photographer unknown, *Baeg-il* portrait, c.1955, gelatin silver print, © Hong Mi-suk
- Figure 3.10 Photographer unknown, *Baeg-il* portrait, 1962, gelatin silver print, © Hong Mi-suk
- Figure 3.11 Photographer unknown, *Baeg-il* portrait, c. 1960-65, gelatin silver print, © Hong Mi-suk
- Figure 3.12 Photographer unknown, *Baeg-il* portrait, c. 1960-1965, Gelatin silver print, © Hong Mi-suk
- Figure 3.14 Poster for the family planning campaign in the 1970s, the Association of Daehan Family Planning
- Figure 3.15 Poster for the family planning campaign in the 1980s, the Association of Daehan Family Planning
- Figure 3.17 Kim Gyu-jin, Cheonyeondang Sajingwan, *Dol* portrait of Kim's son, 1912, Gelatin silver print
- Figure 3.18 Photographer unknown, *Dol* portrait, c.1970s
- Figure 3.19 Photographer unknown, *Dol* portrait, c. 1970s
- Figure 3.20 Photographer unknown, *Dol* portrait, c. 1990s, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.21 The façade of Sagwanamu Studio, Cheongju, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.22 Interior of Orange Studio, Gwangjin, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.23 Interior of Orange Studio, Gwangjin, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.24 Interior of Joongang Color Studio, Changwon, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.25 Professionally prepared *dol* table, 2010
- Figure 3.26 *Dol* family portraits made during a *dol* banquet, 2011
- Figure 3.27 *Dol* family portraits made during a *dol* banquet, 2011
- Figure 3.28 *Dol* portrait of a male child, 2011
- Figure 3.29 Acrovista Studio, Seoul, family portrait, c. 2000s, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.30 Gaya Studio, Gongju, family portrait, c. 2000s, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.31 Studio Photo 21, Ulsan, family portrait, c. 2000s, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.32 Lee Seon-min, *Cheon Sun-ryang's House* (천선량의 집), from the series *Yeojaeui Jip* (여자의 집, Woman's House), 2006
- Figure 3.33 Lee Seon-min, *Lee Sun-ja's House* (이순자의 집), from the series *Yeojaeui Jip* (여자의 집, Woman's House), 2004
- Figure 3.34 Lee Seon-min, *Lee Sun-ja's House* (이순자의 집), from the series *Yeojaeui Jip* (여자의 집, Woman's House), 2004
- Figure 3.35 Kim Oksun, *Candy and Ray*, from the series *Happy Together*, 2002
- Figure 3.36 Kim Oksun, *Oksun and Ralf*, from the series *Happy Together*, 2002
- Figure 3.37 The show window of Lotte Studio, Seoul, © Oh Hyun-ju
- Figure 3.38 The show window of Acrovista Studio, Seoul, © Oh Hyun-ju

Chapter Four

- Figure 4.1 Lee Kyung-mo, A Meeting at the Police Station, Gwangyang, Jeon-nam, August 15, 1945, gelatin silver print
- Figure 4.2 Lee Kyung-mo, Opening ceremony of Daedongcheongnyeondan's Gwangyang Office, June 1948, gelatin silver print
- Figure 4.3 Lee Kyung-mo, Gwangyang after the Yeosun Rebellion, September, 1948, gelatin silver print
- Figure 4.4 Lee Kyung-mo, Gwangyang after the Yeosun Rebellion, September, 1948, gelatin silver print
- Figure 4.5 Lee Kyung-mo, Gyeonggi area (present day Panmunjeom) during the Korean War, 1953
- Figure 4.6 Heo Jong, Kim Ju-yeol in the sea of Masan, April 11, 1960
- Figure 4.7 Park Yong-yoon, Kim Ju-yeol taken out from the sea water, Masan, April 11, 1960
- Figure 4.8 Jeong Beom-tae, Shootings of the Korea University Students, Seoul, April 18, 1960
- Figure 4.9 Shin Bok-jin, The Martial-Law Troops in Gwangju, May 18, 1980
- Figure 4.10 Shin Bok-jin, Inspecting corpses killed during the 5.18 Gwangju Democratic Uprising, May 27, 1980
- Figure 4.11 Chung Tae-won, Collapsing Lee Han-yeol, Seoul, June 9, 1987
- Figure 4.12 March at the June Democracy Movement, Seoul, June 1987
- Figure 4.13 June Democracy Movement, in front of the City Hall, Seoul, June 1987
- Figure 4.14 Choi Byeong-su, *Hanyeol-yiryel salryeonaera*, 1987, acrylic on canvas, 7.5x10 m, A commemorative assembly for Lee Han-yeol, Yonsei University, Seoul, 1989
- Figure 4.15 Chung Tae-won, Lee Han-yeol protesting right before being hit by a teargas grenade, Yonsei University, Seoul, June 9, 1987
- Figure 4.16 Lee Han-yeol collapsing after hit by a teargas grenade
- Figure 4.17 Choi Byeong-su, *Han-yeol-yiruel salryeonaera!*, 1987, woodcut print
- Figure 4.18 John Filo, Jeffrey Glen Miller shot by the Ohio National Guard, Kent State University, May 4, 1970
- Figure 4.19 Front page of the *New York Times*, May 5, 1970
- Figure 4.20 Ron Haeberle, My Lai Massacre, March 1968
- Figure 4.21 Caravaggio, *The Entombment of Christ*, 1602-03, oil on canvas, 300 × 203 cm
- Figure 4.22 Weryeongje (shaman ritual) at the funeral of Lee Han-yeol, July, 1987
- Figure 4.23 Funerary procession of Lee Han-yeol, July, 1987
- Figure 4.24 Sam Nzima, Hector Pieteron being carried by Mbuyisa Makhubu, Soweto, 1976
- Figure 4.25 Sam Nzima, Hector Pieteron being carried by Mbuyisa Makhubu, Soweto, 1976
- Figure 4.26 Then-Senator Barak Obama with Antoinette Sitole, the Hector Pieteron Museum, Soweto, August 2006 © Associated Press
- Figure 4.27 Sahoosajinyeonguso, National Workers' Protest in Commemoration of the Labor Activist Jeon Tae-il, November 13, 1988, Seoul
- Figure 4.28 Sahoosajinyeonguso, Protest against Hyundai Heavy Industries, Gumi, April, 1989
- Figure 4.29 Sahoosajinyeonguso, A Worker at an Injection Factory in Gyeonggi-do, 1989
- Figure 4.30 Sahoosajinyeonguso, A Worker Protester at the National Workers' Protest, Nov. 1988, Seoul

Figure 4.31 Korean supporters cheering for the Korean soccer team in the City Hall Square, Seoul, June 2002

Figure 4.32 Korean supporters (estimated 60,000) cheering for the Korean soccer team Sejong-ro, Seoul, June 22, 2002 © DongA.com

Figure 4.33 A candlelight vigil for Shin Hyo-sun and Shim Mi-seon outside the City Hall Square which was blocked by the police force, November 2002

Figure 4.34 A man taking a photograph with his cellular phone at the 2008 candlelight vigil, Seoul, June 2008 © dkb news

Figure 4.35 Police water carrier shooting water at protesters, Seoul, June 1, 2008 © Pureun Geurim

Figure 4.36 Police water carrier shooting water at protesters, Seoul, June 2008 © Lee Dail

Figure 4.37 Confrontation between candlelight vigil protesters and police force, Seoul, June 2008

Figure 4.38 A man broadcasting a protest on Afreeca, Seoul, 2008 © Vin Kim

Figure 4.39 A man broadcasting a candlelight vigil on Afreeca, 2008 © Ahn Hee-tae

Figure 4.40 Confrontation between candlelight vigil protesters and police, Seoul, 2008 © MoneyToday

Figure 4.41 A candlelight vigil, Cheongju, 2008 © Cheon Yun-mi

Figure 4.42 A picket protest by junior high school students, 2008

Figure 4.43 A candlelight vigil in the City Hall Square, Seoul, June 2008

Figure 4.45 Fire at the Yongsan protest, January 2009 © Yonhap News Agency

Figure 4.46 Fire at the Yongsan protest, January 2009

Chapter Five

Figure 5.1 Kuwabara Shisei, Dongducheon, 1965, gelatin silver print

Figure 5.2 Kuwabara Shisei, Dongducheon, 1965, gelatin silver print

Figure 5.3 Kuwabara Shisei, Dongducheon, 1965, gelatin silver print

Figure 5.4 Kuwabara Shisei, Paju, 1964, Gelatin silver print

Figure 5.5 René Burri, Yongsulgol, Dongducheon, 1961, © Magnum Photos

Figure 5.6 René Burri, Taesong-dong, Dongducheon, 1961, © Magnum Photos

Figure 5.7 René Burri, Taesong-dong, Dongducheon, 1961, © Magnum Photos

Figure 5.8 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.9 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.10 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.11 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.12 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.13 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.14 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.15 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.15 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.16 Kang Yong Suk, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, 1984

Figure 5.18 Nan Goldin, C Putting on Her Make-up at the Second Tip, Bangkok, 1992, Chibachrome print

Figure 5.19 Jeff Wall, *No*, 1983, Transparency in light box

Figure 5.20 Photographer unknown, from *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia*, 1974-75

Figure 5.21 Photographer unknown, from *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia*, 1974-75

Figure 5.20 Photographer unknown, from *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia*, 1974-75
Figure 5.21 Photographer unknown, from *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia*, 1974-75
Figure 5.24 Kang Yong Suk, *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong*, 1999
Figure 5.25 Kang Yong Suk, *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong*, 1999
Figure 5.25 Kang Yong Suk, *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong*, 1999
Figure 5.27 Noh Suntag, *State of Emergency*, Daechu-ri, 2005
Figure 5.28 Noh Suntag, *State of Emergency*, Daechu-ri, 2006
Figure 5.29 Noh Suntag, *State of Emergency*, Daechu-ri, 2006
Figure 5.30 Noh Suntag, *State of Emergency*, Daechu-ri, 2006
Figure 5.33 Noh Suntag, *State of Emergency*, Seoul, 200
Figure 5.34 Kim Sangdon, *Manhattan*, from *Little Chicago*, 2008
Figure 5.35 Kim Sangdon, *New Chicago*, from *Little Chicago*, 2008
Figure 5.36 Kim Sangdon, *Soul*, from *Little Chicago*, 2008
Figure 5.37 Kim Sangdon, *Foreigners' Apartment*, 2007-08
Figure 5.38 Lee Young Hoon, *Paradise*, 2008, Inkjet print
Figure 5.39 Lee Young Hoon, *Paradise*, 2008, Inkjet print
Figure 5.39 Lee Young Hoon, *Paradise*, 2008, Inkjet print
Figure 5.39 Lee Young Hoon, *Paradise*, 2008, Inkjet print
Figure 5.39 Lee Young Hoon, *Paradise*, 2008, Inkjet print

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: TOWARD A HISTORY OF KOREAN PHOTOGRAPHY

This dissertation examines photography in Korea since 1945, focusing on the medium's relation to the processes of nation building, civic resistance, and democratization. The dissertation assesses a number of different types of photograph, ranging from war photographs to family portraits, to artistic photography. These assessments are informed by the ways in which photography has articulated, and in turn, been shaped by social, political, and technological shifts in Korean society. Nevertheless, this dissertation will argue that a transnational art history is necessary if a Korean history of Korean photography is ever to be articulated.¹

Over the past sixty years, Korea's citizens have experienced various socio-political events through the medium of photography, whether through exposure to an iconic photograph or through participating in the routine practice of family studio portraits. To understand these photographs, one must look into the specificity of the history that foregrounds these events in Korea. Many of the photographic practices in Korea are also common in other parts of the world. Photojournalism, family albums, and internet photo galleries are just a few examples of such "universal" genres practiced in Korea. This means that the ways in which photographs can be studied and historicized are not automatically defined by national boundaries. There is a need to develop a mode of history that can negotiate the flow between the inside and outside of a given nation state. The history of photography has, for decades, been conceived and matured as an academic discipline of the West: its methodology, aesthetic values, and categories of visual assessment come from those of the discipline of art history as taught and studied in the West.

¹ In his book, *Imaginary States: Studies in Cultural Transnationalism*, Peter Hitchcock argues that "the crisis of globalization is a crisis of the imagination," and urges "cultural transnationalism not be feared or suppressed but approached as a way to imagine difference globally." See Peter Hitchcock, *Imaginary States: Studies in Cultural Transnationalism* (Urbana & Chigago: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

The art historian James Elkins argues in his book *Chinese Landscape Painting as a Western Art History* (2010)² that the discipline of art history is Western, “whatever its subject and wherever its origin” is.³ If the discipline of art history in Korea is also fundamentally Western, then it follows that as part of the academic system and disciplines adopted from Western models (via Japanese colonial education),⁴ a history of photography in Korea must negotiate the following: the fissures within Korean history, the disciplinary conventions and traditions of art history (developed in the West), and the problems in categorizing what is Western and what is “authentically” Korean in photographic images found in Korea.

My dissertation is a test of this negotiation. Indeed, it explores how photography has become the battleground of this negotiation, a battle specific to Korean life and society. While this history may resonate with histories of photography in other parts of the world, this dissertation is an attempt to situate photography, a medium that undermines the boundary between national specificities and transnational commonalities, in its relation to postcolonial Korea-in-the-making.

A recent incident in Korea offers an example in which the transnational practice of using photography and information technology resulted in great social consequences particular to the Korean context. For several weeks during the month of June 2008, the Seoul *Gwangjang* (City

² James Elkins, *Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010).

³ The art historian of Chinese painting, Robert Harrist, argues that, after all the discussion on whether applying Western art historical methods to the study of Chinese landscape paintings is legitimate, Elkins announces that any hesitation is simply another “rhetorical” device to claim that a work of non-Western art can only be understood “through comparison with Western modernism,” and that “Western art history apparently got things right after all.” See Robert Harrist, “Review: Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History by James Elkins and The Great Image Has No Form, or On the Nonobject through Painting by François Jullien,” *The Art Bulletin* 93, no. 2 (June 2011): 252.

⁴ In South Korea, the discipline of art history has generally been geographically subdivided into “Western art history (서양미술사),” “Asian art history (동양미술사),” and “Korean art history (한국미술사).” Subcategories of temporal divisions such as Modern and/or Contemporary art history (근/현대미술사) have also become common. It becomes harder to distinguish national boundaries in the contemporary art world largely influenced by the “global” art market and internationally educated and active artists, curators, critics, and scholars.

Hall Square) was overtaken by concerned citizens holding candlelight demonstrations in protest at the South Korean government. The focus of these demonstrations centered on the government's decision to allow the import of U.S. beef products coming from cattle older than thirty months, feared of carrying a higher risk of infection for Mad Cow Disease.⁵ This decision magnified the public's scrutiny of the outspoken neoliberal policies set forth by the newly elected President Lee Myung-bak. The extent of the backlash shocked not only the Lee administration but also the wider public as a whole. On many levels, the demonstrations marked a departure from the way in which past solidarity and democratization movements, led by student and labor activists, took place in the 1980s and '90s. The 2008 demonstrations, for example, were truly intergenerational; thousands of high school girls displayed their homemade pickets and banners while mothers with strollers sang along to campaign songs, later to be joined by their spouses. What was also particularly striking about this socio-political and cultural movement was the configuration of its documentation, using means of communication that did not exist in the 1980s and '90s.⁶ Remarkably, the dissemination of information about the event did not depend on coverage by the country's mainstream media, dominated by TV broadcasters and newspapers. Video footage and photographs of the event were uploaded and posted on the internet in real time. Those who did not attend the event could simply go online to access news and photographs about the protest, which were conveniently linked together through popular news portal sites and personal blogs.

⁵ "U.S. beef from cattle over 30 months old to hit S. Korean tables soon," *The Hankyoreh*, April 25, 2008, http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/284092.html. Also see Sang-Hun Choe, "South Koreans assail U.S. pact, shaking leader," *New York Times*, June 11, 2008, sec. A1(L).; Sang-Hun Choe, "Beef Protest Turns Violent in South Korea," *New York Times*, June 30, 2008, sec. A7(L).

⁶ As the law on *jiphoe* (집회, "gatherings under specific purposes") prohibits protests by groups (two or more people), demonstrators had to change their "outlook" from a political protest to a cultural event with entertainment. To emphasize that these gatherings were not *jiphoe*, a new term, *munhwaje* (문화제, cultural ritual), was used to describe these gatherings.

The deluge of information throughout the course of the event was fueled by the ubiquitous presence of digital cameras, especially cellular phones equipped with high-resolution digital cameras and camcorders. Images of ordinary citizens taking a stand, captured from the point of view of other ordinary citizens, spread rapidly and inspired others to join. The nation witnessed a profound transformation in the way it experiences a mass grassroots movement, a change accentuated by new modes of communication that empowered demonstrators and increased the movement's political impact. This change is marked by a new relationship between photographic practice and social movements: one in which the relationship moves away from a reliance on a handful of iconic published photographs that characterized the violent demonstrations held during past military regimes, to the new ubiquity of user-generated digital images that circulate online today.

The incident in Korea in 2008 bears a resemblance to the recent civic upheavals in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt, where citizens utilized social networking services (SNS), particularly Facebook and Twitter, to disseminate information, organize meetings, and mobilize for demonstrations.⁷ Images and footage of demonstrations were posted on YouTube, one of the largest video-sharing communities in the world.⁸ The surge of public desire for democracy spread with SNS across North Africa. The people of Tunisia and Egypt were successful in overthrowing President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and President Hosni Mubarak, respectively, both of whom had been in power since the 1980s. However, a similar civic movement turned into a civil war in their neighboring country, Libya, in a violent conflict between the citizens who

⁷ David D. Kirkpatrick and David E. Sanger, "A Tunisian-Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History," *New York Times*, February 14, 2011, sec. A1(L).; Jennifer Preston, "While Facebook plays a star role in the revolts, its executives stay offstage," *New York Times*, February 15, 2011, sec. A10(L).; "Facebook role in Egypt crisis: Author discusses how internet helped spark revolt," *Guelph Mercury* (Guelph, Ontario, February 8, 2011), sec. A8.

⁸ "UN rights expert hails 'power' of internet," *Daily News Egypt* (Egypt, May 3, 2011), http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T004&prodId=SPN.SP00&docId=CJ255248508&source=gale&srcprod=SP00&userGroupName=nysl_me_gradctr&version=1.0. (Accessed July 13, 2011)

have fought to depose the de facto ruler, Muammar Gaddafi, later captured and killed, and his army, with the involvement of NATO.⁹ The movement in Libya was conceived and manifested differently than it was in Tunisia and Egypt.¹⁰ While the uprising in Libya was also informed via SNS, the protesters did not gain as much support from all sectors of society in that country as they did in the two neighboring countries, largely due to their request for foreign military intervention.¹¹

Although much less violent, the candlelight demonstration of 2008 alarmed many people in Korea, especially the Lee administration, proving to all that a grassroots movement of such magnitude can be organized through SNS. Nevertheless, the Korean movement, including its calls for the impeachment of President Lee, quickly dissolved, and U.S. beef has been imported since. The hundreds and thousands of photographs taken by digital cameras and cell phones now remain on old blog posts or have disappeared into individuals' computer folders. It is unclear when these photographs will be exposed to the public again in the way that they circulated via SNS, smartphones, or personal blogs in 2008.

This dissertation will investigate why and how such a photographic practice in Korea emerged in the way it did. Despite the fact that segments of the population in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya similarly employed digital and information technology as a political act, they did not engineer the same result. To understand this difference, it is important to recognize the specifics of the politico-historical background of each movement, that the outcomes of the movements are closely related to political, economic, and cultural traditions and conditions distinct to each place.

⁹ Charlie Savage and Thom Shanker, "As NATO claims progress in Libya, a U.S. deadline is put to the test," *New York Times*, May 21, 2011, sec. A9(L).

¹⁰ Since the overthrow of their despot in 2011, Egyptian citizens in particular have also been subjected to violence due to escalating tension between the ruling generals of the military-controlled government and the Islamist-dominated parliament. See "Egypt News - Revolution and Aftermath," *New York Times*, March 16, 2012. <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/egypt/index.html>.

¹¹ See "Don't Equate Libya with Other Recent Uprisings," *Post-Standard* (Syracuse, NY, May 9, 2011), sec. Opinion.

The results are also affected by each nation's colonial and postcolonial histories; their present-day international relations in many ways depend on how their decolonization proceeded.¹² Hence, what appears at first to be a common and "universal" practice of SNS image sharing demands a much more complex understanding of the histories specific to each nation.

This chapter lays out the theoretical framework and rationale behind the undertaking of this project. The most critical issue concerns the production of a history of photography that is "different" from the established European and American models. To approach this issue, I review publications on Korean photography, mainly published in South Korea, and recent publications on national histories of photography. Through this assessment, I draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the publications in an effort to arrive at my own methodology for a history of photography bounded by nationhood. A production of such a history, however, also necessarily faces the question of how one can write about difference without creating a history of photography of yet another Other, whose identity is signified only by virtue of its deviation from Euro-American categories. In order to explicate the limitations and possibilities involved in producing a history of "difference," I examine Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's critique of the "irresoluble contradictions" of discursive acts in confronting hegemony. These discussions will be helpful in selecting the critical issues to be dealt with in each chapter and the manner by which we can approach them historically. Following this examination, I outline some of the major historical events that have occurred in Korea since the late nineteenth century to facilitate an understanding of various events I discuss in the following chapters. I then provide a brief

¹² For instance, Egypt became independent from Britain in 1922 and Tunisia from France in 1956. However, their colonial histories are much more complicated than can be summated in the above dates, as, for example, these countries have also been under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, each having different relations and outcomes, prior to the Western invasion.

overview of the state of contemporary Korean art photography. Lastly, I offer an outline of each chapter of the dissertation.

Historiography of Korean Photography

This dissertation has been inspired by the work of Korean scholars and photographers who have pioneered the scholarship on the history of photography in Korea. My study is also indebted to various historians of photography across the world, especially those who provide precedents for national and social histories of photography.

The publications by the founding members of the Research Institute of the History of Photography (RIHP) based in Seoul offer useful studies on the early history of photography in Korea. Furthermore, their work discusses the idiosyncratic ways in which the history of photography developed as a field of study in South Korea. This particular focus had been largely ignored in the pre-1990s scholarship, which tended to focus more on the history of the professional practice of photography in Korea.¹³ Within this small circle of scholars, Choi Injin has been regarded as the collector and researcher who single-handedly founded the RIHP.¹⁴ His contributions to the scholarship on Korean photography include seminal publications such as *Hanguksajinsa 1631-1945 (The History of Korean Photography 1631-1945, 1999)*, which

¹³ For example, prior to the survey publication of Choi's *Hanguksajinsa 1631-1945*, Kang Sang-gyu, a photographer, published a book titled *Hanguk Sajinsa (The History of Korean Photography)* in 1985. The book chronicles the reception and development of photography in Korea through a framework of chronological and developmental progression: the periods of "the dawn (여명기, 黎明期)," "the fetus (태동기, 胎動期)," "the blossom (개화기, 開花期)," and "the development (전개기, 展開期)." This framework outlines its history as the reception of the medium in the late nineteenth century, artistic photography during the colonial period, and then the post-Korean War movement of "Realism" in the mid-twentieth century.

¹⁴ Choi founded RIHP in Gwanhwamun, Seoul, in 1978. See Seon-Hee Yoon, "Choi In-Jinjakga 'Sajinedo Yeoksaga Sala Sumsheoyo' (최인진 작가 '사진에도 역사가 살아 숨쉬어요')," *Hankook Ilbo*, December 3, 2008, <http://weekly.hankooki.com/lpage/arts/200812/wk20081203131404105130.htm>.

remains to date the only historical survey of the medium's history up to 1945.¹⁵ *Hanguksajinsa* traces the medium's history in Korea back to the seventeenth-century Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897).¹⁶ This was a time characterized by Korea's first direct contact with Western cultures, in China. At home, Dutch ships were arriving in the coastal areas of the Jeolla Province and Jeju Island [Appendix A]. Choi considers 1631 a crucial year for Jeong Du-Eon (정두언), a Korean representative who traveled to China, and forged the first contacts with people from Europe.¹⁷ Choi notes that one of the scientific books that Jeong brought back to Joseon after meeting with Europeans was *Wongyeongseol* (원경설), a book which Choi suspects to have included information about the camera obscura.¹⁸ The rest of Choi's book provides information about early photographers and their work in Korea, closely tracing historical accounts during the fall of the Joseon Dynasty and the colonial period, with hundreds of examples of photographs, newspapers, and literature. The book includes an extensive number of black-and-white reproductions of photographs. Although Choi provides historical accounts of the "arrival" and development of photography in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, he does not employ any particular methodology in his interpretation of the images. As a result, any social, political, or cultural contextualization of the material remains largely absent from his study. An earlier book, his 1993 publication, *Hanguk Shinmunsajinsa (The History of Photojournalism in Korea)*,

¹⁵ Injin Choi, *Hanguk Sajinsa 1631-1945 (한국사진사 1631-1945, The History of Korean Photography 1631-1945)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 1999).

¹⁶ Joseon is the name for the Korean sovereign state ruled by the Yi Dynasty from 1392-1897. It was founded by Taejo Yi Seong-gye and roughly encompassed the territory of what is now South and North Korea. Hanyang, present day Seoul, was the capital.

¹⁷ Choi, *Hanguk Sajinsa 1631-1945 (한국사진사 1631-1945, The History of Korean Photography 1631-1945)*, 36-37.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

focuses on photojournalism, but, similar to *Hanguksajinsa*, he chronicles historical events through his chosen images without offering an interpretive frame.¹⁹

The past few years have witnessed the publication of a number of Korean-language books focused on specific periods and issues in the history of photography in Korea. These publications are valuable not only for studying the early development of photography in Korea but also in demonstrating how a handful of key photographers and critics have shaped the ways in which the history of photography was being studied and recorded from the 1920s on.²⁰ They also provide their own critical lens through which to view the formation of the medium's history in Korea. Many of these publications were written by scholars once affiliated with the RIHP, such as Lee Kyungmin's *Gyeongseong, Sajine Bakhida* (*Gyeongseong, Imprinted on a Photograph: Reading Cultural History of Korea in the Modern Era*, 2008) and Park Pyeong Jong's *Hanguk Sajineui Jasaengryeok* (*The Homegrown Strength of Korean Photography*, 2010).²¹ In *Gyeongseong, Sajine Bakhida*, Lee Kyungmin discusses the role of photography during the colonial period (1910-1945), with a particular focus on how photography was used by Japanese colonists to control Korean people and arrest independence activists.²² Lee focuses on how photography became popularized and truly public in the 1920s through photography studios

¹⁹ Injin Choi, *Hanguk Shinmun Sajinsa* (*한국신문사진사*) (Seoul: Yeolhwadang, 1993).

²⁰ On the other hand, although most of them did not develop into more academic publications, a number of dissertations and theses on post-1945 Korean photography have been written in Korean. The theses have often been insightful for my own project. Those include Sang Bin Uhm, "Photojournalism on the May 18 Gwangju Democratic Movement" (MA Thesis, Sangmyung University, 2001); Young Suk Kim, "Analysis of Korean Collective Consciousness through Photography" (MA Thesis, Chung-Ang University, 2004); Su Young Ahn, "Korean Photography in Magazines in the Late 1980s" (MA Thesis, Hongik University, 2005); Yunjung Kim, "Korean War Photography as Documentary" (MA Thesis, Seoul: Seoul National University, 2009); Kyungmin Lee, "A Study on History of Modern Korean Photography" (Ph.D. Thesis, Chung-Ang University, 2011). The English titles have been provided by the authors of the theses in their English abstracts.

²¹ Kyungmin Lee, *Gyeongseong, Sajine Bakhida: Sajineuro ilnun Hanguk Geundae Munhwasa* (*경성, 사진에 박히다: 사진으로 읽는 한국 근대 문화사*, Gyeongseong, Imprinted on a Photograph: Reading Cultural History of Korea in the Modern Era) (Seoul: Sanchaekja, 2008).; Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Jasaengryeok* (*한국사진의 자생력*) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2010).

²² Lee, *Gyeongseong, Sajine Bakhida: Sajineuro ilnun Hanguk Geundae Munhwasa* (*경성, 사진에 박히다: 사진으로 읽는 한국 근대 문화사*, Gyeongseong, Imprinted on a Photograph: Reading Cultural History of Korea in the Modern Era), 17-32.

in Gyeongseong, the old name for Seoul.²³ Lee Kyungmin's work on early vernacular photography in Korea has been especially helpful in tracing the origins of current vernacular practices.²⁴ On the other hand, Park Pyeon Jong's *Hanguk Sajineui Jasaengryeok* focuses on the development of photographic movements in the mid-twentieth century. Park assesses the rise and fall of the "Realist" movement in the 1950s and '60s, and the limitations of the movement as an artistic endeavor.

Historians of photography in Korea have also devoted their energies to recording biographies of key individual photographers who were important members of various photography movements during the early to mid-twentieth century. This is because a substantial number of photographers active in the southern parts of Korea prior to the Korean War moved to North Korea shortly before the war, and others died before studies of their work were conducted in the aftermath of the war and under the military regime. Such are the topics of Cho Woo-Seok's *Hanguksajingaron* (1998)²⁵ and Park Yeong Jong's *Hanguksajineui Seongujadeul* (2007).²⁶ Cho and Park provide brief biographies of the photographers they have chosen as representatives of major photographic movements and offer information on their affiliations with various studios and institutions. They also provide formal analyses of selected photographs. In Cho's case, however, most of the analyses consist of comparisons with photographs by Western

²³ Ibid., 81-137.

²⁴ Kyungmin Lee, "Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대 한국의 초상 Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs)," in *Urisajineui yeoksarul yeolda (우리사진의 역사를 열다 Initiating the History of Our Photography)* (Seoul: Hanmi Museum of Photography, 2006), 7-42. For artistic movements of photography during the colonial period, see Kyungmin Lee, *Hanguk Geundae Yesulsajin Archive (1910-1945): Cameradangwa Yesulsajinshidae (한국 근대 예술사진 아카이브 (1910-1945): 카메라당과 예술사진시대 The Archive of Korean Modern Art Photography)* (Seoul: Archivebooks, 2010).

²⁵ Woo-Seok Cho, *Hanguksajingaron (한국사진가론)*, Noonbit Sajinseonseo (눈빛 사진선서) 15 (Seoul: Noonbit, 1998).

²⁶ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul (한국사진의 선구자들)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 2007).

photographers. Park, though very brief, makes efforts to contextualize the work of photographers with regard to the specific social and political conditions under which they were generated.

Even with the inspiring work of the scholars discussed above, there still exist only a limited number of scholarly publications and comprehensive surveys on the history of Korean photography within Korea, and none outside, despite growing international interest in Korean art and visual culture. In 2010, however, a curiously large number of photography books were published in Korea. Many of them were in fact war photography books issued to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Korean War. Most were published by governmental agencies, such as *1950 0625 Hangukjeonjaeng Sajinjib (1950 0625 한국전쟁 사진집)* by the GyeonggiGi Cultural Foundation and *Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War: Photo Exhibition on Peace and National Unification (6.25 전쟁 60주년 평화통일 사진전)* by the Ministry of Unification.²⁷ These two books are bilingual publications, chronicling conflicts between South and North Korea through documentary photographs. They include photographs from the National Archive and Records Administration (NARA) of the United States, but fail to provide information about authors or sources of photographs. The latter even includes photographs of contemporary government officials such as the Minister of Unification, Hyun In-taek, and President Lee. Less propagandistic is the exhibition catalog published by the Daelim Contemporary Art Museum and the Ministry of National Defense, in conjunction with a commemorative exhibition held at the Daelim Contemporary Art Museum. The exhibition was

²⁷ GyeongGi Cultural Foundation, ed., *1950 0625 Hangukjeonjaeng Sajinjib (1950 0625 한국전쟁 사진집)* (Gyeonggi-Do: GyeongGi Cultural Foundation, 2010).; Ministry of Unification, ed., *Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War: Photo Exhibition on Peace and National Unification (6.25 전쟁 60주년 평화통일 사진전)* (Gwacheon: Ministry of Unification, 2010). Other commemorative publications include John Rich, *Korean War in Color: A Correspondent's Retrospective on a Forgotten War* (Seoul: Seoul Selection, 2010).; Sujin Shin, ed., *On the Line: Exhibition Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War (경계에서)* (Seoul: Ean Books, 2010). The National Folk Museum of Korea, ed., *60th Anniversary of the Korean War Special Exhibition-- "Geumsoon: Overcome Adversity" (굳세어라 금순아! 6.25 전쟁 60주년 기념 특별전)* (Seoul: The National Folk Museum of Korea, 2010). The English titles have been provided by the authors of the publications.

curated by “photo-psychologist (사진심리학자)” Shin Sujin and included the work of ten well-known contemporary photographers, including Koo Bohnchang, Oh Hein-kuhn, and Kang Ungu.²⁸

Very few books that address the history of Korean photography have been published outside of Korea.²⁹ One exception is *Korea: Caught in Time* (1997), which showcases photographs taken by itinerant photographers from Europe, such as Felice Beato, during the early years of photography in Korea. Written by Terry Bennett, a collector and dealer in nineteenth-century Asian photographs, the book is the only survey of nineteenth-century photography in Korea available in English. Bennett’s book examines the medium’s reception in Korea, which was closely linked with the colonization of the nation by the Japanese.³⁰ Nevertheless, Bennett does not adequately acknowledge the impact of colonialism on the arrival of photography in Korea. The book lacks a critical methodology, which may have helped to assess the specificities of the Korean photography that the book promises to represent, but also fails to include any references to the work of Korean scholars and does not provide anything other than historical accounts of itinerant foreign photographers in Korea. The book is, in fact, indicative of a larger issue: very few historical texts exist on the subject in English, and these few fail to consult Korean sources, resulting in highly flawed and one-sided scholarship.

Survey exhibitions of Korean photography outside of Korea have also been scarce, and those that have been mounted have not been successful in further engaging the public, critics,

²⁸ Shin, *On the Line: Exhibition Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War* (경제이서).

²⁹ In fact, studies on the history of Korean photography have not been published in languages other than English, although numerous exhibition catalogs on individual photographers have been published in different languages. Such publications include *Koo Bohnchang* in Japanese and *Noh Suntag: Ausnahmezustand* in German and English. See Yuki Kajikawa, Akiko Yamada, and Satoshi Nojima, *Koo Bohnchang* (Kyoto: Kyoto Museum of Contemporary Art, 2006).; Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler, eds., *Noh Suntag: Ausnahmezustand, State of Emergency, 비상국가* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008).

³⁰ Terry Bennett, *Korea: Caught in Time* (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 1997).

and scholars to produce more substantial publications. Such an exhibition was organized by the RIHP, *The Century of Korean Photography – Images from the Land of Morning Calm*, in Cologne, Germany, in September 2001. The exhibition was adapted from a much more extensive exhibition titled *Hanguksajinyeoksajeon (The Exhibition of the History of Korean Photography)* held in Seoul in 1998.³¹ The exhibition catalog was published in English with short essays by Park Ju Seok and Choi Injin. The book includes photographic portraits of the members of the royal family and intellectuals of the Joseon Dynasty, followed by the work of major Korean photographers/artists active in the twentieth century. The book also includes ethnographic photographs taken by Japanese photographers in the 1910s and a few vernacular portrait photographs employed in the work of one artist. The publication includes a wide variety of photographic genres across two centuries but sacrifices content for quantity; the authors provide little information on how those photographs came to be, what they are, or what they mean.

More recently, The Museum of Fine Art, Houston, held an exhibition of contemporary Korean photography from November 2009 to January 2010. The exhibition, titled *Chaotic Harmony: Contemporary Korean Photography*, showcased the work of forty Korean artists, ranging from emerging to established artists.³² The photographs chosen for the exhibition dealt with a variety of issues, including gentrification and patriarchal gender roles in Korea. The catalog includes essays by the curators, Anne Wilkes Tucker and Karen Sinsheimer. Tucker's essay chronicles the development of photography in Korea while emphasizing its achievements by making comparisons with Western photographic movements.³³ Sinsheimer's essay also

³¹ Park Ju Seok's name has also been transliterated as Park Juseok and Park Ju Suk in some publications. For the purpose of consistency, this dissertation uses "Park Ju Seok" throughout. Injin Choi and Juseok Park, *The Century of Korean Photography: Images from the Land of Morning Calm (한국사진의 한세기)* (Seoul: RIHP, 2001).

³² Karen Sinsheimer and Anne Wilkes Tucker, *Chaotic Harmony: Contemporary Korean Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2009).

³³ *Ibid.*, 11, 12.

compares the photographic work of contemporary artists in Korea, especially portraits, with the work of Western photographers of earlier times, such as Julia Margaret Cameron and August Sander. Sinsheimer focuses on what she interprets as expressions of Korean identity, for example, in portraits of people of different generations.³⁴ Despite the various issues they discuss through their consideration of the individual subjects of the photographs, the emphasis of these writers lies in describing individual works and showing how that work is “reminiscent” of well-known works by Western photographers such as *Gentleman Farmer and Wife* (1924) by August Sander.³⁵ Furthermore, the exhibition reflected the views of the organizers that “Contemporary Korean Photography” means contemporary art photography, as they chose not to include any other forms or genres of photography widely practiced in contemporary Korea.

Histories of National Photography: An Overview of the Literature

This brief overview of the literature on the history of photography in Korea, despite the fact that much of it lacks concrete methodologies, indicates a rapidly increasing interest in the history of the medium in Korea. Concurrently, there has been a rapid growth in the number of publications in English that emphasize national specificities found in photography. These include *The History of Japanese Photography* by Anne Wilkes Tucker, et al. (2003); *Dutch Eyes: A Critical History of Photography in the Netherlands* by Flip Bool, et al. (2007);³⁶ Christopher Pinney’s *The Coming of Photography in India* (2008);³⁷ Helen Ennis’s *Photography and Australia* (2007);³⁸ Maria Golia’s *Photography and Egypt* (2010);³⁹ and Maria Antonella

³⁴ Examples include Jung Yeondoo’s *Bewitched* series and Oh Hein-kuhn’s *Ajumma* series that show individuals in their teens and early twenties and middle-aged women, respectively.

³⁵ Karen Sinsheimer, “Identity, Family, Memory: Who Am We?” in *Chaotic Harmony*, 72.

³⁶ Flip Bool, et al., *Dutch Eyes: a critical history of photography in the Netherlands* (Waanders: Zwolle, 2007).

³⁷ Christopher Pinney, *The Coming of Photography in India* (London: British Library, 2008).

³⁸ Helen Ennis, *Photography and Australia* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).

Pelizzari's *Photography and Italy* (2010),⁴⁰ the last three published as part of the *Exposures* series by Reaktion Books; Roberto Tejada's *National Camera: Photography and Mexico's Image Environment* (2009);⁴¹ Terry Bennett's *History of Photography in China 1842-1860* (2009);⁴² and Karen Strassler's *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java* (2010).⁴³ Most of these publications attempt to situate photography within the specifics of their respective national histories, particularly in countries overlooked in the European and North American-dominated⁴⁴ standard survey texts of the history of photography, such as those by Beaumont Newhall⁴⁵ and Michel Frizot.⁴⁶

My own explorations of photography in Korea since 1945 have been motivated by both the strengths and weaknesses found in the publications on national photography mentioned

³⁹ Maria Golia, *Photography and Egypt* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010).

⁴⁰ Maria Antonella Pelizzari, *Photography and Italy* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010).

⁴¹ Roberto Tejada, *National Camera: Photography and Mexico's Image Environment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

⁴² Terry Bennett, Anthony Payne, and Lindsey Stewart, *History of photography in China 1842-1860* (London: Quaritch, 2009), http://www.worldcat.org/title/history-of-photography-in-china-1842-1860/oclc/436819664&referer=brief_results.

⁴³ Karen Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁴⁴ A recent edition of Mary Warner Marien's survey text devotes various sections, sub-headed as "Focus" and "Portraits," to non-European or American photographers and their work, such as the Mexican photographer Manuel Álvarez Bravo and the Cambodian genocide photographic database. Given limited spaces, however, most of the discussions of non-Western photographers and photographic practices in the book remain as swift introductions rather than thorough assessments of contextualized histories. Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, Third. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011).

⁴⁵ Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982).

⁴⁶ Michel Frizot, *A New History of Photography* (Köln: Könemann, 1998). Geoffrey Batchen aptly pointed out how Michel Frizot does not include photographers, photographs, or photographic practices from countries in the African continent, nor even mention the word "Africa" in this survey book. Frizot, however, does include a short chapter on Japanese photography (the only chapter on photography outside Europe and the United States) titled "Japan and Photography: In Quest of the Other," written by the Japanese photographer, curator, and critic, Chihiro Minato. Minato introduces the "arrival" of photography in Japan and chronicles the "belatedness" of photographic movements in Japan. For example, Minato states "Japanese Pictorialism lagged behind that of Europe and the United States by a good twenty years[.]" (688) and explains the time gap and other differences by mentioning what was happening in Japan at the time, such as earthquakes and rapid capitalist development. After introducing major photographers throughout the twentieth century, such as Tomatsu Shomei, Nakahira Takuma, and Araki Nobuyoshi, Minato ends the essay by stating the history of Japanese photography is "a struggle to arrive at the universal... while still remaining conscious of the unique character of Japanese culture" and asks a rhetorical question as to whether "the question of East and West" is still legitimate (p.693). The concise essay fails to provide supporting points for Minato's claim that such a question is no longer needed, because it does not give comparative and critical assessments (other than that of "a time lag") of photography of the places he terms as "East and West."

above. Among those, one of the most ambitious in its scope and volume is the survey text *The History of Japanese Photography*, which was published in conjunction with the traveling exhibition held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2003. The book is organized chronologically, with six essays contributed by five scholars of the history of Japanese photography (four of them being Japanese), along with 207 handsomely reproduced plates. The essays provide historical accounts of the development of photography in Japan with numerous examples of the work of major photographers. Overall, however, they seem to lack a thematic or theoretical approach to the images under consideration. Most critically, the absence of a rationale for inclusion and exclusion of photographs introduced in the book impedes the reader's understanding of what "Japanese Photography" is in this version of the history, other than a selection of photographs produced by Japanese-born photographers.⁴⁷

Although the effectiveness of comparisons between photographs of different places and times (namely between those of the West and non-West) is a matter that needs to be argued for in each history of photography framed by a national boundary, *The History of Japanese Photography* does not offer sufficient critical, comparative analyses of the photographs chronicled. On the other hand, Roberto Tejada's *National Camera: Photography and Mexico's Image Environment* claims to base its discussions on a comparative methodology to assess "the relation between visual documents and local identities to show how Mexican and U.S. cultures have been reflected and transformed through photographic images."⁴⁸ The term "image environment," coined by Tejada, proves to be appropriate for his methodology as well. The term

⁴⁷ Joel Smith, "Review: The History of Japanese Photography," *CAA Online Reviews* (September 11, 2003), <http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/576>. Smith questions why the survey bypasses the influential work of foreign photographers who worked in Japan for a substantial period of time, such as Felix Beato and William Klein while including the overseas work of Nakayama Iwata, Yasuhiro Ishimoto, and Hiroshi Sugimoto.

⁴⁸ Roberto Tejada, *National Camera: Photography and Mexico's Image Environment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 17.

signifies an environment in which complex and often asymmetrical exchanges of power take place through images. According to Tejada, the image environment's "interface is located between discursive practices and photographic performances," and "this interface constitutes a blueprint for a larger sociopolitical system that is the 'shared image environment' of meanings that otherwise could not have found exchange."⁴⁹ He also emphasizes the local over the national by asserting that the production of art, its potential meanings, and representational effects should be examined through the question of locality, which should foreground a national framework by making the "national" and "foreign" mutual entities.⁵⁰ This may be a roundabout way for Tejada to justify his inclusion of the American photographer Edward Weston, and Italian-born Tina Modotti, and their relationship and work in Mexico in his discussion. With an extensive discussion on the scope of his study, Tejada's *National Camera* at first appears to have the answers to Joel Smith's concern that a history of photography "kept within the tidy boundaries of one nation-state" risks the possibility of "flattening regional variance rather than linking it to broader perspectives on the medium."⁵¹

Nevertheless, Tejada mainly provides critiques and analyses of existing scholarship on bodies of photographs that have already been widely received, such as the work of Modotti and Manuel Álvarez Bravo. This has been done largely through theoretical assessments, either by critiquing the existing feminist analyses of images or referencing various philosophers and theoreticians. Although Tejada does look at, for example, the Casasola Collections that illuminate the post-Revolution era of changing urban spaces as well as class and race relations, his endeavor mostly provides an updated review of the art photography of Mexico. What Tejada does not include in his study is vernacular practices of photography in Mexico and the impact of

⁴⁹ Ibid., 136-137.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁵¹ Smith, "Review: The History of Japanese Photography."

social, political and cultural exchanges between Mexico and the United States as he promised to offer in the beginning of the book.⁵² Unfortunately, what is national about *National Camera* is still left ambiguous at the end of the book. What is certain instead is that he has revisited a few Modernist moments in photography with excessive theoretical references that may hinder the reader's understanding of the actual visual sources.

On the other hand, as part of the ongoing series on photography, *Exposures*,⁵³ Maria Golia begins her book, *Photography and Egypt*, by examining how the development of photography in Egypt in the nineteenth century is deeply related to the European desire to capture "familiar Egypt,"⁵⁴ "to reinforce expectations rather than provide new information."⁵⁵ Egypt was, from the perspective of European visitors, in immediate need of modernization through exploitation of cultural heritage, natural resources, and labor. Unlike Tejada, this story is told strictly as a historical account, bypassing theoretical debates or introspection. As a result, the work lacks a discussion about subjectivity, particularly about the politico-historical negotiations at play in the formation of the Egyptian subject since the mid-twentieth century. Yet Golia does focus her discussions on the socio-political aspects of a wide range of photographic practices in Egypt, including the nineteenth-century Royal court photographs, studio practices such as wedding portraits, recent digital photographs of riots and disasters, and contemporary art

⁵² Although Tejada examines in the last chapter the implication of the vernacular photographs of brothels and clubs taken from a Mexico-U.S. border town called Nuevo Laredo, now housed at an archive overseen by the Wittliff Collections, Texas State University-San Marcos, he mainly focuses on the issues of aesthetics and ownership of the archive.

⁵³ The *Exposures* series of Reaktion Books currently includes John Harvey, *Photography and Spirit*, *Exposures* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).; Helen Ennis, *Photography and Australia* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).; David Company, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008).; François Brunet, *Photography and Literature* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009).; Kelly Wilder, *Photography and Science* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009).; Denis Cosgrove, *Photography and Flight* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009).; Erin Haney, *Photography and Africa* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010).; Mick Gidley, *Photography and the U.S.A.* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010); and Pelizzari, *Photography and Italy*. Five more books are forthcoming as part of the series in 2011 on topics that include photography in Japan and Ireland.

⁵⁴ Maria Golia, *Photography and Egypt*, *Exposures* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

practices. The discussion, retrospectively speaking, anticipated the popular uprising against President Mubarak in early 2011 that utilized SNS, partly to circulate digital images, in a massive effort to depose him. Golia also introduces various Egyptian as well as foreign-born photographers and explains their relationship to the country, and to each other.

What sets Golia's book apart from *The History of Japanese Photography* or *National Camera* is that she accentuates her discussion with a critical reflection on Egypt as photographed by itinerant European photographers, such as Francis Frith. In the following chapters, she discusses how photographs by indigenous photographers, whether by King Farouk himself or by modest studio photographers, visually construct life in Egypt in different, complex, and varying ways. In other words, although the question was never explicitly asked, Golia is concerned about the question of what "unique considerations frame 'photography' in" Egypt.⁵⁶ While being accessible to non-photography or Egypt specialists, *Photography and Egypt* offers an engaging way to look at vernacular practices of photography in Egypt through a socio-cultural lens.

A recent publication has been especially relevant to this dissertation in terms of its subjects and thematic approach. Karen Strassler's publication, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*, industriously aims to answer the question, "What does it mean to be Indonesian?" through an examination of photographic practices.⁵⁷ As an ethnographic study, the book offers a localized perspective on photography in Indonesia that raises a number of cultural and political issues. What makes Strassler's book different from others discussed above is that it focuses solely on vernacular practices of photography.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Smith, "Review: The History of Japanese Photography."

⁵⁷ Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*. Strassler ends the book by reminding us of the question again and anticipates new ways to answer the question with the new photographic practices involving digital images in Indonesia.

⁵⁸ Throughout the dissertation, I use the term "vernacular" to refer to the photographic practices that are often part of cultural traditions of a place, such as the portrait photograph of the 100th day after birth in Korea. These may be

Comparable to my own project, the book examines the Indonesian nation-in-the-making through selected photographic practices, such as amateur landscape photographs that depict the Indonesian landscape in ways that resemble the work of “Old Masters,”⁵⁹ studio portraits with painted backdrops,⁶⁰ I.D. photographs called *pasfoto* (passport photograph),⁶¹ and photographs of student protests against President Suharto’s thirty-two-year rule taken by student photographers.⁶² For example, through an analysis of the practice of I.D. photographs, *Refracted Visions* conveys the complexities of ethnic identity in Indonesia, a country comprised of about three hundred native ethnicities, as well as non-native ethnicities such as Indian and Chinese, who speak over seven hundred different dialects.⁶³ The book also examines the role of the ethnic Chinese community in the development of photography studios, as well as the photographic practice of using *pasfoto* as a form of memorial portraiture.⁶⁴

Strassler’s book is the fruitful result of extensive anthropological fieldwork that offers numerous different photographic practices and countless testimonies of Javanese residents, many of them being Strassler’s own close contacts. Her writing style naturally reflects her intimacy with the subjects, especially when she records her own memories of conversations and experiences with them. This is an important juncture at which the disciplines of the history of photography and anthropology meet: her assessments of photographs and history are supported and legitimized by her first-person narrative that positions her as an eyewitness privy to knowledge acquired firsthand. This conventional anthropological practice of using the first-

made by professional photographers in photography studios, but they are not for further commercial transactions (cf. advertisements or fine art) but for individuals’ own pleasure and commemoration.

⁵⁹ Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*, Chapter I (29-71).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Chapter II (73-122).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Chapter III (123-163).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 207-249.

⁶³ “An Overview of Indonesia - The land, people, government and economic factors,” *Living in Indonesia, A Site for Expatriates*, n.d., <http://www.expatriates.or.id/info/overview.html>.

⁶⁴ Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*, 148-155.

person pronoun and personal experiences usually proves to be powerful and evocative for Strassler's analyses. The convention also blurs the boundary between the speaker and the subject, producing a voice that alternates between outside researcher, participant-observer, and native informant. Even outside the discipline of anthropology, a study presented through the voice of a participant-observer or native informant would not be a problem, even if it is less conventional, as long as the study provides accurate, critical, and effective assessments. In such a study, however, the speaking-self tends to position his/herself as deeply entrenched within the community of the subject. While claiming to view the subject with "distant eyes," the speaker is at the risk of projecting concepts and values familiar to his/her own culture on to the subject of the study without acknowledging it.⁶⁵

In *Refracted Visions*, for example, Strassler discusses *documentasi* photography, "a genre of photographic practice that cultivates a particular 'way of seeing' and remembering the family."⁶⁶ Strassler also provides definitions and examples of terms associated with memorial objects, such as *kenagan*, "objects that serve as metonymic reminders of an event or person."⁶⁷ The discussion of *documentasi* and *kenagan* necessarily concerns what "memory" might mean in the tumultuous years under the Suharto regime in Javanese society. Strassler, however, opts to focus on the photographic modalities of memory rather than the concept and value of "memory" itself in Java. As a result, what appears unique in the Indonesian practice of, for example, family photography is the physical manifestation of memory in the practice of *documentasi* and

⁶⁵ This "risk" has been the subject of major debate in anthropology throughout the past two decades. See, for example, Melford E. Spiro, "Postmodernist Anthropology, Subjectivity, and Science: A Modernist Critique," *Comparative Studies in Society & History* 38, no. 4 (October 1996): 759-781.; Charlie Galibert, "Some Preliminary Notes on Actor-Observer Anthropology," *International Social Science Journal* 56, no. 181 (September 2004): 455-466.; Tom Boland, "Critical Subjectivity: Towards a Gnomonic Model of Subject Constitution," *Culture, Theory & Critique* 48, no. 2 (October 2007): 123-138.

⁶⁶ Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*, 170.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

kenagan, rather than what memory might mean to Javanese individuals and society.⁶⁸ Although the reader learns that birthday *documentasi* expresses parental love, the funeral *documentasi* contains loss and grief, and that all these different practices represent the “internal heterogeneity” of “one’s personal trajectory”⁶⁹ in Indonesia, these practices indeed appear quite similar to those found in the West or in other parts of the world such as Korea. It may be because Strassler’s assessment bypasses the possibility that memory itself might be something quite different in Java than in the West, something that has evolved as a uniquely “Indonesian” concept. In other words, Strassler, perhaps without realizing it, applies some of the most fundamental concepts and phenomena, such as memory and death, as conceived and understood in the West, specifically in the United States where Strassler comes from, to photographic practices in Java.

The publications discussed above are culminations of arduous efforts to examine the complexities of photography in relation to identity, politics, iconicity, and culture from a variety of perspectives. Despite some weaknesses, it is the more far-reaching strengths of publications like *Refracted Visions* that have pushed me to think rigorously about what it means to study and write about the relationship between photography and a nation in the making.⁷⁰ I have also benefited greatly from the work of many historians of photography that have educated me on what it means to study photography as social art history, how the medium can be approached

⁶⁸ A similar critique is made by Geoffrey Batchen of Strassler’s discussion of funerary portraiture in the book. Batchen points out that Strassler’s assumption that death is static and permanent is a Western view. See Geoffrey Batchen, “Review: *Photography and Egypt* by Maria Golia and *Refracted Vision: Popular Photography and National Modernity* in Java by Karen Strassler,” *The Art Bulletin* (2011), forthcoming.

⁶⁹ Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*, 206.

⁷⁰ Other examples include books that assess the politics of visual culture in the United States in a global context. David D. Perlmutter’s *Picturing China in the American Press: The Visual Portrayal of Sino-American Relations in Time Magazine, 1949-1973*, investigates the role of the photographic medium in international politics from the perspective of the United States; Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites’s *No Captions Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* examines iconic photographs informed by American culture and politics. See David D. Perlmutter, *Picturing China in the American press: the visual portrayal of Sino-American relations in Time magazine, 1949-1973* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007); Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Captions Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

from different perspectives that directly engage with the public, and what kind of comparative angles a study could take.⁷¹

My dissertation is by necessity the work of a “native informant,” since I am Korean by birth, culture, ethnicity, heritage, and law. If needed, I also use the first-person pronoun in the following chapters. However, while it may be impossible to draw the line between my “academic” research and “personal” experience with photography in Korea, the study does not solely privilege my own encounter with the medium over that of others. I have been constantly reminded of my own subject position, that I am studying photographs found in Korea inevitably as a Korean, even while situated in the West and while writing for an American academic audience. Therefore I must discern what is familiar to non-Korean readers and what is not, including photographic practices, historical facts, and concepts. It also requires me to make value judgments to avoid “self-exoticization” by focusing heavily on what may appear “foreign” to the reader outside of Korea. All of these considerations mean that even before I began negotiating between a history of photography particular to Korea and art history as a Western discipline, I have been negotiating my own subjectivity as a conductor of this research. In the same vein, I examine issues of subjectivity specific to the formation of a Korean subject in photographic practices, artistic movements, and individual photographic works in the following chapters. But first, I will explore a contradiction in pursuing a history of photography framed by nation via an argument elucidated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

⁷¹ In particular, the work of Victor Burgin, John Tagg, Elizabeth Edwards, Geoffrey Batchen, and Abigail Solomon-Godeau has been helpful. See Victor Burgin, ed., *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1982).; John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).; Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997).; Geoffrey Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001).; Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology, and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).; Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds., *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004).; Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography & Remembrance* (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 2004)..

Beyond the “Irresoluble Contradictions” of a History of National Photography

In celebration of the sixtieth birthday of Choi Injin, a closed circle of Korean photo historians associated with the RIHP published an anthology of essays in 2001.⁷² The topics of the essays vary from Korea’s first contact with photography in the nineteenth century to the practice of ethnographic photography during colonial rule. It even includes a short essay on a Chinese photographer, Lang Jing Shan, by a Chinese author who argues for Lang’s significance in East Asia in the 1930s. Among others, an essay by Park Ju Seok stands out for its critique of the state of the history of photography in Korea. The thesis of Park’s essay is that the history of Korean photography must find a new methodology, one that is different from the “Western” one determined by “Western art history.”⁷³ He argues that until now (2001), the history of Korean photography has adopted the methodology of Western art history without giving it much thought, and as a result produced poorly examined studies. Using an example of a work by a well-known photographer active in the early twentieth century,⁷⁴ Park contends that a photo historian must avoid applying “Western categorizations” of photography, such as “art photography, media photography, commercial photography, landscape photography, portrait photography, fashion photography, and documentary photography,” to a Korean photograph.⁷⁵ These categories merely reflect “the Western ways of thinking, governed by Western tradition, institutions, and

⁷² Injin Choi et al., *Hanguksajineui Jipyong (한국사진의 지평, Studies of Korean Photography)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 2001). English title original.

⁷³ Juseok Park, “Hanguksajineui doip gwajeong seolmyeonggwa Jeong Hae-chang sajineui haeseoke natanan munjejeom gochal (한국사진의 도입 과정 설명과 정해창 사진의 해석에 나타난 문제점 고찰),” in *Hanguksajineui Jipyong (한국사진의 지평, Studies of Korean Photography)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 2001), 103-104.

⁷⁴ Park provides a critique on the reception of the photographer Jeong Hae-chang, whose photographs have been “categorized” as landscape photography.

⁷⁵ Choi et al., *Hanguksajineui Jipyong (한국사진의 지평, Studies of Korean Photography)*, 116. “... 예술사진, 매체사진, 광고사진, 풍경사진, 정물사진, 인물사진, 패션사진, 다큐멘터리 사진 등...”

mentality.”⁷⁶ Applying these categories to Korean photographs, Park argues, fails to take the particular socio-political conditions that affected the aesthetics of photography in Korea into consideration. He completes the essay by suggesting that photography in Korea, especially early photographs, should be studied within the context of the artwork of traditional media in Korea, such as Korean genre painting and portrait painting in ink. In other words, early photography in Korea is conceptually and aesthetically closer to traditional Korean ink painting than to photographic works outside Korea.

Park’s call for a uniquely Korean methodology for a history of photography appeals strongly to this dissertation. However, while a Korean methodology pitted against a Western one (assuming there is one single methodology that applies to all studies of art history in “the West”) aptly identifies what may have been overlooked in the study of photography in Korea, it also echoes a nationalistic agenda. If photography is a medium used by people throughout the world, and if this use reflects certain traditions and conventions established by different peoples in different parts of the world, how should one argue photography automatically becomes a medium contained within the territorial boundary of Korea? What kind of an “authentically” Korean methodology could identify an “authentically” Korean photograph? Granted that one was able to apply an authentic, “non-Western” methodology in examining a work of Korean photography, what kind of history would this produce if it does not examine what makes photography in Korea epistemologically Korean? While applying the categories listed by Park to Korean photographs may actually be erroneous, treating photography in Korea as a medium that is automatically “different” from any other photographs outside of Korea also runs the risk of ironically repeating “the unequal exercise of power that enables us to name peoples as the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 117. “...지극히 서양의 사진 환경에서 그들의 관습적, 정서적, 제도적 사고방식이 완벽하게 반영된 것이라는 사실을 알아야 한다.”

‘other.’”⁷⁷ In other words, Park assumes that difference is only to be found outside the West, in this case in Korea, thus assuming that, as Geoffrey Batchen warns, “photography’s other history is to be fashioned from accounts of the medium’s representations of non-Western peoples.”⁷⁸

Whether studied by scholars within or outside the West, “difference” in photography necessitates, through and through, an examination of “what unique considerations frame ‘photography’” in a given locality.⁷⁹

In addition, the establishment of a non-negotiable boundary of identity, such as a “Korean photography” made legible only through comparison with other Korean artworks, may disclose a “will to install a new hegemony.”⁸⁰ According to Spivak, this move is an “irreducible ‘cognitive failure,’”⁸¹ a failure that motivates and effects “the process in which historical and political entity, agency, and event are identified and solidified.”⁸² “Cognitive failure,” which I understand to be a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, is a precognized action designed to fulfill its own prediction. In other words, identification of the degree of authenticity or hybridity of someone or something is not an innocent outcome of research-based scholarship, but a predetermined will to designate an identity as fulfilling the purpose of a hegemon. Spivak has consistently warned against this “failure” in her critique of subaltern studies.⁸³ I contend that the concept Spivak terms “cognitive failure” should not prevent us from trying to produce a different kind of history of photography. It shows us, however, that a study which is conceived and

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Batchen, “How the Other Half Photographs: Looking Globally,” *New York Times*, July 12, 2003, sec. B9(L).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Smith, “Review: The History of Japanese Photography.”

⁸⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Introduction: Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography,” in *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 5-10. The concept of “cognitive failure” is assessed in Hyon Joo Yoo Murphree, “Toward an ‘Accented’ Critique of Culture: Theorizing Postcolonial East Asia” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse: Syracuse University, 2007), 7-10.

⁸¹ Spivak, “Introduction: Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography,” 5-10.

⁸² Murphree, “Toward an ‘Accented’ Critique of Culture: Theorizing Postcolonial East Asia,” 9.

⁸³ Also see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

carried out as an antithesis to a “hegemon,” to take Park’s example of “Western art history,” repeats the will of the hegemon, and ultimately produces a history that resembles it.

Hence, this dissertation eschews productions of knowledge that try to resolve the problem by framing an identity in terms of an opposition of One and Other. It is not an attempt to establish a national history of photography as an end product or as an alternative to the established history of photography. Rather, this project seeks to expose the inevitable difficulties in producing a national history. It is a methodological experiment designed to examine im/possibilities generated by the pursuit of a local history of photography. As Hyon Joo Yoo Murphree, a scholar of English literature and film studies, succinctly puts it, Spivak’s concept of cognitive failure argues that “discursive or political acts must never be considered in terms of resolution, or complete transition to the new term of presence and power, but as continuous confrontations and revealing of irresolvable contradictions” generated by the counterinsurgency of the Other.⁸⁴ In pursuit of a history of photography in Korea, which acknowledges but also aims beyond “irresolvable contradictions,” I focus on socio-political considerations that bridge photography’s relation to postcolonial Korea-in-the-making, rather than treating photography as a medium with a national identity.

My dissertation also addresses the dangers inherent in the discipline of art history and visual culture studies of falling into essentialisms such that viewers identify certain aesthetic, social, or even behavioral elements (for example, in photographic practices) as national tropes, despite their embodiment of transnational or transcultural complexities.⁸⁵ In order to do this, my

⁸⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁸⁵ For example, Richard Chalfen’s ethnographic study of Japanese practices of photography has examined “authentically Japanese” photographic practices, such as the use of photo-stickers, even though this practice exists throughout East and South East Asia and in diasporic communities throughout North and South America. Designating the Japanese example as “an original,” Chalfen’s study measures its difference only from the “mainstream” Anglo-American perspective, overlooking complex postcolonial cultural dynamics within the Asian

study takes an interdisciplinary approach, drawing methodological tools from the social sciences, art history, and cultural studies. Aside from social and cultural theories, postcolonial theory and critiques of political philosophy are very relevant to the theoretical framework of this dissertation.

My use of the word “postcolonial” acknowledges, in a temporal and political sense, the impact of the Japanese annexation of Korea, which began in the late nineteenth century and was officially declared in 1910, and the abrupt transition from a feudal system to a capitalist one imposed by an imperial power. A postcolonial approach, however, also entails an assessment of how photography and its impact in Korea have been influenced by geopolitical and economic changes since its decolonization, when Korea began to be perceived as a member of the world economy. This approach requires a critical analysis of what it means to have experienced modernization within a compressed time frame and an intense labor mobilization. This was an experience imposed both “belatedly” and forcibly by the Japanese colonists and later by the Korean military regime in such a way that contemporaneity never escapes the legacy of its colonial past. Therefore, rather than adhere to the chronological and linear emphasis on origins and innovations found in standard Western histories of photography, my study must be attentive to how the experience of social change in Korea has been mediated by and reflected in photography, looking at both quotidian and iconic images. This will be achieved through thematically constructed studies, rather than through a comprehensive survey of Korean photography, avoiding a historicization of progress that remains centered on originality and lineage.

region, as well as in the diasporic communities across the world. See Richard Chalfen, “Print Club Photography in Japan: Framing Social Relationships,” in *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 166-185.

Timeline of Major Historical Events in Korea since the Late Nineteenth Century

According to Choi Injin, a group of Korean delegates to China were the first Koreans to experience photography in 1863.⁸⁶ This was during the time that the Joseon Dynasty practiced a prolonged policy of “closed country (쇄국정책)” except toward China. Powerful countries such as the United States, the Netherlands, Russia, and Japan were trying to open the ports of Joseon, while, on the domestic front, internal conflicts within the Royal Court and State Council were debilitating the security of the Dynasty in the face of encroaching foreign powers. In 1876, King Gojong signed the Treaty of Ganghwa (강화조약), which was an unequal treaty that opened the ports to Japan. Joseon, therefore, was also forced to open its ports to other countries of the West, such as the United States and United Kingdom. As a result of the Treaty of Ganghwa, enclaves of Japanese residents began to form in Gyeongseong and Busan, where Japanese photographers opened photography studios in the early 1880s.⁸⁷

In 1895, Empress Myeongseong of Joseon was assassinated inside the Royal Palace by Japanese guards. In the same year, Japan won the Sino-Japanese War and expanded its power over Joseon, which was forced to hand over its diplomatic and administrative power to Japan. Following Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty, also known as Eulsa Treaty (을사조약), was signed, allowing Japan to have complete power over Joseon’s foreign affairs and trades. In August 1910, Korea officially became a colony of Japan. During the colonial period, the number of photography studios operated by both

⁸⁶ Choi, *Hanguk Sajinsa 1631-1945* (*한국사진사 1631-1945, The History of Korean Photography 1631-1945*), 63-64.

⁸⁷ Lee, “Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대 한국의 초상 Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs),” 9.

Korean and Japanese photographers increased, a situation which will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

When Japanese imperialism and its colonial ambitions collapsed in 1945, the country found itself occupied once again, under the notorious trusteeship of “temporary occupation,” by two other imperialist powers—the United States and the Soviet Union. They divided the nation along the thirty-eighth parallel demarcation line. Despite elite and popular opposition, the independence activist, Sygman Rhee, supported by the U.S. government and military forces, established a separate government in the South in 1948, founding the Republic of Korea (ROK). The North was overseen by a Soviet Civil Authority until 1948, when Kim Il-sung, the father of the current leader, Kim Jong-il, became the head of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). After several armed conflicts between the North and South, the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, with the United Nations supporting the South and China and the Soviet Union supporting the North. The Korean War Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. Even though this is viewed as the end of the Korean War, a peace treaty was never agreed upon. Military and terrorist attacks against South Korean officials and civilians, including the 1987 bombing of a Korean Air flight, killing all 115 people on board⁸⁸ and the recent shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010, continue to remind the Korean public that the Korean War has never officially ended. Since 1945, the United States Armed Forces has remained in South Korea. As of 2010, about 28,500 U.S. troops were still present in South Korea.⁸⁹

The 1960s began with the pro-democracy protests led by young students that resulted in the April 19 Revolution, deposing President Sygman Rhee. The Revolution, however, was quickly overturned in 1961 by the military coup d’état of General Park Chung-hee, whose

⁸⁸ “Seoul Seeks Suspect’s Extradition (Foreign Desk),” *New York Times*, December 8, 1987.

⁸⁹ “Official United States Forces Korea (USFK) Website”, n.d., <http://www.usfk.mil/usfk/default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>.

military rule continued through 1979 until his assassination. Ending the short-lived civilian government of Youn Bo-seon, another coup followed in 1980, this time led by Park Chung-hee's successor, Army General Chun Doo-hwan. The military regime ended as the result of a series of student-led democratization movements that reached their peak in June 1987. Somewhat paradoxically, the years of the military dictatorship are also viewed as a period of dramatic economic development in South Korea. Along with this increased economic development, Korea has hosted, and anticipates, a number of international sporting events, such as the 1986 Asian Games, 1988 Summer Olympics, 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup, and the 2018 Winter Olympics, which are all entangled with state policies, real-estate speculations, gentrification, economic growth, and national pride. It is within this broad national history that Korea's experience of photography has taken place.

A Brief Overview of the Field of Contemporary Korean Art Photography

There has been a recent explosion of interest in the medium of photography in art both within South Korea and outside the country, as evident through a significant increase in curatorial and academic attention. More and more artists employing the medium of photography exhibit their works in and outside Korea; artists Atta Kim and Bohnchang Koo, for example, have been shown widely outside Korea at prominent art institutions such as the International Center of Photography, New York.⁹⁰ The younger generations of artists, such as Yeondoo Jeong and JeongMee Yoon, have also been receiving attention from curators, critics, and collectors in and outside Korea. The 2010 survey of contemporary photography in Korea at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, exemplifies the enormous potential in contemporary art photography in

⁹⁰ The exhibition, *Atta Kim: On-Air*, was held at ICP from June 9-August 27, 2006; the Philadelphia Museum of Art organized the exhibition *Plain Beauty: Korean White Porcelain/Photography by Bohnchang Koo*, which was on view from June 19 to September 26, 2010.

South Korea as cultivated by diverse and vibrant groups of Korean artists over the last few decades.⁹¹

Art photography within South Korea has grown not only in terms of the number of artists in the field, but also in the number of photography galleries, publications, festivals, and funded projects. The Museum of Photography, Seoul, was founded by the Hanmi Pharmaceutical Company in 2004, while the Trunk Gallery, founded in 2007, provides opportunities for both ‘established’ and emerging artists to exhibit their photographs; the latter is directed by artist Park Young-Sook, known for her photo-portrait series, *Mad Women Project* (1999-). Photography festivals have been inaugurated in numerous cities across the country since the turn of the century, such as the annual Dong-gang International Photo Festival and Seoul Photo Festival. These festivals are organized by photography curators and feature works by artists across the world, and include photography awards as part of the main events.⁹²

Grant opportunities are available for artists through both public and private funding. The Arts Council of Korea (ARCO), the Korean equivalent of the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States, provides grants for various projects in the fine arts, with an emphasis on those that show merit through international collaborations with overseas art institutions: for example, Gasworks Gallery, London; Rijksacademie van beeldende kusten, Amsterdam; and Kunstlerhaus Betanien, Berlin, all provided exchange programs in the visual arts through ARCO in 2012. Such grant opportunities are not specifically for artists working with photography; however, photography-centric grants and awards are offered through photography competitions and festivals such as the Dong-gang International Photo Festival as well as through individual galleries and their projects, also occasionally funded by ARCO.

⁹¹ Sinsheimer and Tucker, *Chaotic Harmony: Contemporary Korean Photography*.

⁹² For example, Kang Yong Suk, whose work is discussed in Chapter Five, won the ninth Dong-gang Photography Award in 2010.

This popular interest in photography as a cultural medium is buttressed by its presence in academia. Photography is a popular major in the art departments of South Korean universities and colleges. Photographer Limb Eung-sik helped found the photography department at Sorabol College in 1964, the first to include a photography curriculum. This photography division, along with the photographers teaching those courses, was later absorbed into the School of Arts at Joongang University in 1972, making their photography program the center of photography education, an artistic and academic lineage that is maintained today. Today, most universities with studio art curricula and arts colleges include a major in photography.

South Korea boasts a number of research centers and associations for photography. The aforementioned Research Institute of the History of Photography (RIHP, *Hanguk Sajinsa Yeonguso*) houses one of the largest collections of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art photographs, now located at Myongji University, Seoul. The Research Institute of Photography Archives (*Sajin Archive Yeonguso*) was founded by the photography historian Lee Kyungmin, who has digitized over 20,000 photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁹³ Researchers at these prominent institutions include active photography historians and critics: originally affiliated with the RIHP and now working independently, Choi In Jin, Park Ju Seok, Park Pyeong Jong, and Lee Kyungmin have published books on the history of Korean photography. Other photography historians, such as Jin Dong-Seon, Jeong Jin Guk, and Shin Sujin, have also published books on art and vernacular photography, while the photography historian and critic Lee Young June's publications examine Korean photography through theories and discourses of photography critical to field of the history of photography in the West. Many of these writings are published by two important photography publishers Youlhwadang

⁹³ Wan-jun Yun, "Sajinsa moldu Lee Kyungmin daepyo (사진史 몰두 이경민 대표)," *DongA Ilbo*, December 15, 2008, http://news.donga.com/Series/List_70070000000845/3/70070000000845/20081215/8671243/1.

(열화당), founded in 1971, and Noonbit (눈빛출판사), founded by aforementioned Jeong Jin Guk, Lee Young June, and Lee Gyu-sang in 1988.

The Society of Korean Photography is an academic association of photographers, historians and critics; it publishes a biannual journal, *AURA*. Art photography magazines such as *Wolgan Sajin (Monthly Photography)* and *Wolgan Sajin Yesul (Photography Art)*, first issued in 1966 and 1989, respectively, feature works by artists in the medium of photography. New photography magazines are also being published. *CAMERATa*, a non-academic photography magazine published by the mega-conglomerate and manufacturer of digital cameras Samsung, aims at introducing the new generation of photographers in Korea as well as non-Korean photographers working in Europe and the United States. The increase in the number of academic publications on nineteenth-century and early twentieth century photographic practices has also been notable in the past decade. The scholarly contribution of Ph.D. and especially M.A. theses on various socio-cultural aspects of photography in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is especially notable; I have benefited from a number of these, particularly studies of baby and family portraits.⁹⁴

As this dissertation focuses on the history of twentieth-century photography in Korea in relation to nation building and democratization, the artworks by photographers discussed in the following four chapters explore the prevalent issues of politics, gender, and militarism in Korea. The contemporary photographers discussed, from Kim Oksun to Noh Suntag, are exceptional among the generation of contemporary artists in respect to their deadpan approaches to the subject. Nonetheless, they also represent the rise of a large group of socio-culturally and politically engaged and outspoken artists/photographers in Korea; they are not afraid to articulate

⁹⁴ These theses on vernacular photo-portraiture and documentary practice of the 2008 candlelight vigil are discussed in the following Chapters Two and Three.

where they stand on politico-culturally sensitive issues such as the country's patriarchal heritage and confrontation with North Korea. These artists are constantly searching for artistic means to present problematic issues to their audience and engage them dialogically, even at a time when the practice of censorship of cultural production has conspicuously reemerged.

Thematic Outlines of Chapters

Chapter Two provides an analysis of collective memory about the Korean War and where and how photography is situated in this memory. The Korean War was a defining moment in the modern history of Korea, following the fall of the Joseon Dynasty in the late nineteenth century and the subsequent colonization of the country by Japan. Korea became a contested land that experienced devastating casualties during the Cold War in its very early stages. It is, however, difficult to claim that there are specific photographs that have become iconic enough to conjure up the memory of the Korean War, in contrast to World War II photographs such as Joe Rosenthal's *Raising the Flag on Iwo jima*, or Robert Capa's photographs of the Normandy invasion. I examine the political and cultural implications of this seeming absence of popularized photographs of the Korean War, despite the presence of both Korean and foreign war correspondents during the Korean War. These include Limb Eung Sik, Sung Doo-Kyung, Max Desfor, and Margaret Bourke-White, who was appointed as an official UN war correspondent to Korea in 1952. The photographs by these official war correspondents were possibly one of the very few means of reporting the newly decolonized and war-torn state of Korea to the people of Korea and the world at the time. I also examine the work of selected Korean war correspondents, particularly that of Limb, and their continued work after the War. These photographers continued to photograph the dire situation of the war-torn nation throughout the 1950s and 60s. Led by

Limb, they created one of the first Korean photographic movements, called *Saenghwaljuui* Realism (Everyday Life Realism). The chapter also discusses the legacy of the Korean War and its influence on the development of this photographic movement.

Although the nation's industries and infrastructures were virtually wiped out during the Korean War, foreign aid, accompanied by consecutive military juntas that ruled the country, brought rapid industrialization to South Korea. The 1950s and the following two decades were a period of ideological and territorial separation and lopsided industrialization. The public began to appreciate photography through specialized photographic practices that highlighted the "modern" family structure and its values. In Chapter Three, I examine mid-twentieth century vernacular photographic practices in Korea, focusing on family and baby studio portraits. My aim is to theorize how these practices underwent transformations since the colonial period and how making portraits and family photographs of certain stages in life has become an integral component of modern rituals and traditions in Korea: a baby portrait at the 100th day after birth, the first birthday, then the 60th, 70th, and 80th birthday, and lastly, a portrait for use at one's funeral. I argue that many of these practices, especially family and baby studio portraits, not only reflect the changing demographics of the population from extended families from rural areas to nuclear families in urban centers, but also create an ideal model of a family that suits the modernization scheme of the new military government. Between the 1960s and 1980s, the successive military juntas strove to achieve rapid economic development at the cost of "proletarianizing" the vast majority of the Korean population.⁹⁵ Providing analyses of studio practices of family and baby portraits, the chapter contends that these photographic traditions

⁹⁵ For further discussion on the process of proletarianization, see for example Immanuel Wallerstein's discussion of class formation and class conflicts in his essays in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London & New York: Verso, 1991).

were carefully crafted into propaganda mechanisms to help convert the traditional family structure and values to those that would suit the rapid industrialization of the nation.

Beginning with the April Revolution in 1960, and again in the 1980s, photography played a critical role in democratization movements in South Korea. Chapter Four considers photography's relationship to social movements in Korea and how it has presented the struggles of Koreans dealing with the decolonized, modernized state under a military dictatorship. This was a period in which photojournalists voluntarily and involuntarily played the role of political activists. Hence, photography was politicized in general, and iconic images directly affected the lives of Koreans. Focusing on three of the most significant social movements in South Korea, the chapter reconsiders the visual experiences of social movements as a battleground upon which the "success" and "failure" of the movements tend to be judged. I also propose that perceptual and experiential changes in photographic practices in South Korea have altered the ways in which the public has experienced civil social movements since the 2000s. This argument is pursued through a close analysis of the public use of iconic photographs of martyred students, killed during pro-democracy protests in 1960 and 1987, and the specific characteristics of photographs of the candlelight demonstration of 2008 circulated and consumed by Korean internet communities.

Chapter Five examines the works of contemporary Korean artists whose photographs deal with the impact of militarism in South Korea, highlighting works depicting life in United States Army Base camptowns. Through comparative assessment of militarism as depicted in the work of Korean, Japanese, Italian, and Mexican photographers, I examine the gendered, asymmetrical power dynamics created between the U.S. military presence in South Korea and the native civilian population. The chapter scrutinizes images of camptown sex workers, ranging

from photojournalistic to commercial snapshot photographs, illuminating the ways in which such images simultaneously articulate the institutionalization of camptown prostitution while either creating or challenging the metaphors of gendered nations, i.e. the U.S. as a patriarchal protector and South Korea as an ‘available’ female figure. This is followed by the discussion of “townscape” photographs of camptowns by the Korean photographers Kang Yong Suk, Noh Suntag, and Kim Sangdon. I then suggest a reading of their photographs in light of a theory of subjectivity, as delineated by Slavoj Žižek in his critique of Gilles Deleuze and his concept of the body without organs.⁹⁶

My project does not and cannot include every practice and issue I find important in the history of Korean photography, and what is excluded from my study of photography may also deserve a considerable amount of attention. What I try to do, nevertheless, is dynamically engage with theoretical analyses of the social, political, and cultural meanings of photography in post-1945 Korea. This study is enhanced by visual analyses of original sources, including collections of documentary photography that have not been published prior to my project. I expect that my dissertation is merely the beginning of a much longer meditation on photography and history, facts and facticity, the spectacular and the spectator, and universality and locality. In this sense, it is relevant not only within the context of Korean history but also across multiple disciplines, media, and nation.

⁹⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences* (New York & London, 2004), xii. In the introduction to his book, Žižek argues that the inverse of the Deleuzian notion of the body without organs will expose a “misshaping” of the popular “Deleuzian Politics” and proposes an approach to “the new figures of revolutionary subjectivity.”

CHAPTER TWO

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE CONTENTIOUS MEMORIES OF THE KOREAN WAR

This chapter investigates the relationship between the photographs of the Korean War and the collective memory of it.¹ I posit that the lack of iconic images of the Korean War both inside and outside the country is closely linked to the unstable and conflicted nature of the Korean people's memories of the war. This connection is traceable through assessments of Korean War photographs taken by Korean photographers and of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism, a dominant photographic movement in South Korea for two decades following the war.

The Korean War (1950-53) broke out on June 25, 1950, when North Korean forces attacked South Korean territory.² Following Korea's independence from Japanese colonial rule after the end of World War II, the United States divided Korea into North and South along the 38th Parallel in September 1945. The leaders of each division failed to agree upon a free presidential election for uniting North and South back into a single nation. As a result, the Republic of Korea was founded in 1948 in the South, and a communist government was established in the North. Over the next two years, tensions between the North and South escalated, eventually pitting South Korea and the United Nations against North Korea, which had military support from Communist China and material support from the Soviet Union.³ Generally considered an offshoot of the Cold War hostility between democracy and communism, the

¹ In this chapter, I use the phrases "Korean War photographs" and "photographs of the Korean War" interchangeably, both referring to the photographs taken in Korea during the Korean War.

² The North Korean Communist Party and pro-North Korea NL (National Liberation) activists in South Korea have disputed this, arguing that South Korea and the United States initiated the attack.

³ The U.N. Forces combined soldiers from sixteen countries, listed here in order of the number of soldiers sent to Korea: the United States (302,483), the United Kingdom (14,198), Canada (6,146), Turkey (5,455), Australia (2,282), the Philippines (1,496), New Zealand (1,389), Thailand (1,294), Ethiopia (1,271), Greece (1,263), France (1,119), Colombia (1,068), Belgium (944), South Africa (826), the Netherlands (819), and Luxembourg (100). See Haengbok Kim, *Hanguk Jeonjaeng: Sajineurobon 6.25ui silsang* (韓國戰爭--사진으로 본 6.25 의 실상 *The Korean War: Seeing the Reality of the Korean War through Photography*), ed. Chang-Gu Kang (Seoul: Byoung Hak Sa, 1995), 46.

Korean War resulted in the deaths of over 1,300,000 Korean civilians and soldiers, 184,000 Chinese soldiers, and 36,000 U.N. soldiers, of whom the majority were Americans.⁴ This was the first combat operation of the Cold War era, shaping the course of U.S.-Soviet, U.S.-China, and Soviet-China relations for the next several decades, as well as initiating the policy of militarization that governed U.S. global engagement into the next century.⁵ However, the Korean War was soon overshadowed in the West by the Cuban Missile Crisis⁶ and an escalation of fighting in Vietnam; therefore, despite international involvement and heavy casualties, it is often referred to by non-Koreans as “the forgotten war.”⁷

Indeed, hardly any iconic images of the Korean War are present in the global circulation of photography that conjures up collective memories. The hundreds of thousands of photographs of the Korean War, including many by world-famous photographers such as Margaret Bourke-White as well as by lesser-known Korean photographers such as Lim In-Sik [Figures 2.1-2], never carried enough impact to catalyze public discourse on the conflict, let alone on the photographs themselves. Conversely, Western ‘forgetfulness’ of the war has prevented the public

⁴ Wan-Beom Lee, “Hanguk jeonjaengui jeongchijeok younghyang (한국전쟁의 정치적 영향, The Political Impact of the Korean War),” in *Jiulsuoepneun Image 3: Hangukjeonjaengee namgingutdel (지울 수 없는 이미지 3: 한국전쟁이 남긴 것들, The Indelible Image 3: The Photographs of the Korean War from National Archives and Records Administration in the United States of America)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 2007), 5. The numbers however vary according to different sources: for example, the South Korean Ministry of Defense estimates that 36,949 American troops died during the War, exceeding the number provided by Wan-Beom Lee. See Institute for Military History Compilation, “6.25 Jeonjaneg tonggye (6.25 전쟁통계, 6.25 War Statistics),” *Institute for Military History Compilation, The Ministry of Defense*, n.d., http://www.imhc.mil.kr/imhcroot/data/korea_view.jsp?seq=4&page=1 (Accessed August 26, 2011).

⁵ Lee argues that the Korean War helped the United States to become the world’s most militarized nation and to expand its political influence across the world. Around the time of the Korean War, the U.S. signed treaties with forty-two allies, which enabled it to establish over 2,700 U.S. military bases outside the U.S. This political change is referred to as “Globalization of Containment Policy.” See Wan-Beom Lee, “Hanguk jeonjaengui jeongchijeok younghyang (한국전쟁의 정치적 영향, The Political Impact of the Korean War),” 8.

⁶ The Cuban Missile Crisis was a confrontation between the Soviet Union-Cuba and the United States that culminated in October 1962. The crisis was the product of the Cold War’s arms race: reacting to nuclear projects led by the U.S. with Britain and Italy—the latter of which had Moscow in missile-range—the Soviet and Cuban governments built ballistic nuclear missile bases in Cuba that would allow strikes on the United States.

⁷ See, for example, Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Times Books, 1987); Arts and Entertainment Network and History Channel, *Korea: the Forgotten War*, Film (Burlington, VT: A&E Home Video, 2005).

from becoming familiar with such images as that by the American photojournalist Max Desfor of war refugees crossing the Pyongyang Iron Bridge [Figure 2.3]; although this work won the Pulitzer Prize in 1951, its potential status as “that one photograph” encapsulating the experience of the Korean War is undermined by the relative obscurity of the war’s public profile in twentieth-century history.

Although neglected by people outside Korea, the nation’s post-colonial history as a republic erupted into being with the unfolding of the Korean War in national and global politics. While Cold War-era concerns are considered obsolete in the West since the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, the legacy of the ideological and military conflict continues to shape politics in the Korean peninsula, if not the entire Northeast Asian region.⁸ The Korean War cannot be ‘forgotten’ in this part of the world because its impact remains very much present in the everyday lives of the Korean people. Nonetheless, iconic images of the war are absent in South Korea just as they are globally, despite their exposure to the public via diverse initiatives often spearheaded by governmental and special interests groups in efforts to imagine the event and create, reshape, and revamp its memory.⁹

The chapter is inspired by a multilayered question: “How do we remember the Korean War?” This question is answerable, in part, through examining the war’s photographic presence. A seeming absence of iconic representations of the Korean War in the global consciousness actually increases the significance of the image as a means of shaping memory; I propose that

⁸ For the war’s influence on Japan, see Wan-Beom Lee, “Hanguk jeonjaengui jeongchijeok younhyang (한국전쟁의 정치적 영향, The Political Impact of the Korean War),” 10; on China, Haebanggun Hwabosa (해방군화보사), *Geudeuleebon hangukjeonjaeng 1: Hangmiwonjo--Joonggukinminjiwongun (그들이 본 한국전쟁 1: 항미원조--중국인민지원군, The Korean War as They Have Seen 1: Against the United States for Joseon--The Chinese Allied Force)*, trans. Dong-Hwan Roh, (Seoul: Noonbit, 2005), 1:16–17.

⁹ See, for example, G. Joon Gil, *Photos from the Korean War: June 1950-July 1953 (사진으로 읽는 한국전쟁)* (Seoul: Jeyoung Communication, 2005); Won-Il Kim et al., *Nareul Ulin Hangukjeonjaeng 100jangmyun: Naega geokeun 6.25jeonjaeng (나를 울린 한국전쟁 100 장면 - 내가 겪은 6.25 전쟁, A Hundred Korean War Scenes that Made Me Cry: 6.25 War as I Experienced)*, ed. Do Park (Seoul: Noonbit, 2006).

conflicting ideologies of the Korean War and its political impact on South Korean nation building complicate the construction of a prevailing collective memory, a situation manifested by the lack of photographic representation. The collective memory of the Korean War in Korea is an imaginary space of colliding political interests, where ideological propaganda attempts to create particular narratives using the photography that emerged from the war. Therefore, a collective memory of the Korean War, if one exists, was not constructed through any contemporary consensus and sustained over generations that have not experienced the war, but has continuously been constructed and deconstructed in response to changing political tensions over the years. Correspondingly, the Korean War lacks an iconic photograph symbolizing the experience of it.¹⁰

This chapter is roughly organized in two parts. The first part concerns defining the relationship between Korean War photographs and collective memory of the war. I begin my examination of this relationship by briefly introducing the present discourse on collective memory and war photography, illustrated by examples of iconic war photographs in the twentieth century. I explore the ways in which wars are remembered through images and how they contribute to the construction and sustaining of collective memory. This provides background and a comparative angle for the following section analyzing what the collective memory of the Korean War means in respect to Korean War photographs in South Korea. My argument centers on a study of collective memory and Korean War photographs conducted by Kim Hyung-Gon, a scholar of memory studies and journalism. Offering an alternative to Kim's study, I investigate a specific category of Korean War photography, namely pictures of Korean

¹⁰ The collective memory of World War II, for example, may vary depending on how people experienced it in a specific place. However, unlike the Korean War, the various fronts, theaters, and areas of interest in World War II have been symbolized through photographs; Robert Capa's photograph of the "Normandy Landing" captured and came to stand in for the Allied experience of ultimate victory on the Western European front while conveying a sense of chaos at the same time.

War orphans. The particulars of this genre further our understanding of how the construction of a memory of the Korean War has been affected by the interests of authorities. A discussion of the work of Korean War photographers follows, focusing on their activities and significance in the history of photography in Korea, and assessing the means through which Korean War photographs were exposed to the Korean public during the war and why those images never became well-known in the public sphere.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the legacy of the Korean War photographs, which resulted in the photographic movement *Saenghwaljuui* Realism, examining how this movement influenced the collective memory of the Korean War in the following decades. Investigating the work of the founder of the movement, Limb Eung Sik, I argue that the movement was influenced greatly by an anti-communist sentiment in the post-War period and by members' determination to bring the status of photography up to par with that of artworks in other media. I then interrogate the scarcity in the number of Korean War photographs by Korean photographers reproduced widely although there were a significant number of Korean photographers at war front, such as Lim In-Sik and Sung Doo-Kyung. This thereby prevents them from becoming "popular" images and part of a collective memory. Lastly, I survey a recent phenomenon in Korean War photography: media companies' annual claims of having "discovered" never-before-seen Korean War photographs.

Discourse on War Photography and Collective Memory

From the earliest years of the medium, photography has recorded wars across the world. As already evident in an 1855 photograph by the first official war photographer, Roger Fenton, photographs of war acts held considerable potential for manipulation. Fenton left two versions of

the photograph *The Valley of the Shadow of Death* that show a road covered with Russian cannonballs during the Crimean War (1853-1856). Figure 2.4 depicts a sloping road leading to Sebastopol, photographed from a tripod looking up the valley. Off the road in the ditch, a large number of cannonballs are visible. A more commonly reproduced version, Figure 2.5, shows the same landscape, but the road is covered with cannonballs as well. Due to this discrepancy, historians and critics such as Ulrich Keller and Susan Sontag have argued that Fenton was unsatisfied with “the peaceful state of things”¹¹ in Figure 2.4. According to their conjectures, Fenton and his assistant Marcus Sparling gathered and rearranged the cannonballs to produce a satisfactory shot.¹² Larry J. Schaaf however argues that Fenton “photographed exactly what he saw,” positing that Figure 2.5, with cannonballs on the road, was the first photographed; Figure 2.4 was taken “after the soldiers had cleared the road.”¹³ In his three-part investigative essays published in the *New York Times*’ online *Opinionator*, Errol Morris exhausts almost every possibility of which photograph may have been shot first and for what possible reasons, interviewing numerous historians and photography experts.¹⁴ After visiting the site of Fenton’s image and digitally examining the photographs, Morris concludes that Figure 2.4 preceded Figure 2.5, because the ancillary rocks on the road have moved downward in the process of being “kicked, nudged, displaced between taking of one picture and the other.”¹⁵ Nonetheless,

¹¹ Ulrich Keller, *The Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 2001), 133, as referenced in Larry J. Schaaf and Roger Taylor, *Roger Fenton: A Family Collection*, Sun Pictures Catalogue Fourteen (New York: Hans P. Kraus, Jr., 2005), 68.

¹² Thomas Barfield, ed., *War Photography* (London: Magpie Books, 2006), 15; Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2005), 53.

¹³ Schaaf, *ibid.* Schaaf’s hypothesis is shared by Gordon Baldwin, who argues that the cannonballs were “harvested” by the soldiers to recycle them. See Errol Morris, “Which Came First, the Chicken or the Egg? (Part One),” *The New York Times*, September 25, 2007, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/09/25/which-came-first-the-chicken-or-the-egg-part-one/> (Accessed August 23, 2011).

¹⁴ Morris, *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Errol Morris, “Which Came First? (Part Three): Can George, Lionel and Marmaduke Help Us Order the Fenton Photographs?” *The New York Times*, October 23, 2007, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/10/23/which->

Morris maintains that it is impossible to prove that Fenton wished to manipulate the scene of the photograph for sensationalism, as argued by Keller and Sontag; this is, of course, possible, but not adequate proof for the chronology.¹⁶

Whether Fenton did or did not manipulate the scene, one thing is clear: the users and reproducers of the photographs had very definite interests in choosing one over the other. This mid-nineteenth century episode indicates that the involved parties already understood the medium's "ability to reveal, conceal, explain, distort, to persuade and manipulate."¹⁷ According to the memory studies scholar Barbie Zelizer, the notion that it is "possible to use the photograph for important social aims" had direct influence on news photography in the 1930s, on the eve of World War II.¹⁸ The rising importance of news photography was the result of "[t]he success of documentary photographers during the early 1930s; photography's co-optation in films, newsreels, and the tabloid press; and experimental picture formats of certain photographers."¹⁹ By the mid-twentieth century, photography was considered as powerful as writing, not merely an indexical support for literary evidence.²⁰

Recognizing the medium's complex relationship with memories of war, war photographs, especially those of World War II and the Vietnam War, have been studied by scholars from

came-first-part-three-can-george-lionel-and-marmaduke-help-us-order-the-fenton-photographs/ (Accessed August 23, 2011).

¹⁶ Caroline Brothers, for example, also examines the possibility of and the symbolic implications in staging Robert Capa's photograph of a falling soldier in the Spanish Civil War, published in *Vu*, September 1936. Brothers compares two different versions of the photograph, arguing that they have been staged, yet it still functions as "an archetypal symbol of death in war." See Caroline Brothers, *War and Photography: A Cultural History* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), 183.

¹⁷ Helen Gee, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona, 1980), 2.

¹⁸ Barbie Zelizer, "From the Image of Record to the Image of Memory: Holocaust Photography, Then and Now," in *Picturing the Past: Media, History & Photography*, ed. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 100.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Gee, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective*, 2.

various disciplines.²¹ These studies show that the meaning of a photograph evolves over time and is contingent on context and circumstance. As shown in the example of Fenton's photograph, such images can accrue very different significance over time; this photograph is rarely discussed nowadays to show the aftermath of battle, but rather to illustrate how new meanings are created by the ways in which the image is deployed.²²

Because memories, real or imagined, are evoked by photographs of war, collective memory is studied through these photographs. What exactly these memories consist of is not very clear, as it is impossible to survey every single member of a society that has experienced war; collective memory, however, is not simply a collection of memories. To construct a collective memory, comparable to social and cultural consensus, the individual memory finds common ground with the memories of others, which may be affected by larger forces, such as the state, attempting to propagate a collective memory conducive to its own interests. Therefore, the difference between a collection of individual memories and a collective memory, aside from the generalized recollection of memory, is the potential influence of various outside powers in shaping the memory toward consensus. Consequently, if the collective memory of war is to be studied through a photograph, it requires not just an examination of whose and what kind of memories are conjured up by the photograph, but also of the nature of the memory in discussion, how it is formed by the photograph, and what role other powers play in this formation.

²¹ See, for example, Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt, eds., *Picturing the Past: Media, History & Photography* (Urbana & Chigago: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and Nancy K. Miller, "The Girl in the Photograph: The Vietnam War and the Making of National Memory," *JAC-a journal of composition theory* 24, no. 2 (2004): 261-290.

²² In all of the essays written by the historians and critics discussed above, none of them have actually found Fenton's photographs useful for the study of the major battle that occurred at the site, but have used it to explore the possibility of photographic manipulation, and manipulation's significance in the history of war photography.

“Collective memory” is memory constructed and shared by a large group of people, usually bound by a common locality or temporality.²³ However, collective memory is not necessarily borne of direct experience of events. Memories conjured up by photographs of war among post-war generations is necessarily second-hand; this sustaining of an event through cross-generational memory is the essence of why societies value collective memory. Maintaining a collective memory of an event preserves it even as the people who experienced the event first-hand eventually die. Marianne Hirsch uses the term “postmemory” to refer to the memory of the Holocaust ‘succeeded’ by the children of Holocaust survivors. Hirsch uses the term to discuss Art Spiegelman’s *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*, a sort of illustrated dual memoir about his father’s experience of the Holocaust and his own experience of the event through his father. Hirsch argues that the prefix “post” indicates a realm beyond “memory,” created by “generational distance and from history by deep personal connection.”²⁴ In contrast to memory, postmemory is constructed through “the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated.”²⁵

In Hirsch’s use of the term, all memory becomes postmemory sooner or later regardless of what the event is or where it happened. Hirsch indeed suggests that postmemory may be used for describing “other second-generation memories.” This emphasis on which generation is involved is crucial: Hirsch invoked the term literally for “the second generation” influenced by the Holocaust, those whose influence was at a generation’s remove. The memory of Holocaust

²³ The term was coined by the French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs, and popularized in the mid-twentieth century with the posthumous publication of his book on the topic published in French in 1950. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

²⁴ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 22.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

survivors' children exists as conjoined with not just the memory of the atrocity but also the afterlife of their parents' experiences and how it unfolded. This is one of the major "formative" differences between the postmemory of the Holocaust and that of the Korean War. While the term "postmemory" can be used for the "memory" of the Korean War carried by the generations that did not experience that conflict, the role of the state in the formation of the postmemory is critical. According to Hirsch, postmemory is "dominated by narratives" of their parents' first-hand experiences. Likewise, the post-Korean War generations were likely influenced by their parents' narratives; however, the anti-communist discourse in Korean society, intensified by the military regime in the 1960s and '70s,²⁶ have also had an enormous influence on the formation of the postmemory of the Korean War, if such a concept can contain the diversified, unconsolidated state of the memory of the Korean War.

Photography is often associated with the construction of collective memory, especially of atrocious events. Yet the construction of collective memory is *ex post facto*, built of individual memories that exist not as abstracts or ideals but which are drawn after the event from visual and other material, such as photographs.²⁷ For individual memories to transform into a collective memory, they have to undergo symbolization, which may be initiated and carried out through vehicles such as mass media, memorial events, or rituals.²⁸ Collective memory is then kept,

²⁶ Hee-yeon Cho, "'Bangonggyuyulsahoe'hyeong jabonjueui baljeongwajeongeseoui nodongjagyeyeupeui 'guseong'jeok chulhyeon ('반공규율사회'형 자본주의 발전과정에서의 노동자계급의 '구성'적 출현, The Formation of the Working Class during the Development of the 'Anti-Communist Society' Type Capitalism)," in *1960-70nyeondaee nodongjaeui saenghwalsegyewa jeongchaeseong (1960-70년대 노동자의 생활세계와 정체성)*, ed. Jong-Gu Lee (Paju: Hanul Books, 2005), 142–143.

²⁷ See Alan Radley, "Artefacts, Memory and a Sense of the Past," in *Collective Remembering*, ed. David Middleton and Derek Edwards (London: Sage, 1990); Zelizer, "From the Image of Record to the Image of Memory: Holocaust Photography, Then and Now."

²⁸ Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*, 3. Referenced in Hyung-Gon Kim, "1970nyeondaee balgandoen sajinhwabojipui hangukjeonjaeng sajine daehan yeongu: sajinhwabojip [Shiryeongwa Younggwangui Yeoksa], 「Life at War」 ae daehan bunseok (1970년대 발간된 사진화보집의 한국전쟁 사진에 대한 연구: 사진화보집 「시련과 영광의 민족사」, 「Life at War」 에 대한 분석)," *Eonrongwahakyeongu (언론과학연구)* 5, no. 2 (2005): 146.

passed on, and modified through popular imagery, literature, film, and other media, reflecting widely shared sets of values, interests, ethics, and aspirations of the present.²⁹

Photographs, then, especially as part of photojournalism, are “often most telling not for what they reveal about the intentions and practices of photographers” at the time they were taken, “but for what they indicate about current views of history and the way people mark, condense, and symbolize the historical past in the present.”³⁰ Iconic war photographs in particular can avail the viewer of this marking, condensing, and symbolizing of the historical past; thus they are particularly pertinent to the formation of collective memory, and subsequently the study of the phenomenon. Michael Griffin attributes this capacity to the medium’s “two powerful and potentially contradictory qualities: its apparent ability to capture a particular moment and its tendency to transcend the moment.”³¹

This state of contradiction is evident in Associated Press photographer Eddie Adams’s Pulitzer winning photograph of General Loan executing a Vietcong officer [Figure 2.6]. The photograph shows the moment in which South Vietnamese National Police Chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan kills a captured Vietcong in Saigon on February 1, 1968. The Vietcong officer, whose hands are tied behind his back, grimaces as Loan pulls the trigger at the side of the Vietcong’s head in the middle of the road. The row of shops and businesses to the right are closed for the seven-day-long Vietnamese New Year’s celebration, *Tet*, which began on January 30.³² Loan is in plain clothes, his back turned to the camera and his face revealed in profile; the tensing of his arm muscles is visible as he pulls the trigger. To the left of Loan is a man in a military uniform wearing a helmet and sunglasses, clenching his teeth as he witnesses the execution. The trees to

²⁹ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 25.

³⁰ Michael Griffin, “The Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism,” in *Picturing the Past: Media, History & Photography* (Urbana & Chigago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 122.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

³² Alyssa Adams and Hal Buell, *Eddie Adams: Vietnam* (New York: Umbrage Editions, 2008), 140.

the left of the photograph cast shadows on the road below Loan's extended arm, creating a cascading effect of the arm's motion. The shadows appear almost like bursts of blood spreading from Loan to the Vietcong, whose blood is actually not visible in the picture.

Adams's photograph of the execution hit the front page of numerous newspapers across the U.S. on February 1 and appeared on TV, magazines, and anti-war placards.³³ Pro-war groups arguing for an increase in the number of U.S. troops sent to Vietnam viewed the photograph as an indication of the anti-Vietcong trajectory of the war; anti-war groups found the photograph symbolic of the extreme inhumanity of involvement in the conflict.³⁴ The photograph was also "co-opted by American popular culture, as a graphic sign of unspecified rage, cynicism or humor, slowly decoupling the photograph from the particular conditions of its making and from the raw impact of its original publication."³⁵

Adams later commented in an Associated Press interview on how photographs can lie. Adams was specifically referring to this photograph, emphasizing that there is much more to the story than Loan's brutal act: Loan's aide and his family were murdered by the Vietcong earlier that morning.³⁶ Although many would not consider this sufficient justification for the act, Adams's awareness of the ability of photography to both capture and elide narratives—its ability to insinuate a history which may or may not be accurate—is profoundly pertinent to the medium's "tendency to transcend the moment" of the photograph. Indeed, the photograph eventually played a role in creating a memory of the Vietnam War that changed over time and influenced policy. The shot displayed the capture and execution of a Vietcong officer as a direct

³³ Ibid., 144. For example, the *New York Times* published Adams's photograph on the front page the next morning, along with the picture of a South Vietnamese officer holding his dead child, murdered by the Vietcong earlier on February 1; the *New York Daily News*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *De Moines Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, and many other newspapers in the U.S. printed the photograph on the front page or on page one.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ David Chandler, "Pictures at an Execution," *Photoworks* (Aut / Wint 2009 2008): 22.

³⁶ Adams and Buell, *Eddie Adams: Vietnam*, 147.

result of the Tet Offensive, a military failure for North Vietnam and the Vietcong. Nonetheless, because of subsequent reprisals by the Vietcong, and the media's report of the Tet Offensive as a series of military losses to the U.S. side, Alyssa Adams, Hal Buell, and Vicki Goldberg argue that the photograph "helped create perceptions in the U.S. that the Tet Offensive was another example of the failure of the American effort in Vietnam."³⁷

The strength of the medium to influence the public imagination is evident as well in this photograph's decisive and lasting influence on both the subject and the photographer.³⁸ General Loan was condemned for his act in Vietnam, and at the fall of Saigon asked the U.S. military to help him emigrate to the U.S.; they refused.³⁹ Loan escaped to Guam and did reach the U.S. with a help of his friend, eventually opening a pizza shop in Springfield, Virginia. However, in 1978, three years after Loan had immigrated to the U.S., he was accused of "moral turpitude" based on Adams's photograph, and the Immigration and Nationalization Service began proceedings to deport him.⁴⁰ The photograph thus came to 'haunt' Loan well after the actions depicted within it, granting him "presen[ce] only through his photographic proxy."⁴¹ Adams felt deeply guilty for his role in Loan's predicament, and avoided discussing the photograph throughout the rest of his life. With many of the facts buried in the symbolic power of the photograph, the photograph has

³⁷ Ibid. After the Tet Offensive, and the wide circulation of Adams's photograph, "American approval of President Johnson's overall performance fell from 48 to 36 percent. Approval of his handling of the war fell from 40 to 26 percent." See Vicki Goldberg, *The Power of Photography: How Photography Changed Our Lives* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 228.

³⁸ Adams, who followed the captured Vietcong and photographed the event in sequence, initially thought that he was witnessing an attempt at intimidation of the captured soldier. The click of the shutter coincided with the gunshot without his realization. Adams said he did not think much about the photographs until they were developed and sent to the AP office. See Adams and Buell, *Eddie Adams: Vietnam*, 144.

³⁹ Ibid., 147.

⁴⁰ Goldberg, *The Power of Photography: How Photography Changed Our Lives*, 229.

⁴¹ Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, "Restaging the War: The Deer Hunter and the Primal Scene of Violence," *Cinema Journal* 44, no. 2 (Winter 2005), 102.

now become a narrative emblem of the complex, mixed memories of the war, “the symbolizing of national mythic narratives.”⁴²

Memories of war, therefore, depend on a medium, either tangible or intangible, through which they are conjured.⁴³ This medium, such as a photograph or a literary work, can be used to evoke memories in any circumstances, but they need to be used recurrently to attain the function of memory—for instance, through commemorations and festive occasions such as Independence Day and Memorial Day, which promote an environment for remembering in a community. As Lewis A. Coser puts it, “it is the collective memory, as an intermediate variable so to speak, that both commemorates the events through calendar celebrations and is strengthened by them.”⁴⁴ Ultimately, war and its memories are affected, if not controlled, by the ways in which they are “stored and interpreted by social institutions;”⁴⁵ this concept underlies the perpetual construction of war memorials and commemorative events of wars throughout human history. Collective memory therefore cannot be “represented” by a photography book or a journal without wide circulation, significant public interest, or frequent republication, because collective memory requires constant updating and reformulation. The memory needs to be refreshed, re-historicized and re-contextualized; however, this essential process is precisely why it can fall under the influence of powers greater than individuals such as governments. Collective memory is inherently subject to manipulation and propagandizing.

Furthermore, the shared experience of collective memory is not necessarily constructed in the same way among the different communities experiencing the same war; Adams’s image meant very different things for the pro- and anti-war camps. This variation in memory is the

⁴² Griffin, “The Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism,” 147.

⁴³ Lewis A. Coser, “Introduction,” in Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 24.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

conceptual basis of Harrell Fletcher's 2005 work, *The American War*. Fletcher's photographs show the images and wall texts displayed at the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, a memorial museum of the Vietnam War (referred to in Vietnam as the American War). Fletcher captured over 200 images and wall texts with a digital camera, then reproduced and framed them [Figures 2.7-8]. Many of the images exhibited at the Museum are themselves reproductions of photographs originally published in *Life* magazine, such as the My Lai massacre as photographed by Ron Haeberle in 1968 [Figures 2.9-10]. The wall texts provide information about numerous massacres and their victims, accompanied by the original descriptions and quotes from *Life* magazine. From the Vietnamese civilian perspective, these 'American' quotes in the wall texts reveal that nation's wartime cruelty through the 'business-as-usual'-style commentary on atrocities.

Fletcher states that while many of the images were familiar to him, "seeing them all together and presented from the Vietnamese perspective was very striking."⁴⁶ By re-representing the Vietnam War, which is simultaneously the American War, Fletcher asks the viewer in the U.S. to look at the war from Vietnam's perspective, and to explore how the same images and texts from a war can articulate different memories of the same events due to the distinct experiences, values, and aspirations of the two countries. In a similar vein, the memory of war might not mean the same thing in South Korea as in the U.S. The following section therefore examines what collective memory means specifically in terms of the Korean War in South Korea.

⁴⁶ Harrell Fletcher, "The American War," *Harrell.Fletcher*, November 2005, <http://www.harrellfletcher.com/theamericanwar/index.html> (Accessed August 9, 2011).

Collective Memory of the Korean War in South Korea

The sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, whose book *On Collective Memory* (originally published in French in 1925) is a seminal text for memory studies, states:

In the case of the family group the similarity of memories is merely a sign of a community of interests and thoughts. It is not because memories resemble each other that several can be called to mind at the same time. It is rather because the same group is interested in them and is able to call them to mind at the same time that they resemble each other.⁴⁷

Memories of a certain event thus varies according to each person, but what is shared among people's memories is the temporality of will—the will to conjure up memories of the event at the same time, so they can share similarities that affirm the interests they hold in common in the present. In the case of memories of the Korean War commonly shared by people now living in South Korea, this “temporality of will” is manifested, for example, in annual public commemorative events on June 25, the anniversary of the day war broke out. Thus the shared memories of the Korean War are at least partially institutionalized, reflecting the state's desire to pass on those memories to following generations. Koreans also remember the Korean War at the same time when violent skirmishes occur between South and North Korea, reminding individuals of the division of the peninsula at the end of colonial rule.

The contribution of war photography to the collective memory of the Korean War is complicated by the nature and popularization of the images by which the war is remembered. While the photograph of General Loan executing a Vietcong soldier broadly conjures memories of the fighting in the Vietnam War in the U.S., there is an absence of iconic images of the Korean War in South Korea; no single image has emerged as representative of the experience, despite the plentiful availability of Korean War photographs taken by both Korean and foreign photographers. This situation is rather unusual and requires closer study, focusing on the

⁴⁷ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 52.

idiosyncrasy of Korean War photographs. For example, illustrated news magazines of the type popular in the U.S. did not exist in post-war South Korea, and photography books have never been particularly popular or widely read in the country—at least until the 1980s—due to the strict censorship of printed materials by the military government.⁴⁸ Indeed, the Korean War photography books of the 1960s and 1980s were published by media companies under the scrutiny, and thus the influence, of the military government.

The United States has a very different history with Korean War photographs. Popular illustrated magazines such as *Life* sent correspondents to the front,⁴⁹ and photographers such as David Douglas Duncan “brought the horror of the undeclared war back to the coffee tables of America.”⁵⁰ These photographs showed GIs fighting in the frozen hillocks of Korea, “to be lost one day, regained the next, and lost again, [shaking] the nation’s confidence.”⁵¹ Although no iconic representation of this particular U.S. experience exists, the Korean War photographs widely circulated in the United States, such as those published in Duncan’s *This is War* (1951), convey the frustration at the front and at home as the justification for the sacrifices became less certain for both soldiers and the public.⁵² How the Korean War is remembered today seems primarily influenced by the outcome of the war. In the long run, the U.S. gained numerous

⁴⁸ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*) (Seoul: Noonbit, 1998), 60.

⁴⁹ Gee, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective*, 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid. David Douglas Duncan photographed the activities of the GIs in Korea in 1950 and published a photography book the next year. Duncan was commissioned by *Life* magazine to photograph the war with Carl Mydans and Hank Walker. Having served WWII in the South Pacific islands and Tokyo Bay as a Marine, Duncan states that he was empathetic to U.S. Marines in Korea and wanted to photograph their battles. See David Douglas Duncan, *This is War: A Photo-Narrative in Three Parts* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951). A newer version of the book was published in 1990. David Douglas Duncan, *This is War!: A Photo-Narrative of the Korean War*, 20th ed. (Toronto and London: Little, Brown & Co., 1990).

⁵¹ Gee, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective*, 26.

⁵² Hyung-Gon Kim, *Hangukjeonjaengui Giyeokgwa Sajin* (한국전쟁의 기억과 사진, *The Memory and Photography of the Korean War*) (Paju: Hangukhaksuljeongbo (한국학술정보), 2007), 75. Kim refers to the political scientist Samuel P. Huntington that the American troops at the Korean War expressed extremely low interest in the war’s political purpose. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 389.

military and political advantages in the Northeast Asian region; according to Lee Wan-Beom, a historian of modern and contemporary Korea, the Korean War furthered the militarization of the U.S., positioning it as the primary counterpart to the Soviet Union and its allies while Western Europe's global influence waned. Around the time of the Korean War, the U.S. signed treaties with forty-two allies, which enabled the nation to establish over 2,700 U.S. military bases outside the U.S.⁵³ For the U.S., the Korean War was neither a World War II-type victory, nor an attack on its own territory, as was the case with Pearl Harbor, nor a lost and seemingly futile conflict such as the Vietnam War. That it did not fall into such defined categories in part explains why the significant circulation of images of the Korean War during the fighting largely disappeared over the following decades. Not only did the general American public find insufficient reason to remind itself of the war, but the state authorities had no need to consolidate the memories of the war to shape the consensus of a collective memory. The result of this change in public consideration is the current status of the Korean War as “the forgotten war” in the U.S.

While photographs of the Korean War were published in the U.S. as the war proceeded, the situation in Korea was quite different. Newspaper companies were destroyed and their staff fled Seoul during North Korean and Chinese attacks, so there was virtually no outlet for the people to view Korean War photographs during the fighting itself, except at exhibitions held at the United States Information Service in Busan.⁵⁴ Korean War photographs only began to be published in photography books in the following decades during the military regime,⁵⁵ and most of these publications were produced by newspaper and broadcasting companies and government

⁵³ Wan-Beom Lee, “Hanguk jeonjaengui jeongchijeok younhyang (한국전쟁의 정치적 영향, The Political Impact of the Korean War),” 8–9. This political change is referred to as “Globalization of Containment Policy.”

⁵⁴ The exhibitions will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁵⁵ The publications include the following: *Korea, 20 Years in Pictures* (Seoul: Kyunghyang Shinmun, 1966); *Shiryeongwa Younggwangui Minjoksa (시련과 영광의 민족사)* (Seoul: Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation & Kyunghyang Shinmin, 1975); *Sajineuirobobon Gwangbok 36nyeon (사진으로 본 광복 36년)* (Seoul: Hanguk Ilbo, 1981); *Jeongbusurip 40nyeon (정부수립 40년)* (Munhwagongbobu, 1988).

agencies that were under the direct control of the military government, and therefore heavily mediated for propaganda after the fact.⁵⁶ As a result, the publication of Korean War photographs in those (“educational”) books in South Korea did not have the same kind of public exposure or response as those in the U.S. received. Combined with the heavily propagandistic intention of the South Korean publications, these books may be effective for assessing the ways in which the publishers, under the scrutiny of the military regime, attempted to shape the collective memory of the Korean War; they are nevertheless not indicative of how war experiences varied in different regions and political groups in the country, and thus how these varying experiences affected the construction of the collective memory. Kim Hyung-Gon however uses what he refers as “bundled photographs,” multiple photographs in photography books of the Korean War to study the collective memory of the Korean War in South Korea; the following section assesses the effectiveness of that study, clarifying the necessity for an alternative approach.

“Bundled Photographs” and Collective Memory of the Korean War

The lack of iconic images of the Korean War has resulted in a scarcity of studies on the collective memory of the Korean War over the decades. In the past few years, however, Kim Hyung-Gon has published a number of articles and a book on this topic.⁵⁷ He begins by investigating various books of Korean War photography published since the 1960s, discussing the concept of collective memory and providing examples of collective memories of the Korean

⁵⁶ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 60.

⁵⁷ Hyung-Gon Kim, *Hangukjeonjaengui Giyeokgwa Sajin* (한국전쟁의 기억과 사진, *The Memory and Photography of the Korean War*). Hyung-Gon Kim, “1970nyeondaee balgandoen sajinhwabojipui hangukjeonjaeng sajine daehan yeongu: sajinhwabojip 「Shiryeongwa Younggwangui Yeoksa」, 「Life at War」 ae daehan bunseok (1970년대 발간된 사진화보집의 한국전쟁 사진에 대한 연구: 사진화보집 「시련과 영광의 민족사」, 「Life at War」 에 대한 분석),” *Eonrongwahakyeongu* (언론과학연구) 5, no. 2 (2005): 141-174; Kim, “Sajingwa Realism: Sajineun yeoksareul eotteoke boyeojuneunga (사진과 리얼리즘- 사진은 역사를 어떻게 보여주는가)” *Hangukeonronhakhoe, Special Symposium Issue* (2003); 1-7.

War in the U.S.⁵⁸ Kim then catalogues books of Korean War photography published in South Korea using a statistical methodology of collecting data from the images, such as nationality of the photographic subjects and the activities they are involved in. For example, Kim organizes the photographs by categories such as photographs of Korean soldiers, U.N. soldiers, Chinese soldiers, and North Korean soldiers.⁵⁹ Kim uses such statistical evidence to tease out the purposes behind the publications, deciphering the propagandistic agendas of the publishers. His deconstruction of the content in *Korea, 20 Years in Pictures*, published by *Kyunghyang Shinmun* (*Kyunghyang Daily*) in 1968, demonstrates the usefulness of this approach. The book contains photographs of total eighty-three soldiers; among these, twenty are South Korean, nine are North Korean, twenty-eight are U.S. soldiers, and so on.⁶⁰ Kim points out that the North Korean soldiers depicted in the photographs are engaged mostly in violent acts against civilians while the South Korean soldiers are shown engaging only with other combatants and helping civilians.⁶¹ The result, Kim concludes, was the creation of a binary of “good” (South Korea) and “evil” (North Korea).⁶²

Although this detailed statistical examination of the photography books is impressive, Kim’s approach is limited by the relative lack of contextual assessment; the “good/evil” binary is distinctly supported by the photographic evidence, but he fails to consider whether the vehicles themselves—the “bundled photographs”—are valid as reflections of the collective memory of

⁵⁸ Hyung-Gon Kim, *Hangukjeonjaengui Giyeokgwa Sajin* (*한국전쟁의 기억과 사진*, *The Memory and Photography of the Korean War*), 75.

⁵⁹ In his book, Kim includes tables for each photography book he examines to indicate the subjects’ nationalities, occupations, and activities. The categories become even more detailed in the tables in the appendix. See Kim, *Hangukjeonjaengui Giyeokgwa Sajin* (*한국전쟁의 기억과 사진*, *The Memory and Photography of the Korean War*), 217-243.

⁶⁰ Hyung-Gon Kim, *Hangukjeonjaengui Giyeokgwa Sajin* (*한국전쟁의 기억과 사진*, *The Memory and Photography of the Korean War*), 129.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 130.

the Korean War. Kim argues that “bundled photographs” (“묶음사진”)—multiple photographs on a single theme published together—are much more effective materials through which to examine collective memory than “individual photographs.”⁶³ Kim however does not consider the socio-political background of the books’ publication, overlooking the publishers’ position under the strict censorship of the military government. Indeed, with censors present at newspaper and broadcasting companies during the junta, it is even possible that the book projects were overseen by those government intelligence agents; certainly, they were officially approved of.⁶⁴ Therefore, the images in the books he examines are more reflective of the publishers’ intentions rather than representative of the collective memory of the general public in South Korea.

Nonetheless, Kim considers this a virtue of sorts, as, rather than trying to “pass on specific facts of the event, the books try to convey symbolic meanings of the war via a series of images.”⁶⁵ Indeed, he contends that the merit of the photography books he studies lies in their specific expression of this purpose. Kim considers the scarcity of widely published individual photographs of the Korean War an impediment to thorough evaluation of the symbolic meaning of the photographs,⁶⁶ holding that individual photographs of the Korean War do not offer

⁶³ Kim, “1970nyeondaee balgandoen sajinhwabojipui hangukjeonjaeng sajine daehan yeongu: sajinhwabojip 「Shiryeongwa Younggwangui Yeoksa」, 「Life at War」 ae daehan bunseok (1970 년대 발간된 사진화보집의 한국전쟁 사진에 대한 연구: 사진화보집 「시련과 영광의 민족사」, 「Life at War」 에 대한 분석),” *Eonrongwahakyeongu* (*언론과학연구*) 5, no. 2 (2005): 151-52; Hyung-Gon Kim, *Hangukjeonjaengui Giyeokgwa Sajin* (*한국전쟁의 기억과 사진, The Memory and Photography of the Korean War*), 27–28.

⁶⁴ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (*한국신문사진론, Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 66.

⁶⁵ Hyung-Gon Kim, “1970nyeondaee balgandoen sajinhwabojipui hangukjeonjaeng sajine daehan yeongu: sajinhwabojip 「Shiryeongwa Younggwangui Yeoksa」, 「Life at War」 ae daehan bunseok (1970 년대 발간된 사진화보집의 한국전쟁 사진에 대한 연구: 사진화보집 「시련과 영광의 민족사」, 「Life at War」 에 대한 분석),” 152. “이런 의미에서 한국전쟁에 관한 묶음사진들은 각 사진이 재현하는 전쟁의 세부적인 사실을 전달한다기보다는, 일련의 여러 사진들을 통해 한국전쟁에 대한 상징적 의미를 전달하는 것이라고 할 수 있다.”

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

sufficient materials for a discussion of the collective memory of the war.⁶⁷ However, this fails to take into account the significance of that absence. Likewise, although the purpose of the books is clearly expressed and they do offer symbolic readings of the Korean War, whether these were successfully conveyed to the reader and correspond with the public consciousness is not considered in Kim's publications. He also never proves that they have had sufficient exposure to be considered familiar images of the war.

If "individual photographs"—left undefined by Kim—cannot offer significant insight into the collective memory of the Korean War, it is equally questionable whether photography books even less well known to the public can do so. Individual photographs, after all, are selected from a series or archive; most photographs seen by the public, whether in a newspaper or history book, are individual photographs by definition, since they are selected from a larger pool of photographs. This act of selection inherently entails individual or collective preferences in values, aesthetics, and ethics, all of which are subject to agenda-driven manipulation. Such photography books are not transparent vehicles for the conveyance of information, especially considering the propagandistic purposes of state-influenced publications during the Cold War arms race of the 1960s and '70s. All in all, then, it is doubtful that the images in these books have become "representative" images of the war such that they enable the public to construct a collective memory of the Korean War.

Nevertheless, the selected series of photographs in the books discussed by Kim provide material for assessing the varied political intentions behind those publications. Frequently,

⁶⁷ Hyung-Gon Kim, "1970nyeondaee balgandoen sajinhwabojipui hangukjeonjaeng sajine daehan yeongu: sajinhwabojip 「Shiryeongwa Younggwangui Yeoksa」, 「Life at War」 ae daehan bunseok (1970 년대 발간된 사진화보집의 한국전쟁 사진에 대한 연구: 사진화보집 「시련과 영광의 민족사」, 「Life at War」 에 대한 분석)," 151. "미국의 경우 집합기억과 사진에 대한 연구를 하기 위해 주로 포토저널리즘 잡지들에 게재된 사진들을 연구대상으로 많이 삼고 있는데, 한국에는 이러한 잡지가 부재했었기 때문에, 여기에서는 사진화보집과 전시회사진들과 같은 묶음사진을 연구의 대상으로 선택하였다." Although Kim does not provide examples of such photography journals, he frequently refers to illustrated magazines such as *Life* and *Time*.

publishers intended to include photographs of U.S. soldiers and South Korean soldiers exclusively, omitting North Korean and Chinese soldiers and civilians from both sides. In *Shiryungwa Younggwangui Minjoksa* (시련과 영광의 민족사, *The National History of Trial and Glory*, 1975), most photographs depict General MacArthur and U.S. and Korean soldiers. Only two photographs are specifically of North Korean and Chinese soldiers, and no photographs of civilians were included.⁶⁸ This, Kim argues, indicates that, in contrast to the juxtapositions seen in *Korea, 20 Years in Pictures*—of South and North, democracy and communism, good and evil⁶⁹—*Shiryungwa Younggwangui Minjoksa* was an effort to pictorially narrate the course of the Korean War from the perspective of the U.S. Army. This is the case, even though the book was published by MBC and the *Kyunghyang Daily*, Korean broadcasting and news media companies, respectively. Such illustrations sought to dignify and valorize the soldiers' sacrifice, given that these U.S. soldiers did not have any personal stake in the battles over foreign land. Under the military regime, Koreans were “educated” to appreciate the foreign troops' involvement in the war and feel a sense of indebtedness to them;⁷⁰ many were persecuted for expressing their discontent with the prolonged presence of the U.S. military in South Korea.⁷¹ Therefore, the coexistence of U.S. military bases throughout South Korea and the kind of photography books produced by media companies under the watchful eyes of the military regime are not to be

⁶⁸ Kim, *Hangukjeonjaengui Giyeokgwa Sajin* (한국전쟁의 기억과 사진, *The Memory and Photography of the Korean War*), 130, 136.

⁶⁹ Hyung-Gon Kim, “1970nyeondaee balgandoen sajinhwabojipui hangukjeonjaeng sajine daehan yeongu: sajinhwabojip 「Shiryeongwa Younggwangui Yeoksa」, 「Life at War」 ae daehan bunseok (1970 년대 발간된 사진화보집의 한국전쟁 사진에 대한 연구: 사진화보집 「시련과 영광의 민족사」, 「Life at War」 에 대한 분석),” 159–160.

⁷⁰ See, for example, various discussions on the issues of the presence of U.S. troops in post-war Germany, Japan, and South Korea in Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon, eds., *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁷¹ One of the most violent examples was the arson of the U.S.I.S. in Busan in March 1982. Moon Bu-Shik, along with another main figure of the explosion, received a death sentence for plotting the arson. It was their way of protesting against the U.S. involvement in the Gwangju Massacre of May 18, 1980 and for protecting the military regime. Their sentences were reduced to life imprisonment.

regarded as mere coincidence. As of 2010, South Korea hosts 23 military camps, three air bases, and a naval base of the United States Forces Korea (USFK), with approximately 28,500 U.S. soldiers present.⁷²

The books Kim analyzes are conspicuous in their inability to provide insight into their own public reception. It is hard to know what readers might have looked for or favored in the books as contemporary reviews of those books are not available. Rather, as evidenced by *Shiryungwa Younggwangui Minjoksa*, there was no prevailing need to juxtapose North versus South at that point because Cold War ideology had already penetrated every aspect of life in South Korea by 1975.⁷³ The 1970s were indeed the second decade of the first military junta of Park Jung-hee, highlighted by the regime's export-oriented industrialization and Five-Year Economic Development Plans (경제개발 5개년계획). Very little was added to the collective memory of the Korean War in this period due to the lack of major public discourses on the recent past under the Martial Law that "kept a close eye" on intellectual activities.⁷⁴ But while the Cold War shaped the prevailing ideology at the time, the very scarcity of iconic war photographs does tell us something: the highly descriptive nature of many of the photographs revealed too much about the casualties of war on both sides, imperiling the military government's anti-communist reconstruction of memory. Hence, photographs of military camps, combat, civilians and their residential areas were excluded from the official documentation, as the photography books manipulated the story of the Korean War to suit specific agendas.

⁷² "Official United States Forces Korea (USFK) Website."

⁷³ Hyung-Gon Hyung-Gon Kim, "1970nyeondaee balgandoen sajinhwabojipui hangukjeonjaeng sajine daehan yeongu: sajinhwabojip 「Shiryeongwa Younggwangui Yeoksa」, 「Life at War」 ae daehan bunseok (1970 년대 발간된 사진화보집의 한국전쟁 사진에 대한 연구: 사진화보집 「시련과 영광의 민족사」, 「Life at War」 에 대한 분석)," 160.

⁷⁴ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 60.

Therefore, Kim's notion of collective memory is limited to an ideological message propagated by the military government. Despite Kim's detailed statistical methodology, he does not offer information on how many of the books were printed and sold, or if educational institutions were required to own them—a factor which would provide critical evidence for the actual circulation of the books among the general public. This paucity of comprehensive data makes it difficult to argue for the books' effectiveness as a means of assessing collective memory. The study would benefit more from comparative assessments with other cultural materials—literature, film, artwork, exhibitions, concerts, commemorative events, etc.—from which collective memory could be deduced. In addition, rather than focusing only on “bundled photographs,” examining the uses of different types or genres of Korean War photograph provides opportunities to study diverse aspects of the war and its impact on Korean society from past to present.

Photographs of War Orphans: “Individual Photographs” as an Alternative to “Bundled Photographs”

Individual photographs can be grouped together for the purpose of studying collective memory in ways other than “bundling” via book publication. One very illuminating grouping of Korean War photographs by subject involves those of Korean orphans of the war. Orphans were the subject of a large number of photographs taken by foreign war correspondents, as over 100,000 children became orphans by the end of the War.⁷⁵ These orphan photographs have been used explicitly and extensively to construct a memory of the war. A prime example is the

⁷⁵ “Orphanages of Korea during the Korean War,” *Korean War Children's Memorial*, n.d., <http://www.koreanchildren.org/docs/orphanages.html>. This website, operated and edited by Mr. George F. Drake, a Korean War veteran, is dedicated to “the American servicemen and women who, during the Korean War and the years following, rendered compassionate humanitarian aid to the children of that war torn nation.” The website postings include stories and photographs of the GIs and Korean orphans between 1950 and 1954.

photograph of an orphan boy in Seoul taken by Limb Eung Sik (1912-2001)—*A War Orphan, Taepyungro* (1950) [Figure 2.11]. In the photograph, a boy with a shaved head looks utterly haggard: his clothes are torn, his face and body completely covered with dirt, his knees scarred. To his right sits an open can that appears to be a military utensil; his hand is in his mouth as if he had just picked up something edible from the can. Looking straight into the camera lens, the boy's forehead wrinkles like that of an old man. The shot tightly frames the boy and the brick wall behind him, but the messy ground covered in torn-up papers shows the viewer the conditions he is living in.

A War Orphan, Taepyungro is one of the better-known photographs of mid-twentieth century Korea.⁷⁶ It has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions with catalog publications; with each exposure, critics and historians such as Yim Young-Gyun (임영균) discuss the photograph as a representation of the devastation of the war-stricken nation.⁷⁷ The title invokes the large number of civilian casualties resulting in many orphaned children who roamed the streets of major cities such as Seoul.⁷⁸ Other than the general information that the photograph was taken on the boulevard Taepyeongro, it is difficult to find out any further information about the boy or his circumstances; Limb has avoided exposing any details that could come between the viewer and the subject. This lack of other details in the photograph is precisely what allows it

⁷⁶ Exhibitions in which Limb's photograph of the boy was shown include "Limb Eung-Sik Sajinjeon" (임응식 사진전) at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, from September 2002 to July 2003, and "*Hanguksajin 60nyeon*" (한국사진 60년) at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, from August to October, 2008.

⁷⁷ Young-Gyun Yim, *Sajingawaeui Daehwa 3 (사진가와의 대화 3, Conversations with Korean Photographers 3)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 1998). Young-Gyun Lim, "임응식 사진전," *National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea*, 2002, <http://www.moca.go.kr/notice/h19/19-e.html>. (Accessed February 16, 2010); Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul (한국사진의 선구자들)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 2007), 101.

⁷⁸ Similar images of war orphans have been published elsewhere. *LIFE at War* (1975), originally published by the American publisher Time-Life Books, included an image of a smiling boy tightly holding a military can in Seoul. See *LIFE at War* (Seoul: Hanguk Ilbo and Time-Life Books, 1977).

to achieve the level of symbolism necessary to represent the general tragedy of war.⁷⁹ The image is therefore propagated as a powerful symbol of the Korean War by curators and critics of photography.⁸⁰

Another photograph of an orphan with a great symbolic value is housed in the Korean War archive at the National Archive and Records Administration (NARA) in Silver Spring, Maryland [Figure 2.12].⁸¹ The photograph shows a girl sitting on the ground with her right leg stretched out, crying with her mouth wide open. She wears traditional Korean clothes (common attire at the time), but does not seem to be wearing much underneath. Based on the Chinese characters on a plaque by the gate, the building behind her was once used for industrial manufacturing in Incheon, a port city made famous by General Douglas MacArthur's Incheon Landing Operation (인천상륙작전, Sept. 10-19, 1950)⁸² reclaiming Seoul from the North Korean People's Army.⁸³

Rather than explicating the circumstances of the specific orphans pictured, the Seoul and Incheon photographs generalize the experience of the event, calling attention to the atrocities of the Korean War "by paying less attention to their effectiveness as referential documents...in a specific place and time, and more to their effectiveness as symbols of the atrocities as their most generalized and universal level."⁸⁴ In the absence of titles or captions, the photographs do not offer any locational context unless the viewer can read the Chinese characters in the Incheon

⁷⁹ Zelizer, "From the Image of Record to the Image of Memory: Holocaust Photography, Then and Now," 107.

⁸⁰ See Young-Gyun Lim, "임응식 사진전."

⁸¹ The photograph is in fact a still from footage of the Incheon Landing by an American war correspondent or soldier. The footage and still image is archived at NARA. I was unable to retrieve the identity of the maker of the film.

⁸² The operation is also known as the Battle of Incheon in English, with its code name being Operation Chromite.

⁸³ Korean nouns that have their etymologies in the Chinese language were written largely in Chinese letters until the late 1980s at the end of the military regime. They are still used in academic purposes or by elders, in general, who have been educated to use Chinese characters for those nouns.

⁸⁴ Zelizer, "From the Image of Record to the Image of Memory: Holocaust Photography, Then and Now," 101. I am actually referring to Zelizer's assessment of the symbolization of Holocaust photographs, which is closely relevant to the photographs of Korean War orphans.

photograph; such generality—the children could have been anywhere in East Asia—leads to symbolization. This is demonstrated by another photograph, resembling that of the girl in Incheon, in which an injured toddler in the middle of a ruined area sits on the ground facing the right, mouth wide open and crying [Figure 2.13]. Covered with blood, the vulnerable body is juxtaposed against the horrifying scene of destroyed buildings and other infrastructure in the background. This photograph was taken by the Chinese photographer Wang Xiao Ting (王小亭) during the Second Sino-Japanese War in Shanghai in August, 1937, commonly referred to as the Battle of Shanghai.⁸⁵ The similarities between the two photographs are striking, not only in subject and pictorial effects but also in the images' degree of ambiguity. They are in fact so similar that either could be mistaken for having occurred during the other event; indeed, these images could be used to signify atrocities in any large city in East Asia during the violent years of the first half of the twentieth century.⁸⁶ Such symbolization through photography emphasizes the universality of suffering, rather than the referential potential of the photographs as part of an index.⁸⁷

The symbolic meaning of the photographs is clear: the most tragic victims of a war are the children affected in the aftermath. As the photographs conjure up not only sympathy but also shame, frustration, guilt, and helplessness on the part of the viewer, the orphans pictured begin to personify the nation itself, stripped of security, resources, independence (only gained following the end of World War II), and even a future. Many South Koreans believe that they were the most victimized group during the war, as the North initiated aggressions and the fighting on the

⁸⁵ The work of the Chinese photographer is introduced in Chen Shen, *Zhouguo she ying shi (History of Photography in China 1840-1937)* (Taipei: She ying jia chu ban she, 1990), 137-38

⁸⁶ Zelizer, "From the Image of Record to the Image of Memory: Holocaust Photography, Then and Now," 108.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

Korean Peninsula was really a power struggle between outside superpowers.⁸⁸ Despite the tremendous economic success achieved by South Korea since the war, the two Koreas are still divided by the 38th Parallel; tensions have worsened since 2008, as the conservative ruling party of South Korea has toughened its rhetoric and curtailed diplomatic relations with North Korea; and the North remains utterly cut off from the rest of the world. Hence, the orphan photographs convey the collective memory of the Korean War as an “orphanizing” experience for the Korean nation and people.⁸⁹ Kwon Myung-a, a scholar of contemporary Korean literature, argues that “*sunansa* (수난사, the history of suffering)” encourages the public’s self-victimization—the collective sub-consciousness of war victims—and at the same time homogenizes divergent experiences of the Korean War. As a result, individuals identify themselves through the orphan photographs as “‘*minjok*’ *sunanja* (‘민족’ 수난자, ‘national/ethnic’ sufferer).”⁹⁰

Less well known are photographs of groups of Korean orphans taken in front of or at orphanages, many of which are kept at NARA. Some show children brought into U.S. military camps to live with soldiers.⁹¹ Others show those taken into orphanages operated by foreign Christian charity groups and U.S. military units; in these photographs, orphans stand in front of

⁸⁸ Wan-beom Lee, “Hangukjeonjaengui jeongchijeok younghyang (The Political Impact of the Korean War),” 8-10.

⁸⁹ Tobias Hübinette, for example, uses the analogy of an “orphaned nation” in his discussion of popular representations of international Korean adoptees in his book. Tobias Hübinette, “Comforting an Orphaned Nation: Representations of International Adoption and Adopted Koreans in Korean Popular Culture” (Stockholm, Sweden: Stockholm University, 2005).

⁹⁰ Myung-a Kwon, “Munyeounghwawa Gongyugioek Mandeulgi (문예영화와 공유기억 만들기, *Literary Films and the Making of Collective Memory*)” in *Joenjaengeui Gioek, Yeoksawa Munhak (전쟁의 기억, 역사와 문학, The Memory of War, History and Literature)* (Seoul: Wolin Books, 2005), 335-365. Referenced in Hyung-Gon Kim, *Hangukjeonjaengui Giyeokgwa Sajin (한국전쟁의 기억과 사진, The Memory and Photography of the Korean War)*, 62. The term, *minjok*, is difficult to translate into another term in English. *Minjok* is a group of people sharing the same ethnicity, but because Koreans believe that they have been united by their single ethnicity, the term is often used interchangeably with “national.” *Minjokjuui* means nationalism and/or ethnocentrism.

⁹¹ Orphans who were brought into the camps were called “house boys”. Many pictures of orphans in the Korean War archives in NARA depict soldiers and the boys together, exchanging warm gestures and smiles. The photographs have been reproduced in Do Park, ed., *Jiulsuoepneun Image 3: Hangukjeonjaengee namgingutdeul (지울수 없는 이미지 3: 한국전쟁이 남긴 것들, The Indelible Image 3: The Photographs of the Korean War from National Archives and Records Administration in the United States of America)*, vol. 3 (Seoul: Noonbit, 2007).

plaques identifying the orphanages or military bases. In one photograph, a group of male children with an American chaplain and a Korean soldier stand in front of a chapel, basically an oval-shaped tent with a cross on top and a sign that reads “Chapel on the Parallel” (referring to the 38th Parallel dividing South and North Korea) [Figure 2.14]. The children, wearing overlarge clothes likely received from soldiers in the camps, appear to be in much better condition than, for instance, Limb’s war orphan. In another photograph, two U.S. marines are handing bundles of clothing to a man in a suit [Figure 2.15]. Next to them are small children with their backs to the camera looking at what the men are doing; a sign behind the Korean man reads “US MARINE MEMORIAL ORPHANAGE” and “포항 서OO 애육원 (Pohang West “something” Orphanage)” in Korean. The subjects in the photograph are posing for the shot to commemorate the charitable act of the marines at the front door of the orphanage.

Unlike the photographs of the crying girl and orphan boy, these photographs were never widely circulated or exhibited. While the two orphan photographs, especially Limb’s, have been decontextualized to symbolize the “anonymous” suffering wrought by the war, the group photographs exhibit too much specific information about the subjects for such generalization. When the viewer perceives specific information about the scenes depicted in the images, such as the names and locations of the charity groups, the photographic narratives can no longer be universalized.⁹² This in turn impedes the images from creating symbolic meanings, preventing them from becoming a medium for collective memory.⁹³

However, by focusing on the photographs of civilians, especially on its most helpless members, these orphan photographs block the viewer from the subject matter featured in the majority of extant Korean War photographs—documentations of combat, casualties on both

⁹² Zelizer, “From the Image of Record to the Image of Memory: Holocaust Photography, Then and Now,” 108.

⁹³ Griffin, “The Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism,” 140.

sides, war prisoners, and mass executions of civilians who collaborated with the enemy. Such photographs necessarily show the casualties of the North and its allies, conjuring undesirable collective sympathy towards the North Koreans and Chinese. This was, and largely still is, strictly taboo in the anti-communist environment of South Korea. Thus the orphan photographs also serve an agenda; they personify the South Korean nation as the innocent victim of the war.

The orphan photographs of the Korean War thus demonstrate how “individual” photographs can be effective material for collective memory studies. The images undergo symbolization and become a medium of the collective memory of suffering. However, they do not merely evoke empathy for universal suffering but show how Koreans turned themselves into “national/ethnic sufferers” by identifying themselves as war orphans, a memory that cannot be shared by non-Koreans; the nation transforms itself into an orphan figure. Ironically, by orphanizing both individuals and the nation, other issues, such as the fate of mixed-race war orphans of GIs and Korean women, and the adoption of war orphans both within Korea and internationally (by non-Koreans), were suppressed to an extreme degree during the military regime; many of the them thus had their situation used against their long-term recovery.⁹⁴

Korean Photographers in the Korean War

Though fewer than the foreign photographers in Korea during the three years of the Korean War, there was a significant number of Korean photographers actively documenting the event, some employed by the Korean military and others working privately. Most were referred to as “*jonggungija* (중군기자, war correspondents).” In English, a war correspondent is “a

⁹⁴ Since the 1990s a growing number of books and articles on these issues have been published in South Korea and the U.S. For discussions on the issues of war orphan adoptions in English, see Arissa Oh, “A New Kind of Missionary Work: Christians, Christian Americanists, and the Adoption of Korean GI Babies, 1955-1961,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2005): 161-188; and a memoir by Elizabeth Kim, *Ten Thousand Sorrows: An Extraordinary Journey of a Korean War Orphan* (Rantoul, IL: Doubleday, 2000).

journalist engaged by a newspaper to send home first-hand descriptions of the fighting.”⁹⁵ The Korean use is broader, including non-literary documentarians such as photojournalists and photographers who were not professional journalists. The term as used in this chapter refers to the broader Korean definition, to include the photographers of the Korean War.

The number of foreign war correspondents stationed either in Korea or Japan between 1950 and 1953 exceeded 600.⁹⁶ In addition to the 40 to 60 correspondents reporting from the battlefield, 175 to 250 covered the war in other parts of Korea and Japan.⁹⁷ In 1950, the year the Korean War began, 310 war correspondents were in Korea, of whom 60% were from the United States; the rest were from twenty other countries, including from the other fifteen nations comprising the U.N. forces in the Korean War. About 50 of these were photographers, including famous American photographers such as Max Desfor, David Douglas Duncan, Carl Mydans, Werner Bischof, and Margaret Bourke-White. As the South Korean and U.S. forces began counterattacks on the North Korean forces, the number of Korean photographers working on the frontlines increased; prominent among them were Lim In-Sik (임인식)⁹⁸, Choi Gye-bok (최계복), Lim Eung Sik (임응식), Lee Geon-joong (이건중), Hong Sa-young (홍사영), Chung Do Seon (정도선), Lim Youn-chang (임윤창), and Sung Doo-Kyung (성두경).⁹⁹

Unfortunately, much of the work of these Korean photographers did not survive, or was lumped

⁹⁵ “war-correspondent,” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, n.d., <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/225589?redirectedFrom=war%20correspondent#eid15332325> (Accessed August 11, 2011).

⁹⁶ Eun-su Shin, “Research of the War Correspondent’s Operation and Danger” (MA Thesis, Daejeon: Joogbu University, 2008), 21. The translation of the thesis title is by Shin.

⁹⁷ Ibid. According to Shin, 18 war correspondents died during the Korean War.

⁹⁸ Lim In-Sik (임인식) was a lieutenant in the Office of Public Relations of the Ministry of Defense. He was a photographer and owned a studio when he entered the Korea Military Academy in 1948. He began photographing the war front from the onset of the Korean War and was discharged in June 1952. See In-Sik Lim, *Woorigabon Hangukjeonjaeng* (우리가 본 한국전쟁, *The Korean War as We Have Seen*), ed. Chung-Eui Lim (Seoul: Noonbit, 2008).

⁹⁹ Yunjung Kim, “Korean War Photography as Documentary” (MA Thesis, Seoul: Seoul National University, 2009), 26. The list of photographers includes both military personnel and civilian war correspondents.

without citation into collections of Korean War photographs taken by “anonymous photographers.”¹⁰⁰

During the war, it was difficult to expose the public to images of the war through news media. Most newspaper companies were located in large cities, primarily Seoul, and many fled further south during the invasion of these cities by North Korean and Chinese forces.¹⁰¹ Of those news outlets that remained functional, newspapers were strictly censored during the war by the Rhee administration.¹⁰² Furthermore, with the outbreak of war, the devastating situation forced civilians to abandon not just their belongings but activities such as media consumption in general. Nonetheless, the number of Korean photographers actively working during the Korean War increased over time, and their work did circulate somewhat among the population.¹⁰³

Their photographs were largely used for educational and propagandistic purposes, as many of the photographers worked for the Office of Public Relations at the Ministry of Defense (국방부 정훈국 보도과, OPRMD).¹⁰⁴ The OPRMD founded a branch office devoted to photography on August 19, 1952, to conduct these tasks more efficiently and to preserve photographs. They received photographs from each military camp and battalion, and “rented” them out to other camps or PR offices for panel displays to be held once a week.¹⁰⁵ According to the records remaining at the OPRMD, these photographs were rented 60 times, for exhibition or reproduction. The number of viewers thus exceeded 120,000 by the end of the war, although the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰² Much of the censorship concerned the spread of communist ideas. See Shin, “Research of [sic] the War Correspondent’s Operation and Danger,” 28-31.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁰⁴ Lim, *Woorigabon Hangukjeonjaeng* (우리가 본 한국전쟁, *The Korean War as We Have Seen*), 8-9.

¹⁰⁵ Gukbangbu Jeonghukung (국방부 정훈국), *Jeonghuneopmuui Heogowa jeonmang* (정훈업무의 회고와 전망) (1952), 98-99, as referenced in Yungjung Kim, 27.

OPRMD does not specify whether this number refers solely to exhibition visitors or includes other means of exposure.

These photography exhibitions were typically held at the office of the United States Information Service (U.S.I.S., 미공보원). At the time, the U.S.I.S. was one of the few active “cultural institutions;” the office saw itself as in charge of the “cultural education” of Koreans, a euphemism for “anti-communist” and “pro-U.S.” indoctrination.¹⁰⁶ The curatorial process thus deemphasized photographs reflecting “personal views;”¹⁰⁷ therefore, most of the photographs shown at the U.S.I.S. did not portray civilian casualties or warfront atrocities, but rather focused on the Korean and U.N. soldiers working together for the reconstruction of the destroyed nation.¹⁰⁸ The identities of the photographers of these exhibition images are absent from the records of the events, but the inclusion of work by Korean photographers can be assumed given the number employed by state-run or –influenced organizations; indeed, Lim In-Sik (임인식) was a Lieutenant at the OPRMD.¹⁰⁹

The OPRMD and U.S.I.S. records show that photographs of the Korean War were exposed to the public via exhibition in the southernmost parts of the peninsula, most significantly in Busan. There is, however, no specific information on whether these photographs were reproduced in South Korea in widespread print media.¹¹⁰ Therefore, even if some of the war photographs viewed at the exhibitions had powerful impressions on the attendees, the public’s

¹⁰⁶ Yungjung Kim, 27.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 28.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰⁹ Lim was the head of the photography unit at the OPRMD during the war. Originally from Jeongju, Pyeonganbukdo, now part of North Korea, he opened a photography studio in Seoul upon Korea’s liberation from colonial rule in 1945. His photograph of a fallen American soldier from Indiana ran on the front cover of *The Indianapolis News* in 1950. Lim left a diary of his experience as a war photographer, which was reproduced in In-Sik Lim, *Woorigabon Hangukjeonjaeng* (우리가 본 한국전쟁, *The Korean War as We Have Seen*).

¹¹⁰ As mentioned earlier, illustrated magazines similar to *Life* or *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* did not exist in South Korea during the Korean War.

exposure to these photographs was temporary and rarely repetitive, and limited to the population of the southern cities.¹¹¹ This absence of fast and frequent reproduction and wide circulation contributes to the lack of iconic images of the Korean War in South Korea. The following section will discuss how this effect was heightened by the growing prominence of a photographic movement in the immediate postwar years heavily influenced by the widespread anti-communist/leftist sentiment in Korean society over the following decades.

Limb Eung Sik and *Saenghwaljuui* Realism

The Korean War, like most others, inhibited the creative activities of many citizens. Some wealthy artists and intellectuals fled to Japan, Europe, or the United States. However, the Korean War is considered critical to the development of Korean photographers' "photographic aesthetics."¹¹² Before the war, photographers such as Lee Kyung-mo, who photographed popular uprisings, were exceptions to the rule; most Korean photographers worked with Pictorialist or experimental styles, submitting their pictures to *gongmojeon* (공모전), photography competitions organized by "salons" (generally photography organizations) or newspaper competitions.¹¹³ These photographers aspired to highly composed and stylized landscape photographs such as those by Limb Eung Sik [Figure 2.16]. These activities were entirely halted by the war as photographers lost studios and equipment, or were drafted into the armed forces.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ The population of Busan swelled with refugees from the more northern cities, but this was a temporary situation. The pre-war population of Busan was 882,000, and it "was crowded with approximately half-a-million refugees" in early 1951. See Andrei Lankov, "January 1951: Life of Korean War Refugees in Busan," *The Korea Times*, January 31, 2010, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/01/113_60003.html (July 23, 2011).

¹¹² Young-gyun Yim, *Sajingawau Daehwa 3: Hanguksajineul Gaecheokhan Wonrosajinga Singwau Daedam* (사진가와의 대화 3: 한국사진을 개척한 원로사진가 8 인과의 대담, *Conversations with Photographers 3: Interviews with Senior Photographers Who Paved the Paths of Korean Photography*) (Seoul: Noonbit, 1998), 14. Also see Yunjung Yunjung Kim, "Korean War Photography as Documentary," 30.

¹¹³ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguksajinui Jasaengryeok* (한국사진의 자생력) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2010), 15.

¹¹⁴ Yim, *Sajingawaeui Daehwa 3* (사진가와의 대화 3, *Conversations with Korean Photographers 3*), 68.

Limb was living and working in Busan when the war broke out, insulated from the destruction occurring in cities farther north.¹¹⁵ He operated a photography studio called ARS, and became president of the Busan *yesulsajin yeonguhoe* (부산예술사진연구회, the Busan Research Council of Art Photography) in 1947.¹¹⁶ After the war began, Eugene Knez, the Director of the U.S.I.S., encouraged Limb to become a war correspondent for the U.S. State Department.¹¹⁷ Limb worked alongside Hank Walker, a photographer for *Life* magazine; they were present at the Incheon Landing Operation on September 6, 1950, the most critical military operation by General MacArthur during the Korean War.¹¹⁸ He photographed the reclamation of Seoul on September 28, 1950, and ended his stint as war correspondent in October of the same year, although he continued to photograph throughout the war.¹¹⁹ Like others who photographed the war, Limb saw himself as a mediator between the world of reality—the war-stricken nation—and the general public.

Before the war, Limb was involved in the photographic movement *bitgwahaejo* (빛과 해조, light and current), which was influenced by the Japanese photographer Fukuhara Shinzō's Pictorialist approach called “light with its harmony.”¹²⁰ *Bitgwahaejo*, and other variations of Pictorialism are generally described as *yesulsajin* focused on the painterly effect of light and

¹¹⁵ Eung Sik Limb, *Naegageoleoon Hanguksadan: Limb Eung Sik Heogorok* (내가 걸어온 한국사단: 임응식 회고록) (Seoul: Noonbit, 1999), 77-80.

¹¹⁶ Tae-gyun Kwon, *Sajinga Limb Eung-Sik: Cameraro Jinshileul Malhada* (사진가 임응식: 카메라로 진실을 말하다, *Photographer Limb Eung Sik: Telling the Truth with a Camera*) (Seoul: Namusup, 2006), 20. *Sajin* means photography in Korean.

¹¹⁷ Yunjung Kim, “Korean War Photography as Documentary,” 28.

¹¹⁸ Limb, *Naegageoleoon Hanguksadan: Limb Eung Sik Heogorok* (내가 걸어온 한국사단: 임응식 회고록), 82-103.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*; Tae-gyun Kwon, *Sajinga Limb Eung-Sik: Cameraro Jinshileul Malhada* (사진가 임응식: 카메라로 진실을 말하다, *Photographer Limb Eung Sik: Telling the Truth with a Camera*), 22-24.

¹²⁰ In Japanese, it is called “hikarito sono kaichō.” See Anne Wilkes Tucker et al., *The History of Japanese Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2003).

composition as well as on pastoral and abstract subject matters.¹²¹ *A Sunny Place* (1935) is typical of these aesthetic elements [Figure 2. 17]. In Limb's photograph, a group of children play a game, guarded by a wall behind them. The soft tonal quality of the gelatin silver print yields the impression of gentle spring sunshine, as the afternoon sun creates long shadows on the ground. The tone and subject matter evokes a peaceful yet melancholic feeling.

This style, of course, could not be further removed from the realities of war. In his autobiography, Limb states he was unaware of the tasks of a war correspondent when he took on the role.¹²² His experience of the Korean War previously had been limited to hearing the remote sounds of bombings and witnessing the arrival of war refugees and wounded soldiers into Busan.¹²³ Limb recalled that he was unable to photograph anything for four days upon his arrival in Seoul following the reclamation; what he experienced and witnessed at the front was simply too horrific to photograph in his usual manner. Therefore, he developed a new style of photography to suit the circumstances. The circulation and propagation of that style is in part due to luck. While many Korean War photographers working for the Korean Ministry of Defense went to report from Pyongyang, Limb stayed with General MacArthur's command office as his contract was with the U.S. State Department;¹²⁴ this proved very fortunate for Limb, as many who went to Pyongyang never returned.¹²⁵

Limb held a solo exhibition of his photographs from the war front as early as October 15, 1950, at the U.S.I.S in Busan. Unlike other panel exhibitions, the photographs in

¹²¹ Yunjung Kim, "Korean War Photography as Documentary," 29. For the reception history of in Korea, see Jihyun Yu, "Iljeshidae 'Yesulsajin'eui gaenyomgwa yesulsajingaeui Insik (일제시대 '예술사진'의 개념과 예술사진가의 인식)," in *Hangukgeundaemisulgwa Shigakmunhwa (한국근대미술과 시각문화, Modern Art and Visual Culture in Korea)*, ed. Young-Na Kim (Seoul: Chohyong Kyoyuk, 2002), 215-234.

¹²² Limb, *Naegageoleoon Hanguksadan: Limb Eung Sik Heogorok (내가 걸어온 한국사단: 임응식 회고록)*, 81-85.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹²⁵ Woo-Seok Cho, *Hanguksajingaron (한국사진가론)*, 90.

Gyeonginjeonseon bodosajinjeon (경인전선보도사진전) included pictures of dead soldiers and civilians. According to Limb, audiences covered their mouths or avoided seeing these photographs.¹²⁶ This recollection evokes the drastic difference between life on the front and in the southern cities; those who took refuge in the south were insulated from the experiences of people unable to flee the North Korean and Chinese forces.¹²⁷

Limb's changed attitude toward the photographic medium and style of his work was also affected by his encounter with foreign photographers present during his service as a war correspondent.¹²⁸ Limb recounts noticing the working methods of Hank Walker and Margaret Bourke-White, which consisted of shooting thousands of photographs without worrying that they were consuming too many rolls of film; Limb had always been careful not to waste any film with clumsy shots.¹²⁹ Impressed by their vigor and persistence, he realized the importance of the photographer's awareness of his surroundings at all times. Limb states that his initial disinterest in Hank Walker quickly turned into admiration and respect.¹³⁰

The changes in the work of Limb and others in the movement became recognizable after the war. For his new style, Limb coined the name *Saenghwaljuui Realism* (생활주의 리얼리즘, "Everyday Life Realism") to signify how photographers focused on scenes of "the everyday" in

¹²⁶ Yunjung Kim, "Korean War Photography as Documentary," 30.

¹²⁷ See essays that recollect the experiences of the Korean War by Kim Won Il (김원일), Moon Sun-Tae (문순태), Lee Ho-Cheol (이호철), and Chun Sun-Tae (전순태). Won Il Won-Il Kim et al., *Nareul Ulin Hangukjeonjaeng 100jangmyun: Naega geokeun 6.25jeonjaeng* (나를 울린 한국전쟁 100 장면-내가 겪은 6.25 전쟁, *A Hundred Korean War Scenes that Made Me Cry: 6.25 War as I Experienced*).

¹²⁸ Tae-gyun Kwon, *Sajinga Limb Eung-Sik: Cameraro Jinshileul Malhada* (사진가 임응식: 카메라로 진실을 말하다, *Photographer Limb Eung Sik: Telling the Truth with a Camera*), 22, 24; Yunjung Kim, "Korean War Photography as Documentary," 70.

¹²⁹ Kim, *Ibid.*, 30. Also see Tae-gyun Kwon, *Sajinga Limb Eung-Sik: Cameraro Jinshileul Malhada* (사진가 임응식: 카메라로 진실을 말하다, *Photographer Limb Eung Sik: Telling the Truth with a Camera*), 22. Lee Kyung-mo recollects that he met Margaret Bourke-White twice, once in Busan and the other time in Jirisan (Mt. Jiri). See Young-gyun Yim, *Sajingawau Daehwa 3: Hanguksajineul Gaecheokhan Wonrosajinga Singwau Daedam* (사진가와의 대화 3: 한국사진을 개척한 원로사진가 8 인파의 대담, *Conversations with Photographers 3: Interviews with Senior Photographers Who Paved the Paths of Korean Photography*), 57.

¹³⁰ Limb, *Naegageoleon Hanguksadan: Limb Eung Sik Heogorok* (내가 걸어온 한국사단: 임응식 회고록), 84-85.

their work; this became the dominant style of photography in South Korea in the late 1950s and '60s.¹³¹ The aesthetic school also included photographers documenting life after the war, such as Choi Min-Sik (최민식) and Chung Beom-Tae (정범태); these mostly depicted the hardships of everyday life, and basic activities such as eating [Figure 2.25]. An early work by Limb using *Saenghwaljuui* Realism, *gujuk* (구직, 1953), shows his move toward the new style [Figure 2.18]. In the black and white photograph (gelatin silver print), a man leans against a reflective marble wall on the street; behind him is a group of pedestrians in business suits. The man leaning against the wall wears over-sized pants with what appears to be a mismatched combination of denim jacket and a woman's hat, the rim of which covers his eyes almost completely. The button-down jacket, with its sleeves rolled up, also seems too big for his size. But what stands out most is a sign tied to his waist: The Chinese 求職, pronounced *gujuk* according to the Korean phonetic system, is written on a small piece of cardboard. The word means 'seeking a job'. A tall man in a dark suit walking past turns to look at the man, whose head is lowered and posture lethargic as if ashamed of being there. Ahead of the tall man are two others in business suits, shaking hands with polite smiles as if meeting accidentally on the street. Behind them are more pedestrians, all seemingly men in suits. The man with a sign is the odd one out in this street scene, whose other participants all appear employed, presumably in white collar jobs requiring that they wear suits.

The photograph, taken immediately after the Korean War, reveals a major social problem in post-war Korea—unemployment—and does so with a sense of melancholy. Upon close observation of the scene, it does not seem dramatized, but at the same time the action of the man with the sign in lowering his head, potentially hiding from identification by the camera, does not look entirely coincidental. As Limb had established his reputation as an art photographer prior to

¹³¹ Limb founded *Hanguksajinjagahyeophoe* (한국사진작가협회, The Association of Korean (Art) Photographers) in 1952, which became the springboard for recognition of the movement.

the Korean War, his photographs of people and everyday life on the streets were viewed as artistic creations, rather than carrying the journalistic context of his war correspondent photography. Limb, however, advocated straight photography, arguing that the true value of photography lies in its capacity for realism.¹³²

In another photograph taken in 1950, Limb shows a woman and man against a wall on which a sign reads “Keep Clear—No Parking 이 곳에 잊지 마시요 Red Cross Only 미국...의 한 함” [Figure 2.19]. The sign and the title of the photograph, *Restricted Area*, hint that there is a military camp and a Red Cross office nearby. The woman seems to be mending a garment while the child on her back tilts his or her head toward the wall. The man on her left, apparently sitting on the ground, is fixated on what appears to be a newspaper. He may be looking at classified ads in search of a job; they may be a couple. While the English reads “Keep Clear—No Parking,” directed toward U.S. and U.N. soldiers, the Korean translates literally as “Don’t be here.” It is intended to discourage not only drivers or movers but also pedestrians and people like the photographic subjects. The picture thus encapsulates several features of wartime Korea within a single scene: the presence of the U.S Army, other U.N. forces, and the Red Cross in civilian spaces; the gendered activities that the photographer decided to capture; the more authoritative and subjectifying language used to address the native population; and the weird peacefulness of the scene so soon after the violent outbreak of the war.

Limb’s photographs thus depict mundane scenes of life, yet also inform the viewer of something peculiar about that scene, especially regarding the subject’s state of being—war-stricken, struggling to survive. In the three photographs by Limb discussed here—*A War Orphan*, *Gujik*, and *Restricted Area*—the presence of aesthetic humanism underlies the images. Such

¹³² Kwon, *Sajinga Limb Eung Sik: Cameraro Jinshileul Malhada* (사진가 임응식: 카메라로 진실을 말하다, *Photographer Limb Eung Shik: Telling the Truth with a Camera*), 24.

humanism was a major interest for adherents of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism.¹³³ They treated photography as a medium for portraying the reality of post-war South Korea, “a record that describes historical contents concretely so that it was important to express things in view of their reality in time and in space....”¹³⁴ The movement, therefore, emphasized the indexical power of the photographic medium, while at the same time prizing the medium’s capacity to conjure up ‘humanistic’ emotions such as sympathy and familial love. Limb believed that the movement thus offered “an opportunity to confirm a social impact of photography.”¹³⁵

The work of photographers associated with *Saenghwaljuui* Realism tended to be juxtaposed against the styles dubbed “yesulsajin (art photography)” and “salonsajin (salon photography),” roughly equated with Pictorialist and composed photographs. The historians of photography Park Pyeong Jong and Lee Kyungmin argue that these terms were used mainly by *Saenghwaljuui* Realists to differentiate the aims of their own work.¹³⁶ Yet by generalizing—and trivializing—the work of photographers outside the movement, *Saenghwaljuui* Realists simplified and de-intellectualized *salonsajin* while elevating their own status.¹³⁷ Thus, through the discourse of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism, photography in South Korea was dichotomized as

¹³³ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 101.

¹³⁴ Injin Choi and Ju Suk Park, *The Century of Korean Photography: Images from the Land of Morning Calm* (한국사진의 한세기), 97. All grammatical errors are in the original text.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Park Pyeong-jong, *Hanguk Sajineui Jsaengryeok* (한국사진의 자생력) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2010), 16-17; Kyungmin Lee, *Hanguk Geundae Yesulsajin Archive (1910-1945): Cameradanggwa Yesulsajinshidae* (한국 근대 예술사진 아카이브 (1910-1945): 카메라당과 예술사진시대, *The Archive of Korean Modern Art Photography*), 11–12. I have also encountered the mixed use of “salonsajin,” “yesulsajin,” and “misulsajin (art/aesthetic photography)” by critics such as Cho.

¹³⁷ As mentioned earlier, however, Limb himself made photographs during the pre-war period that are now considered *salonsajin*. Upon examining Limb’s photographs before and after the Korean War, the focus on isolating the human subject in the photograph from the surroundings was commonly detected. The photographs showed that Limb’s compositional approach to photography has not transformed completely since the years he practiced “salonsajin.” This was also pointed out by Park Pyeong Jong throughout his biographies of Korean photographers in *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul*. Park argued that the work of Limb in post-war period tends to mix the style of “salon photography” and documentary photography. See Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 102-3.

Realism vs. “Salon-ism.” As a result, the photographs of the Korean War by photographers associated with *Saenghwaljuui* Realism were also aestheticized.

The rise of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism established the documentary approach as a prominent artistic style of photography in South Korea. The photographers of the school became important figures in photographic circles, publishing their own monographs.¹³⁸ This, however, did not lead the Korean War photographs taken by the movements’ artists to become widely reproduced and circulated to become iconic photographs. Their war photographs, such as Limb’s *A War Orphan* and *Gujik*, became aestheticized, remaining on the walls of exhibition and in exhibition catalogs, rather than in popular magazines or propagandistic posters.

Indeed, the use of the term “Realism” requires a broader assessment when applied to photography. The etymology of the term in art history traces back to a movement in painting in nineteenth-century France, and in general refers to paintings that eschew literary or allegorical subject matter, instead using subjects from contemporary life. The painter and the audience considered the scene depicted in the painting realistic in terms of the artistic technique used and the subject matter chosen. “Realism” thus presupposes that the work of art is a portrayal of the real;¹³⁹ however, the genre of Realism cannot simply be defined according to the employment of

¹³⁸ See, for example, the monographs of Limb Eung Sik, Sung Du-Kyung, Lee Kyung-mo, and Lee HyoungRok. Eung Sik Limb, *Naegageoleoon Hanguksadan: Limb Eung Sik Heogorok* (내가 걸어온 한국사단: 임응식 회고록) (Seoul: Noonbit, 1999); Eung-Sik Limb, *The Portfolios of Limb Eung-Sik* (임응식 사진집) (Seoul: Sajin Yesulsa, 1995); Tae-gyun Kwon, *Sajinga Limb Eung-Sik: Cameraro Jinshileul Malhada* (사진가 임응식: 카메라로 진실을 말하다, *Photographer Limb Eung Sik: Telling the Truth with a Camera*) (Seoul: Namusup, 2006); Doo-Kyung Sung, *Dashidolawabon Seoul: Sung Du-kyung Sajinjip* (다시 돌아와 본 서울: 성두경 사진집) (Seoul: Noonbit, 1994); Kyung-mo Lee, *Manifestations of an Age of Turbulence: Photographs by Lee Kyung-mo* (격동기의 현상-이경모 사진집) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2010); HyoungRok Lee, *Lee HyoungRok: Photographs by Lee HyoungRok* (Seoul: Noonbit, 2009).

¹³⁹ The real, in this sense, refers generally to the reality of the world as perceived, as opposed to Jacques Lacan’s the Real in his theory of psychic structures. The Lacanian Real is outside the realm of the Symbolic Order constituted through the system of signs (in fact, closer to the concept of Realism), which are a set of differentiated signifiers. Signifiers or representations do not exist in the Real as there is no division between “the thing” and its signifier. In “What Is a Photograph?” (1994), Margaret Iversen reads Roland Barthes’s *Camera Lucida* through Lacan’s *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, identifying the Real as the gaze, which is then identified as the

realistic subjects and techniques in the painting. The French painter Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), a seminal figure in the Realism Movement in painting, explored the capacity of the medium to convey both the elements of realities and allegories in a mimetic fashion in the epic work *The Artist's Studio (L'Atelier du peintre): A Real Allegory of a Seven Year Phase in my Artistic and Moral Life* (1855) [Figure 2.20]. He did so by invoking his political and artistic experiences as a painter of the revolutionary years in nineteenth-century France. Another Courbet painting, *The Stone Breakers* (1849), depicts two workers performing backbreaking labor [Figure 2.21]; such an unidealized and 'realistic' portrayal allowed Courbet to emphasize the pitiful situation of the workers through details such as ragged clothing. Invisible realities, in this case class struggle, are thus articulated in Realist paintings. The photographers of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism could have aspired to this French tradition for its capacity to portray both the visible and invisible realities of social issues; nevertheless, neither the photographers of the movement nor its critics have yet questioned or examined Realism's definition and significance.

punctum and eventually *objet petit a* (457-458). Barthes's punctum may be explored through each of the Lacanian concepts, but conflating them appears formulaically forced: *objet petit a* is the consequence of the gaze, the point of the split between the self and the Other, and as this "chiasm" does not exist in the Real, *objet petit a* is the remainder of the Real. Iversen argues that "realism [must] be detached from the collection of threadbare academic conventions and aligned with the Lacanian Real... In Lacan's terms the photograph can either be fully integrated in the network of signifiers or it can be tyctic. Or, as Barthes observes, it can either be experienced as tame, that is, 'tempered by aesthetic and empirical habits', or as mad" (453). While a methodology of psychoanalysis is one way to approach Barthes's text, Realism's "threadbare academic conventions" may also provide different contexts and consequences in different times and spaces, such as post-1945 Korea. Moreover, her adherence to Lacanian psychoanalysis, despite its interesting theoretical junctures, can just as easily risk turning into "academic conventions." The question for me is not which theory should be applied, but what such a theory can avail itself of, for the study of photography. On the other hand, without mentioning the term "the Real" in her essay, Margret Olin offers a fascinating and convincing account of what the real—the indexical—could mean for Barthes and for the reader of *Camera Lucida*. Olin illuminates Barthes's 'misidentification' of subjects and other details in several photographs: for example, the punctum in James Van Der Zee's family portrait of 1926, "a slender ribbon of braided gold," is actually a pearl necklace, and the gold necklace was in fact worn by his own relatives in a photograph. Olin suggests a connection between the absent (imaginary) Winter Garden Photograph of Barthes's mother and uncle at ages five and seven and Kafka's Winter Garden Photograph depicting six-year-old Kafka, younger sister, and grandfather, as discussed in Benjamin's "A Short History of Photography." Olin argues that "the most significant indexical power of the photograph may consequently lie not in the relation between the photograph and its subject but in the relation between the photograph and its beholder, in what [she] would like to call a 'performative index,' or an 'index of identification'" (114-115). See Margaret Iversen, "What Is a Photograph?," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 450-464; Margaret Olin, "Touching Photographs: Roland Barthes's 'Mistaken' Identification," *Representations* 80 (Fall 2002): 99-118. Both essays are reprinted in *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida*, ed. Geoffrey Batchen (Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press, 2009).

The connotation of the term Realism, as a photographic movement in South Korea, implies that it does not merely depict real objects, people, or things, but encompasses the larger “scene” of the everyday that can symbolize life during the post-war period in South Korea. The favorite subject of the *Saenghwaljuui* Realists was the everyday struggle of the people affected most harshly by the Korean War. While the photographers of the movement aspired to straight photography, they searched for scenes that evoked sentimental values.¹⁴⁰

The subjects and conceptual approaches of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism resemble those of documentary photography, a term coined in 1926 by the British film maker and critic John Grierson to describe Robert Flaherty’s *Moana*, an “ethno-cultural” film on Polynesians.¹⁴¹ The phrase conveyed the film’s depiction of the “real” people of Polynesia in their own environment, as opposed to the staged films made in Hollywood.¹⁴² The term has since been widely used for the photographs emerging from the U.S. Resettlement Administration founded in 1935, which became the Farm Security Administration the next year. The FSA’s photography program, led by Roy Stryker, commissioned photographers to take pictures of Great Depression-related

¹⁴⁰ “Straight photography” refers to “objective” and “truthful” photography. “Straight” photographs depict scenes without manipulation of the subject and print process.

¹⁴¹ John Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*, ed. Forsyth Hardy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971).

¹⁴² The various issues of documentary photography have been discussed over the decades by artists, critics, and historians, including Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula, Okuwei Enwezor, Geoffrey Batchen, Benjamin Buchloh, Charlotte Cotton, and Jean-François Chevrier. The consensus of their discussions is that, no matter how “objective” a photograph can be, it is by its nature greatly affected by the photographer, and by how it is reproduced and used (i.e. reportage photography, art photography, commercial photography, etc.). The scope of the term has since been expanded to include its use in artworks and ethnographic archives. See the discussions in, for example, The Editors of Time-Life Books, *Documentary Photography* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1972); Allan Sekula, “Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary,” in *Photography: Current Perspectives*, ed. Jerome Liebling (New York: Light Impressions, 1978), 231-255; Martha Rosler, *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 245-258, 151-206; Benjamin Buchloh, “Allan Sekula: Photography between Discourse and Document” in Allan Sekula, *Fish Story* (Düsseldorf: Richter Verlag, 1995), 190-200; Okwui Enwezor, “Documentary/Verite:Bio-Politics, Human Rights and the Figure of ‘Truth’ in Contemporary Art,” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 4, no. 2 (2003): 11-42; Charlotte Cotton, *The Photograph as Contemporary Art* (London & New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004); Geoffrey Batchen, et al., *Deadpan: Photography, History, Politics*, exh. cat. (New York: James Gallery, 2008); Jean-François Chevrier, “Documentary, Document, Testimony...,” in *Documentary Now!*, ed. Frits Giersberg et al. (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2005), 46-56. More recent publications include Brett Abbott, *Engaged Observers: Documentary Photography since the Sixties* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010); and Jonathan Day, *Robert Frank’s “The Americans”: The Art of Documentary Photography* (Bristol: Intellect, 2011).

conditions in the rural South; FSA photographers such as Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and Arthur Rothstein focused on depicting the lives of a particularly hard-hit group, tenant farmers and their families.¹⁴³ Evans's photographs of sharecroppers in Alabama (1936) and Lange's *Migrant Mother* (1936) exemplify the approach of the 1930's documentary photography and how iconic FSA photographs came to symbolize the era of the Great Depression.¹⁴⁴

The work of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism, on the other hand, has rarely been associated or compared with documentary photography by either critics, historians, or the photographers themselves. This is partly due to the photographers' adherence to Realism.¹⁴⁵ More broadly, the term was rarely used for any artwork until the 2000s, when discourse on documentary photography gained prominence in South Korea.¹⁴⁶ Rather, "Realism *sajin*" is the common term for straight photography and documentary photography. Although "documentary photography" today is a term applied not just to FSA photographs but also artworks, *Saenghwaljuui* Realism continues to fall outside that label; in the history of photography in Korea, critics and artists call it a Realist movement.

¹⁴³ Walker Evans's work on the rural south was made when he was actually on leave from the FSA for a project commissioned by *Fortune* magazine in 1936. His work, with James Agee as the writer, was eventually declined by the magazine, and was later published as a book, entitled *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, in 1941. Evans left the FSA in 1938, the year his solo exhibition was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Dorothea Lange continued her work with FSA through the early 1940s when it was incorporated into the Office of War Information upon the outbreak of the Pearl Harbor, leading to the Pacific War in 1941. Arthur Rothstein worked at the FSA for five years, and later joined the Office of War Information and then the US Army as a photographer. Other prominent FSA photographers include Carl Mydans, Gordon Parks, and Ben Shahn.

¹⁴⁴ For discussions on documentary photography of the U.S. in the 1930s, see, for example, William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Carl Fleischhauer et al., *Documenting America, 1935-1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press in association with the Library of Congress, 1988); John Tagg, "The Currency of the Photograph: New Deal Reformism and Documentary Rhetoric," in *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 153-183; John T. Hill, *Walker Evans: Lyric Documentary* (Göttingen and London: Steidl, 2006); John Tagg, *The Disciplinary Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, Photorealism refers to a movement of painting that relies on photographs to create a painting as realistic as the photograph itself. The term denotes that the painting looks 'real' like the photograph. See H.H. Arnason, *History of Modern Art* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall), 626-31.

¹⁴⁶ See, for example, Jee-sook Baek et al., *Activating Korea: Tides of Collective Action* (Seoul: Insa Art Space of the Arts Council Korea, 2007).

This unwillingness of Korean scholars to identify the movement as documentary may be linked to several issues. First, as Realism was already established as an art-historical term in mid-twentieth century Korea, it was much easier to bring forth the significance of the movement through its adherence and similarities to Realism. Furthermore, works of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism retain traces of “salon photography” in their approaches to the subject and composition.¹⁴⁷ Such traces are reflected in the post-war photographs of Lee HyungRok (이형록, 1917-2011), which do not fall neatly into the binary categorization of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism vs. Salon-ism. Lee HyungRok is regarded as one of the most prominent members of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism next to Limb; his approach to Realism cannot be entirely disconnected from the aesthetics of the pre-war years, during which he actively participated in various salon activities and competitions.

In 1935, Lee formed *Gangreung Sawoohoe* (강릉사우회), a photography salon comprised of amateur photographers in the city of Gangreung. The salon was headed by Limb, and the members of *Gangreung Sawoohoe* organized monthly critiques of their photographs that emulated Pictorialism and *bitgwahaejo* popular in Japan.¹⁴⁸ At the end of the colonial period, however, Lee was drafted by the Japanese military to fight in the Pacific War, and a few years later, he became a war correspondent in the Korean War. His experience in the two wars led him to turn to Realism from *salonsajin*, in search of a more “appropriate” aesthetic language to depict the aftermath of the war. Similar to Limb, his post-war photographs focused on the struggle of Korean people after the war.¹⁴⁹ Lee founded a photography group called *Shinseonhoe* (신선회)

¹⁴⁷ Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 101-103.

¹⁴⁸ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 146. Lee applied a technique called “best dan hood-bbaegi,” popularized by the Japanese photographer Nakajima Kengichi in the early twentieth century. To produce a soft focus, Nakajima removed the lens hood from an Eastman Kodak Vest Pocket Camera, shooting with an open aperture. The technique was originally called “besu-tan hood hazushi” in Japanese.

¹⁴⁹ Min Choi, “Straight Photo, Realism, Documentary (스트레이트 포토, 리얼리즘, 다큐멘터리),” in *Hanguksajineui Jaebalgyeon: 1950-1960nyondaeeui Sajindeul* (한국사진의 재발견: 1950-1960 년대의 사진들) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2006), 7. Choi argues that *Saenghwaljuui* Realism did not expand beyond “trivialism.”

in 1956, of which the members aspired to Realism as “the path to be followed by contemporary photography.”¹⁵⁰

Despite his aspiration to Realism, however, Lee still relied heavily on the compositional effects in his photographs. His photograph titled *Shijang* (Market, 1957) reflects this adherence [Figure 2.22]. The photograph is compositionally divided in half: on the left a group of women sit on the ground in a semi-circle, trimming vegetables in washbasins that they brought to sell; on the right stand two women who are shopping. Lee photographed the image from above, possibly from the rooftop of a building nearby. The photograph includes electrical wires that cross the image diagonally from lower left to upper right. While the circles of washbasins arranged in a semicircle create geometrical dynamics against the diagonal lines of the wires and the rectangular form of the photograph, the black and white contrast between the women’s black hair and their white shirts also creates a dynamic tonal arrangement. The photograph nevertheless depicts a scene of the hardships that Korean women experienced after the Korean War, straining to support the livelihood of their families by selling their own produce in the market, while also expected to raise children at the same time. Lee’s photograph therefore shows how he chose his subjects according to the popular approach of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism. At the same time, he was highly concerned about the formal elements (composition, angle, light and dark contrast, and tonality) of *yesulsajin* that he practiced prior to his involvement with the Pacific and Korean Wars. As witnessed in the photographs of Limb and Lee, *Saenghwaljuui* Realism is in fact a combination of *yesulsajin* and “Realism,” rather than a completely new movement as an

¹⁵⁰ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 149. “신선화라는 명칭이 말해 주듯 이들은 리얼리즘 사진을 동시대의 사진이 추구해야 할 새로운 진로라고 생각했다.” The members were also deeply influenced by the traveling exhibition “The Family of Man,” organized by Edward Steichen, the director of the Photography Department at the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition was held in Seoul’s Gyeongbokgung Misulgwan (경복궁미술관, The Art Museum of Gyeongbok Palace) in April, 1956. Limb was a key organizer of the exhibition in Seoul.

antithesis to “salon photography”. In this light, the work of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism cannot simply be pitted against the overtly generalized genre of *yesulsajin*.¹⁵¹ The emphasis on “Realism” in the movement, therefore, asserts the members’ desire to differentiate themselves from the artistic practices (i.e. salon photography or *yesulsajin*) prevalent during the pre-war period.

Although categorized as Realism, the works of photographers like Lee Kyung-mo and Sung Doo-kyung differ from those of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism in that they do not exhibit the formal approaches of salon photography. Nonetheless, the “Realist” discourse has retrospectively framed their works as intellectual and “artistic,” thereby marking them as unsuitable for wide reproduction in news or popular magazines. A Lee Kyung-mo photograph offers a case in point [Figure 2.23]. In this gelatin silver print, a group of war prisoners, including women, are sitting on the ground. The identification tags on their necks show the regiment and battalion to which they belonged and their ranks, but not their names; the tag on the man in the middle of the first row reads “六연대 두만강 중대 식사반장 (6th Regiment Duman River Battalion, Chief of Meal Service).” Photographed in February 1951, the haggard war prisoners suffer from severe cold. The man in the middle wraps his head and feet with scraps of cloth.¹⁵² This image of war prisoners, in contrast to scenes of “everyday life” evoking “humanistic” feelings, “drily” depicts a scene that the South Korean public, especially of the present day, has had little exposure to. Through its categorization as an artistic “Realist” photograph, albeit retrospectively, the value of

¹⁵¹ Min Choi, “Straight Photo, Realism, Documentary (스트레이트 포토, 리얼리즘, 다큐멘터리),” 7. Park contends that salon competitions had a long-lasting impact on the photographers; their photographs tend to focus on single subjects and rely on dramatic compositional or narrative effects rather than depicting the “environment” of which the subject is a part. See Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul (한국사진의 선구자들)*, 128.

¹⁵² The Korean War is often called “6·25 Dongnaan (6·25 동란 6·25 Winter War)” by elder generations. The combat between the Chinese Army and the Korean and U.S. forces was at its peak in the winter of 1950-51, and war refugees suffered from the cold weather as they fled the battles. Duncan’s photography book *This is War!* captures U.S. soldiers struggling in the severe winter conditions of Korea’s mountainous landscape. See Duncan, *This is War!: A Photo-Narrative of the Korean War*.

this image as a war photograph—and thus as material for constructing collective memory—is compromised.

Sung Doo-kyung (1915-1986), a war correspondent, photographed cities and landscapes during the Korean War. His photographs of Seoul document the severity of casualties as well as the presence of the U.S. and U.N. forces there. A photograph of freestanding posts from his series *Report on Seoul in Korean War* (1952) [Figure 2.24] —the remnants of a building that has collapsed entirely—yields a kind of irony: the remaining posts suggest past grandness, but it has a lugubrious quality as the scene is an index of bombardment and human casualties. In another photograph from the same series, Sung photographed Suwonsung (수원성), a major gate of the fortress surrounding the city of Suwon, in 1951. The gate is half destroyed and the buildings that should be in the foreground have been obliterated. This Korean structure is marked by a sign written in English: “SLOW ARCHWAY AHEAD 40’L 14’W 21’H.” Below this sign, a small arrow-shaped sign reads “U.S.” A soldier stands by a military jeep, and further ahead is another jeep with more soldiers. There are no civilians, or indeed, Koreans in this bomb-swept scene. Sung’s subject is the landscape of war and the presence of the foreign soldiers in it, depicting not the individuals of the Korean War but its “warscapes.” His photographs are therefore difficult to categorize as products of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism.

The images by Lee and Sung have gained scholarly interest for their documentary function; they depict critical moments in Korean history with more detached attitudes to the subject, in contrast to the works of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism. Although Korean scholars such as Choi Injin and Park Ju Seok group the works of these photographers within the movement of

Realism,¹⁵³ the photographs' subject matter and formal approach differ from those of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism. Park Pyeong Jong does refer to the works of Lee Kyung-mo and Sung Doo-Kyung as *giroksajin* (기록사진), which translates to 'documentary photography' in English;¹⁵⁴ nonetheless, Park deliberately avoids using the English translation. This may reflect Park's intentional abstention from direct associations between the works of mid-twentieth century Korean photographers and those of earlier Westerners such as the FSA photographers. In any case, the photographs of Lee and Sung have been distinctly "academicized" rather than popularized, adding to the factors contributing to the lack of iconic photographs of the Korean War.

The rise of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism has been discussed as closely related to the experience of war; it was, however, also affected by the anti-communist/anti-leftist politics and sentiment prevalent in all aspects of post-war South Korean life. As pointed out by the historian of Korean photography Cho Woo-seok, Limb modified "Realism" with "Saenghwaljuui" to avoid possible association with Socialist Realism,¹⁵⁵ as the military regime severely persecuted anybody purported to have communist or socialist connections.¹⁵⁶ In fact, the photographer Choi Min-Shik tells stories of his numerous arrests by undercover police officers during the military regime, due to his efforts to photograph underprivileged neighborhoods in Busan, where he was based.¹⁵⁷ Choi claims that the military government persecuted any cultural production that brought visibility to poverty and other types of inequality to the wider public.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Injin Choi and Ju Suk Park, *The Century of Korean Photography: Images from the Land of Morning Calm* (한국사진의 한세기).

¹⁵⁴ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 131–143, 159–172.

¹⁵⁵ Woo-Seok Cho, *Hanguksajingaron* (한국사진가론). (Seoul: Noonbit, 1998), 94, 97.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

¹⁵⁷ Min-shik Choi, *Najeundaero Imhan Sajin: Naui Insaeng, Naui Sajin* (낮은데로 임한 사진: 나의 인생, 나의 사진) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2009), 22, 49-50.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

According to Park, the *Saenghwaljuui* Realists were thoroughly aware of their difficult positions as “revealers” of what the government sought to control and conceal. This awareness affected their approach to Realism, accounting for the focus on overtly sentimental aspects of humanism, such as in some photographs of mothers and children by Choi and Chung. For instance, one of Choi’s photographs depicts a mother (or grandmother) and child at an open market in Eonyang in 1965 [Figure 2.25]. The close shot shows the woman feeding the child on her back, turning her head to put food in the child’s mouth with chopsticks while her other hand holds a bowl. Her headscarf and long sleeves, as well as the steam coming from the lower right of the picture, indicate that the photograph was taken in winter. The scene implies that the woman cannot afford to let the child free from her back even for feeding. By cropping out anything that may distract from the “desperation” of the scene, Choi emphasizes the virtues of sacrifice and love during recovery from war, rather than highlighting a state of poverty which might upset the military government.

A mother-child photograph by Chung, *Gyeonggi Godeunggunbeopjaepanso* (경기고등군법재판소, Gyeonggi Military Supreme Court, 1961), depicts the trial of a group of “political prisoners” convicted of criminal activities associated with communism, a feature of the repressive years of political oppression following Park Chung-hee’s coup d’état on May 16, 1961 [Figure 2.26]. The photograph was taken from the front of the courtroom, facing the attendees and a group of defendants. In the foreground of the image is a woman wearing a convict’s uniform with her head down. A seating area for a stenographer surrounded by wooden panels occupies the space between the woman and a group of male defendants. The only person who looks directly at the camera in the photograph is a toddler holding onto the woman’s uniform. The innocence of the child contrasts with the presumably shameful lowering of the woman’s

head, yet highlights the connection between the convicted mother and the child who has no idea of what is going on, rather than the factuality of the political event. Chung's photograph depicts a particular event in time; however, details of the event are suppressed to allow for symbolization of the universally sympathetic love between mother and child.

The situation of the *Saenghwajjuui* Realists is thus comparable to that of the Photo League in the U.S. during the height of McCarthyism. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC, 1938-1975), an investigative committee of the United States House of Representatives, targeted individuals and organizations suspected of communist intent or influence. The Photo League, added to the Attorney General's list of "subversive organizations" as early as 1947,¹⁵⁹ was "vulnerable because of its dedication to documentary photography." The League was disbanded in 1951 after the stigma led to a substantial reduction in its membership.¹⁶⁰ However, *Saenghwajjuui* Realism was not an organization but a term for an aesthetic approach to the medium; by accentuating their humanistic and artistic values, rather than the critical and social aspects crucial to documentary photography, the movement avoided the military government's severe persecution. Nonetheless, the movement also declined by the late 1970s, ironically when underground democracy movements began to reemerge.

The Annual "Discovery" of Korean War Photographs

In the previous sections, I have delineated some of the factors contributing to the lack of iconic photographs of the Korean War, and the reasons why the collective memory of that war has never stabilized. Recent treatments of Korean War photographs however reflect an effort to re-instill the memory of the Korean War. In conjunction with the sixtieth anniversary of the War,

¹⁵⁹ Gee, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective*, 2.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

photographic works have been published through many different channels, including printed books, exhibitions, and online galleries. In April 2010, a prominent Korean internet news portal revealed a compilation of allegedly never-before-seen color photographs of the Korean War,¹⁶¹ taken by the American photographer John Rich between 1950 and 1953.¹⁶² The digitized Kodachrome photographs appear as if they were taken using the latest digital camera technology [Figures 2.27-28].

Curiously, over the past several years such stories of new Korean War photographs tend to surface almost annually between April and June, as if orchestrated ‘reveals’ are meant to conjure up memories of the war in advance of June 25th, the commemoration day of the Korean War in South Korea. However, these purportedly newly discovered photographs have often come from public and private collections in the United States or the United Kingdom, and in some cases, from one of the national archives of Korean War documents. Sometimes the discovered photographs date from as early as the late-nineteenth century, when a Japanese delegation and its armed forces occupied the Royal Palace of Joseon, the last Korean dynasty. A few of these photographs were portraits of the members of the Korean Royal family taken by non-Korean photographers.¹⁶³ Despite the manipulative intent of news headlines to “sell” these photographs

¹⁶¹ Anonymous, “최초공개, ‘컬러로 보는 한국전쟁’-국군들,” *Yeonhap News* (연합뉴스), April 27, 2010, http://photo.media.daum.net/photogallery/culture/0804_culturenews/view.html?photoid=3102&newsid=20100427162310721&p=yonhap (Accessed April 27, 2010).

¹⁶² Anonymous, “‘컬러로 보는 한국전쟁’기록한 존 리치,” *Yeonhap News* (연합뉴스), April 27, 2010, http://photo.media.daum.net/photogallery/culture/0804_culturenews/view.html?photoid=3102&newsid=20100427162426546&p=yonhap (Accessed April 27, 2011). In 2008, an exhibition of John Rich’s Korean War photographs was held at the Korean Embassy in Washington D.C. A book of Rich’s photographs was published in 2010. See Rich, *Korean War in Color: A Correspondent’s Retrospective on a Forgotten War*.

¹⁶³ On July 25, 2006, *Yeonhap News*(연합뉴스), an online-based news outlet, first reported that a photograph of Empress Myeongseong, the wife of King Gojong, the twenty-sixth King of the Joseon Dynasty, had been discovered by Terry Bennett, a British collector and author. The Empress was assassinated by Japanese agents in 1895. Newspapers reported that in 2003 in London, Bennett purchased a book of photographs by an unknown German photographer, who came to Korea between 1894 and ‘95. Bennett defended the genuineness of the photograph. See *Yeonhap News*, “끊이지 않는 명성황후 사진 논란,” *JOINS News*, July 25, 2006, http://article.joins.com/article/article.asp?ctg=12&Total_ID=2367638. *Yeonhap News*, “이것이 구한말

as new discoveries, they have existed in various public and private collections and archives for years. Most likely, a reporter went to an archive, selected a number of photographs, paid a handsome reproduction fee to a collector like Terry Bennett; then, in the spirit of sensationalism, they were “packaged” and revealed as if they had materialized from thin air.¹⁶⁴ Such productions are intended to invoke, and even create, sentiment and memories surrounding the Korean War in those who are most likely to lack a defense against such propagandist tactics—the people encountering the photographs on computer screens are largely from post-war generations.

Although propagandistic intentions are writ large in these annual June photo-discoveries, they are in fact one of the few occasions when internet users can encounter “old photographs” in digital format without visiting museums or war memorials. This further limits the potential for exposure to Korean War photographs, contributing to the credibility of certain claims in the South Korean media to have discovered new historic photographs. In truth, thousands of images exist in the archives of South Korea and the United States. Archives outside Korea, such as NARA, have become go-to sites for certain individuals and journalists to find materials then

명성황후의 모습?,” *OhmyNews*, n.d., http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/view/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0000348374. Yeonhap News, “명성황후의 초상 사진을 찾아서”, August 6, 2010, <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2010/08/06/0200000000AKR20100806057400005.HTML>. (Accessed August 6, 2010). Also see Kyungmin Lee, “Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대 한국의 초상, Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs),” 41. Lee states that a collector, without disclosing it was Terry Bennett, was furious that Korean collectors and institutions would not acquire this photograph. Lee writes that Bennett claimed it was an original photograph of Empress Myeongseong and that institutions such as the Getty Museum and the Smithsonian negotiated with him to purchase the photograph. Bennett asked a group of Korean experts, including Lee, how is it that the “Korean culture” is content with “generic copies” of photographs when an “original copy” is offered for purchase. Lee and other experts would not conclude that the photograph was of Empress Myeongseong and declined to purchase it. Lee also states that Bennett asked for an exorbitant price.

¹⁶⁴ Aside from being a collector and dealer, Terry Bennett authored several photography books about East Asia. See *Japan: Caught in Time* (New York: Weatherhill, 1995); *Early Japanese Images* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1998); *Korea: Caught in Time* (Reading, UK: Garnet, 1998); *Photography in Japan, 1853-1912* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2006); *Old Japanese Photographs: Collectors’ Data Guide* (London: Quaritch, 2006); *History of Photography in China, 1842-1860* (London: Quaritch, 2009).

claimed as long-lost photographs of great historical value.¹⁶⁵ Nonetheless, the images were not hidden (though some were kept as confidential in the archive) or stolen, and the “discovered” photographs manage to stay on internet news portals in Korea for several days before and after June 25th.

The fact that Korean War photographs can be continuously claimed as “new” reflects the absence of familiar images of the Korean War in South Korea, pointing to the problematic state of the discourse on the war. Halbwachs argues that one cannot “think about the events of one’s past without discoursing upon them;”¹⁶⁶ yet rather than cultivate the discourse, it has been repressed over time due to the particular political situation in the Korean peninsula. The impact on collective memory is thus even stronger for past events that most people in a group did not experience firsthand. Further impeding discourse on the Korean War is the necessity “to connect within a single system of ideas our opinions as well as those of our circle.”¹⁶⁷ However, as evident through the examples used in this chapter, a single system of ideas on the Korean War does not exist in South Korea, which prevents any group from collectively remembering the experience of the war.

Discussing the collective memory of the Holocaust in *Twilight Memories*, Andrea

Huyssen states:

¹⁶⁵ Park Do has conducted research at NARA and in 2004 began publishing a series of books on what he considered valuable historical materials. Do Park, ed., *Jiulsuoepneun Image: 8.15 Haebangeseo Hangukjeonjaeng jongjeonkaji* (지울 수 없는 이미지: 8.15 해방에서 한국전쟁 종전까지, *The Indelible Image: The Photographs of the Korean War from National Archives and Records Administration in the United States of America*), vol. 1 (Seoul: Noonbit, 2004); Do Park, ed., *Jiulsuoepneun Image 2: Hangukjeonjaenge huipssain saramdeul* (지울 수 없는 이미지 2: 한국전쟁에 휩싸인 사람들 *The Indelible Image 2: The Photographs of the Korean War from National Archives and Records Administration in the United States of America*), vol. 2 (Seoul: Noonbit, 2006); Do Park, *Jiulsuoepneun Image 3: Hangukjeonjaengee namgingutdeul* (지울 수 없는 이미지 3: 한국전쟁이 남긴 것들, *The Indelible Image 3: The Photographs of the Korean War from National Archives and Records Administration in the United States of America*); Kim Won-Il Kim et al., *Nareul Ulin Hangukjeonjaeng 100jangmyun: Naega geokeun 6.25jeonjaeng* (나를 울린 한국전쟁 100 장면 - 내가 겪은 6.25 전쟁 *A Hundred Korean War Scenes that Made Me Cry: 6.25 War as I Experienced*).

¹⁶⁶ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 53.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Post-Holocaust generations can only approach that core by mimetic approximation, a mnemonic strategy which recognizes the event in its otherness and beyond identification or therapeutic empathy, but which physically innervates some of the horror and the pain in a slow and persistent labor of remembrance. Such mimetic approximation can only be achieved if we sustain the tension between the numbing totality of the Holocaust and the stories of the individual victims, families, and communities.¹⁶⁸

For post-Holocaust generations, the collective memory, or postmemory as Marianne Hirsch has termed, of the Holocaust is kept alive through “mimetic approximation,” by connecting within a single system of ideas (“the numbing totality of the Holocaust”), people’s opinions, as well as those of their circle (“the stories of the individual victims, families, and communities”). In the case of the collective memory of the Korean War, such mimetic approximation cannot be achieved by sustaining the tension between a single system of ideas and people’s opinions, because in Korea that tension has not yet been abstracted or symbolized; it remains vividly experienced not just through clashing ideologies but also in continuing armed conflicts between North and South.

Huyssen seeks synchronicity, homogeneity, and firm anchoring in collective memory through “reading the traces of past,” in his case with artworks about the Holocaust.¹⁶⁹

Attempting that reading through Korean War photographs reveals that its memories are not synchronic, homogeneous, or firmly anchored in South Korea itself. The collective memory of the Korean War proves rather a chaotic space of nebulous and undefined ideas and opinions about the war as well as the accumulative events that have occurred since; indeed, the relationship between Korean War photographs and the collective memory of the War continues to be complicated each year as ‘new’ Korean War photographs continuously alter the collective consciousness of the event.

¹⁶⁸ Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York & London: Routledge, 1995), 259.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 251.

CHAPTER THREE

BABY AND FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITURE OF KOREA

A prominent feature of Korean photography is photographic portraiture.¹ These are often specifically composed to portray a certain vision of its subjects as Koreans. The particular practice of making photographic portraits of babies on the hundredth day after birth, as well as on the first birthday, and of family portraits in general, developed in part as a response to the need for a national portrait. The success of that endeavor is proven by the manner in which such portraits have not only reflected changes in the Korean family but also contributed to those changes. Indeed, the popularization of baby and family portraits is not simply the result of the growth of the photography industry or of the Korean economy in general. Rather, it reveals a deep-seated desire on the part of both the traditional family and the nation state as a larger cultural family to invest in children's futures as a means to modernize the nation and maintain patriarchal power structures. Korean families perform this imperative through the conventions of hundredth-day and first-birthday portraits. This chapter examines such baby and family photographic portraits within the context of political developments in Korea during the second half of the twentieth century.

Photographic portraiture has consistently been one of the most popular 'genres' of the medium, influencing the growth of the industry since its early days in the 1840s. Reaching a peak in popularity in the early 1850s, urban dwellers in the United States and elsewhere sat for daguerreotype portraits in studios, many of them family portraits.² In the following decades the

¹ I use the terms "photographic portraits" and "portrait photographs" interchangeably throughout the chapter. They both indicate portraits in the medium of photography. *Sajin* is a transliteration of 사진, photography and/or photograph (noun) in Korean.

² For the history of one of the most successful and popular daguerreotype studios in the U.S., see Grant B. Romer, "'A High Reputation with All True Artists and Connoisseurs': The Daguerreian Career of A. S. Southworth and J.J. Hawes," in *Young America: The Daguerreotype of Southworth and Hawes*, ed. Grant B. Romer and Brian Wallis

popular form of portraiture changed from the detail-oriented daguerreotype to mass-produced cartes-de-visite,³ and stylistic conventions of photographic portraiture developed in popular studios using backdrops and props.⁴ Studies on the photographic portraits of the nineteenth century suggest their reflection of the social and cultural histories of a place; likewise, family photographic portraits also articulate issues of familial values and relations.

Resembling the early trends in photographic portraiture in the Western world, Korean photographic portraiture, including family portraits, first appeared in the late nineteenth century. They gained popularity in concert with the growth of the middle class in the mid-twentieth century. During this period, portrait photography was practiced mostly in large cities, where the number of photography studios operated by Korean photographers grew noticeably in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁵ Korea developed a unique set of family portrait ‘types’: a portrait on the hundredth day after birth; on the first, sixtieth, seventieth, and eightieth birthdays; and a portrait for use at one’s funeral. These are photographs as rites of passage, commemorating the importance of certain stages in life. In the mid-twentieth century, such commemorative portraiture came to comprise an integral part of modern traditions in Korea.

This chapter will assess photography’s relation to the twentieth-century transformation of the Korean family as the crux of the nation-state’s modernization. To this end it considers portrait photographs of the hundredth day and the first birthday made in different decades of the twentieth century, in addition to the recent practice of family portraits. I also specifically

(Göttingen: Steidl, 2005), 21-55; and John Stauffer, “Daguerreotyping the National Soul: The Portraits of Southworth and Hawes 1843-1860,” in *Young America: The Daguerreotype of Southworth and Hawes*, ed. Grant B. Romer and Brian Wallis (Göttingen: Steidl, 2005), 57-74.

³ Julia Hirsch, *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning, and Effect* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 93.

⁴ See for example, Geoffrey Batchen, “Dreams of Ordinary Life: Cartes-de-visite and the Bourgeois Imagination,” in *Photography: Theoretical Snapshots*, ed. J. J. Long et al. (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), 65–66.

⁵ Injin Choi, *Hanguk Sajinsa 1631-1945 (한국사진사 1631-1945, The History of Korean Photography 1631-1945)*, 180–184.

examine the work of photographers such as Lee Seon-min (이선민) and Kim Oksun (김옥선) who explore the meaning of family in contemporary South Korea. To provide a historical context, this chapter begins with a brief discussion on the major academic approaches to the interpretation of photographic portraiture. The discussion is followed by a historical overview of the practice of family photographic portraits in Korea, with an introduction to the development of photography studios during the colonial period. After giving this background, I assess the hundredth-day portrait—the *baeg-il sajin* (백일사진)—by analyzing the gender-differentiated practice as it emerged during the nation-building period of the mid-twentieth century, with its rapid economic development under the military regime. A discussion of the practice of the first-birthday portrait—the *dol sajin* (돌사진)—follows, tracing its changing aesthetics and the implications of those changes for Korean society. I also introduce a more recent interest in family portraits. Lastly, photographic artworks about the Korean family will be examined in relation to the national pressures on the family unit to maintain rigid social and gender roles, even while moving toward a leading role in the global economy.

Photographic Portraiture of Family: Major Academic Approaches

Academic studies of photographic portraiture, including individual, family, and baby portraits, have largely developed through three major approaches: trauma and memory studies; anthropological/ethnographic studies; and art historical studies, with a focus on socio-cultural issues, particularly in the nineteenth-century context.

The relationship between family photographs and memory has become a burgeoning interest in research across disciplines, particularly in memory studies and comparative literature.

Scholars such as Barbie Zelizer,⁶ Andrea Huyssen,⁷ Marianne Hirsch,⁸ and Ulrich Baer⁹ have produced literature on the relationship between (traumatic) memory and photography, including family portraits. Their studies consider the intricate workings of the photographic medium in the familial and collective memory of traumatic events, particularly of the Holocaust, exploring the ways in which memory is created and recreated through family photographs and what it means for the making of cultural history. Hirsch, in particular, examines familial memory. She argues that family photographs are representations of how individuals in familial settings respond to “dominant mythologies of family life, to conceptions [they] have inherited, to images [they] see on television, in advertising, in film.”¹⁰ Family portraits are therefore “interspersed with and structured by social settings,”¹¹ providing valuable materials for assessing how individual memory depends on collective framings.¹²

However, by universalizing the concept of trauma and post-traumatic memory, these studies on photography and memory—mostly collective memory and collective amnesia—tend to produce a highly metaphorical understanding of photographs. Memory studies specialists Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weinlböck have problematized the field’s turn to “valorization and aesthetization of trauma, high art, and philosophy,” and argue for the incorporation of empirical

⁶ Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera’s Eye*; Zelizer, “From the Image of Record to the Image of Memory: Holocaust Photography, Then and Now.”

⁷ Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*.

⁸ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*; Marianne Hirsch, *The Familial Gaze* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 1999). Although Hirsch’s work centers on familial memory of traumatic events, her inquiries has been relevant to this chapter: “How does photography insert itself into a heterogeneous tradition of familial representation, and how does it inflect and shape this tradition? How are these relationships marked by national tradition, gender, class, race, ethnic community?” See *Family Frames*, 12.

⁹ Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, MA & London: The MIT Press, 2002).

¹⁰ Marianne Hirsch, *The Familial Gaze*, xvi. Referred in Jens Ruchatz, “The Photograph as Externalization and Trace,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 372.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Hirsch’s argument according to the collective framings of individual memory is based on the one developed by Maurice Halbwachs. See Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*.

and interdisciplinary research.¹³ Without research on “the various [different] ways that people are affected by violence,” such studies remain overtly metaphorical instead of empirical, anti-psychological rather than psychological, aesthetic rather than scientific.¹⁴

Another discipline producing studies on the various practices of photography across the world is “visual anthropology.” Although anthropologists have always depended upon visual sources for their research, ethnographic studies of photography in the non-Western world have become a subset in the field over the past two decades. Christopher Pinney’s extensive research on photographic practices in India, especially photographic portraits, has become a model for such studies in the discipline.¹⁵ Instead of producing an anthropological study of Indian subjects evidenced by ‘photographic truths,’ Pinney investigates the development of the conventions of photographic portraiture in India and how the Indian practice differs from that of various European counterparts. More recently, Karen Strassler has published an anthropological study on the photographic practices of Indonesia, with a chapter devoted to the relationship between memory and family photo-portrait practices during and after the Suharto regime.¹⁶ Another example is a study by Richard Chalfen and Mai Murui on the practice of the photo-sticker booth (which they call Photo Club Photography) in Japan.¹⁷ However, although the ethnographic approaches of these studies provide valuable empirical materials acquired from their association with local subjects, anthropological studies of photography tend to bypass the contextualization

¹³ Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weilböck, “Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma (or How I learned to Love the Suffering of Others without the Help of Psychotherapy),” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Hanover, NH: De Gruyter, 2010), 237; also see Wulf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (2002): 179-197.

¹⁴ Kansteiner and Weilböck, “Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma (or How I learned to Love the Suffering of Others without the Help of Psychotherapy),” 237.

¹⁵ Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Pinney, *The Coming of Photography in India*; also see Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

¹⁶ I provide an assessment of Strassler’s study in Chapter One. Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*.

¹⁷ Chalfen, “Print Club Photography in Japan: Framing Social Relationships.”

of various photographic practices in the history of transnational visual culture, as well as the art history from which these practices have quite often emerged.¹⁸

Studies on the photographic portraits of the nineteenth century conclude that such portraits provide a deeper understanding of the social and cultural histories of a place. John Tagg and Geoffrey Batchen have examined the development of photographic portraiture, contextualizing it within the broad lifestyle changes in nineteenth-century Europe. Rather than treat these photographs as autonomous objects of art, Tagg approaches photographic portraiture within the history of commodities production in nineteenth-century Europe, mainly in Britain and France.¹⁹ Tagg assesses the rise of photographic practice as “a particular stage of social evolution: the rise of the middle and lower-middle classes towards greater social, economic and political importance.”²⁰ Examining the relationship between class, state, art and photographic practices such as the *carte-de-visite*,²¹ Batchen has written extensively on the relationship between memory, desire, and photographic objects of nineteenth-century Europe and the United States.²² Batchen identifies profoundly varied, yet often collectively identifiable, practices of photographic portraiture that provide insights into issues of image, materiality, and remembrance.

Patricia Holland’s work assesses the practice of popular “personal photography” in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Holland examines the relationship between the rise of middle-class consumer culture, which entailed changes in family values. She looks in particular at vernacular photographs, again mainly in Britain. Surveying the widespread practice of portrait

¹⁸ See Chapter One for a contextualized critique of this approach.

¹⁹ John Tagg, “A Democracy of the Image: Photographic Portraiture and Commodity Production,” in *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 37.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Batchen, “Dreams of Ordinary Life: Cartes-de-visite and the Bourgeois Imagination.”

²² Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History*; Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography & Remembrance* (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 2004); Batchen, “Dreams of Ordinary Life: Cartes-de-visite and the Bourgeois Imagination”; Geoffrey Batchen, “Life and Death,” in *Suspending Time: Life-Death-Photography* (Mishima, Japan: Izu Photo Museum, 2010), 108-129.

photography, Holland perceives “ordinary people’s accounts of their lives and fantasies.”²³ The rise of family photography in the nineteenth century, Holland argues, indicates “the domestication of everyday life and the expansion of ‘the family’ as the pivot of a century-long shift to a consumer-led, home-based economy.”²⁴ Holland has also examined popular imagery of children, interrogating the ways in which media has constructed various myths about childhood through images.²⁵

Martha Langford investigates the family albums of the twentieth century,²⁶ considering their meaning, memory, and aesthetic conventions; she also makes connections between ‘anonymous’ family photographs and artworks that employ these images, such as those by Gerhard Richter and Christian Boltanski.²⁷ Langford incorporates individual stories of albums from the archives of the McCord Museum of Canadian History, arguing that the producers of family albums are themselves also “part of the social dynamics mapped on the pages of a photo book.”²⁸ The scholarship of Batchen and Langford on vernacular photographs therefore

²³ Patricia Holland, “‘Sweet it is to scan...’: Personal photographs and popular photography,” in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), 120.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; for more essays on cultural studies of family photographs, also see Jo Spence and Patricia Holland, eds., *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography* (London: Virago, 1991).

²⁵ Patricia Holland, *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

²⁶ For studies on the practice of American snapshot photographs since the late nineteenth through 1978, see chronologically compiled essays in Diane Waggoner, “Photographic Amusements 1888-1919,” in *The Art of the American Snapshot 1888-1978*, by Sarah Greenough and Diane Waggoner (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2007), 7-44.

²⁷ Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001). For Langford’s essay on the relationship between memory, trauma, and the family album of the photographer Rafael Goldchain, see Martha Langford, “Imagined Memories: On Rafael Goldchain’s Family Album,” in *I am My Family: Photographic Memories and Fictions*, by Rafael Goldchain (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 10-15.

²⁸ Stacey McCarroll Cutshaw and Ross Barrett, “In the Vernacular: Photography of the Everyday,” in *In the Vernacular: Photography of the Everyday* (Boston: Boston University Art Gallery, 2008), 19.

uniquely situates them between memory studies, art history, and the social history of photographic objects, upholding the criticality of visual and cultural analyses.²⁹

In a similar vein, this chapter emphasizes the social and cultural history of portrait photographs, centering on the correlation between the photographic practices of baby and family portraits, modernization, and nation building.³⁰ Therefore, rather than frame the chapter as an examination of collective memory based on baby and family portraits, or an ethnographic study of an exotic practice, I employ the methods of art, social, and cultural histories of vernacular photography through visual analyses, on the model of explorations by Tagg, Batchen, Holland, and Langford.

Historical Background and Significance of Family Portraits

Since the introduction of photography to the public, families have been favorite subjects for studio portraits.³¹ Nineteenth-century portrait photographs of young couples holding their infants are early examples of family photographs in the West [Figure 3.1]. Such family portrait photographs in many aspects succeeded, as well as replaced, an aristocratic tradition of family portrait paintings. According to the American Studies scholar Julia Hirsch, this tradition revolved around three ancient metaphors: the family as a state rooted in property; a spiritual assembly based on ethics symbolized by the father; and a bond of feeling stemming from the instincts and

²⁹ For a recent comparative study on family photography in the industrial areas of Britain and France in the nineteenth century, see Nicole Hudgins, "A Historical Approach to Family Photography: Class and Individuality in Manchester and Lille, 1850-1914," *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 559-586.

³⁰ I have also benefited from articles on baby and family photographs of the United States in the nineteenth century including Shawn Michelle Smith, "'Baby's Picture is Always Treasured': Eugenics and the reproduction of whiteness in the family photograph album," in *The Nineteenth Century Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), 358-370; and Laura Wexler, "Techniques of the Imaginary Nation: Engendering Family Photography," in *Looking for America: The Visual Production of Nation and People*, ed. Ardis Cameron (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2005), 94-117.

³¹ Julia Hirsch, *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning, and Effect*, 42.

passion symbolized by the mother.³² These three metaphors of family portraits have undergone transformation as the definition of “family” has changed over time.

The shift from an extended family to a nuclear family, and the new role this smaller unit plays in society, marks the beginning of the modern family. According to Hirsch, today’s definition of family in the West as “an autonomous group—a state, a spiritual unit, a bond of nurturance,” was consolidated during the Renaissance, “a time of profound social upheaval.”³³ Hirsch argues that the precursor of the family photograph is the Renaissance family portrait; both depict the family as a self-contained unit. The most significant aspect of the Renaissance family portrait, she continues, is that the family is shown emancipated from church and manor.³⁴ In the following seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the elite emphasized the power of reason as a means of reforming society, inviting further changes in cultural values;³⁵ in this period of the Enlightenment, the concept and structure of the modern family and its role was established.³⁶

Family images such as that in Figure 3.1 express such metaphors through a backdrop alluding to owned property and familial proximity that suggests their spiritual and emotional bonds. Nevertheless, while the backdrop shows how the family is rooted in their property, it also becomes a signifier of the sitters’ desire for such a property. The husband, wife and the child sitting on the mother’s lap do not face directly toward the camera but slightly toward each other, fitting charmingly within the oval-shaped frame. This conventional composition and pose makes

³² Ibid., 15.

³³ Ibid., 32–33.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ For a comprehensive and socio-politically contextualized study of the Enlightenment, see Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³⁶ According to Park Young Taek, Mary is the ultimate model figure for mothers in the West. In eighteenth century Europe, monarchs were portrayed as the father figure; if one defied the power of a monarch, it was treated as if equivalent to disobeying a father. The monarch as kind but powerful father figure was the Enlightenment ideal. See Young Taek Park, *Gajokeul Geurida: Geurimsokeuro Deuleon Gajokeui Eolguldel (가족을 그리다: 그림 속으로 들어온 가족의 얼굴들, Painting the Family: Faces of the Family in the Painting)* (Seoul: Bada Books, 2009), 28.

the family members appear closely tied to each other, symbolizing the ideal set of familial relationships that the growing bourgeois class aspired to. The scholar of European cultural history Nicole Hudgins argues that the widespread popularization of cartes-de-visite in Western Europe, particularly Britain and France, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century “signified more of a mass conformity to bourgeois, imperialist values than any democratization of self-expression.”³⁷ In other words, while expressing ancient traditions, photographic portraiture is also capable of articulating what is at stake between family and society. For instance, the studio backdrop could be said to reflect a desire for properties that could incur capital value during the maturation of the capitalist economy in Western Europe; posing for a family portrait in a photography studio shows the establishment of a cultural practice, articulating the middle-class values being shaped in the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁸

The rise of middle-class consumer culture, as well as a popular penchant for a romantic sensibility, is analogous to the popularization of baby photographs in the West in the nineteenth century. Images of children represented “a new-rationalism, which set out to record and improve children’s objective conditions, and a romantic notion of childhood as a holy state, undistorted by contact with adult sexuality or commerce.”³⁹ According to Holland, the middle-class consumerism witnessed through the rise of kitsch, which soon dispersed into “a working-class front parlor,” was “both a central aspect of modernity and part of the widening cult of domesticity which put children at its centre.”⁴⁰ In this context, the popularization of baby photographs in the West in the nineteenth century is closely related to not only the ‘cultivation’

³⁷ Hudgins, “A Historical Approach to Family Photography: Class and Individuality in Manchester and Lille, 1850-1914,” 561.

³⁸ For a discussion of “cartomania” in relation to the nineteenth century material culture and middle-class morality, also see Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte-de-Visite Portrait Photograph* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

³⁹ Patricia Holland, *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery*, 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

of the middle-class values and consumer culture, but also to adults' desire to establish the metaphor of childhood as both a rational and romantic realm, 'uncontaminated' by the drastic changes wrought by modernization and industrialization. This middle-class fantasy is particularly ironic as the exploitation of child labor was at its peak in the mid-nineteenth century, in Britain and elsewhere.⁴¹

The *Oxford Dictionary of English Online* defines "family" as "a group consisting of parents and children living together in a household," such as "a group of people related to one another by blood or marriage" or "the children of a person or couple."⁴² While broadly defined, the dictionary definition limits who can be considered family members and under what premise the family can form. For example, while adult relatives tied by blood can comprise a family, unmarried couples or same-sex couples, whose marriages are not legally acknowledged in most of the U.S., would not be considered families. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* has a different focus, defining family as "a group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head."⁴³ This definition encompasses a broader range of the people who might make up a family, although not all people who live under one roof are families either by their own or other's definition. With the many differing definitions of family according to various individuals, groups, and cultures, neither of these dictionary definitions adequately conveys the meaning of family today, as they imply a fissure between what family actually *is* and what society (or a certain part of society) wishes it *to be*; such dictionary definitions privilege particular kinds of families and

⁴¹ In the chapter, "The Working Day," in Karl Marx's *Capital Volume I*, Marx not only explains the relationship between capitalist accumulation and work hours but also provides close accounts of the history of labor exploitation, including child labor, and the labor acts developed in England. Karl Marx, *Capital*, (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 1:340–416.

⁴² "definition of family from Oxford Dictionaries Online", n.d., http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_us1246175#m_en_us1246175 (Accessed April 9, 2011).

⁴³ "Family - Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary", n.d., <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/family> (Accessed April 9, 2011).

specific family members. This means that particular events or power structures can alter and control the meaning of family.

The definition of family has been changing in different parts of the world. The transformation of the ‘traditional’ extended family to a ‘modern’ nuclear one has occurred in various different ways and times (or it may not have occurred at all). In the Joseon period in Korea (1392-1897), families, whether *yangban* (the class of nobleman) or *sangmin*, (the class of ‘the common’ people), primarily consisted of extended members covering up to four generations.⁴⁴ The familial lineage was strictly carried through sons, usually the first son of the family. The family of the first son, his married sons, and their wives and children, comprised the *jong-ga*, the unit responsible for major familial duties such as holding ancestral rituals and taking care of the family graveyard.

According to Korean scholars, including Choi Jae-seok and Ham Inhee, the process of family “nuclearization” within the *yangban* and *jungin* classes began in the late nineteenth century, contradicting claims that it was initiated during the military regime in the 1960s.⁴⁵ The transformation of the Korean family, however, does not simply encompass the structural change from the extended to nuclear: other shifts in the conception of the family and familial relationships must also be considered. Changes in the family were closely related to the shift in the economic system from feudalism to capitalism under colonial influence. In the West, the growth of the middle class and its values in the mid-nineteenth century coincided with the advent

⁴⁴ The caste system of the Joseon Dynasty consisted of four hereditary groups: *Yangban* (elites), *Jungin* (the middle class, merchants, officers, local magistrates) *Sangmin* (‘the common people’, farmers, fishermen, laborers) and *Cheonmin* (slaves, etc.). The caste system was abolished in 1884-85 as part of *Gab-o gaehyeok* (Reformation on the year of Gab-o) and *Eulmi gaehyoek* (Reformation on the year of Eulmi), which was greatly affected by the Japanese delegates present in Joseon. See Eung-cheon Kang et al., *Guenhyeondaesa Shinmun: Guendaepyeon* (근현대사신문 근대편, *Modern and Contemporary History in Newspapers: Modern*) (Paju: Sakyejul, 2010), 1:58.

⁴⁵ Inhee Ham, “Sahoebyunhwawa Gajok (사회변화와 가족, Social Changes and Family),” in *Saero Bon Gajokgwa Hanguksahoe: Byunhwahaneun Hangukgajokeui Salm Ilgi* (새로 본 가족과 한국사회: 변화하는 한국가족의 삶 읽기), ed. Hangukgajokmunhwawon (Seoul: Kyungmunsa, 2009), 60.

of photography; however, the Korean experience of modernization and the attendant rise of popular photography does not center on the emergence of the middle class. What is unique about the experience is that it was both promoted and aggravated by a series of events occurring from the late nineteenth century: contact with the West; the fall of Joseon; colonization under the Japanese; and the reign of the military junta. The changes in the family, as well as in the concept of the child and childhood, largely emerged as fallout from these events.

During the colonial period, Japanese colonists and Korean elites considered extended families in Korea “primitive” and unsuitable for the “advanced modern life” they aspired to. They therefore promoted “new values” catering to what they perceived as a modern family—educated, middle-class, and nuclearized.⁴⁶ The transformation in family structures and values was most visible in its later stages, during the Park Chung-hee regime of the 1960s and ‘70s, when a vast number of migrant workers from rural areas settling in urban and industrial areas formed nuclear families that aspired to new values and goals even while retaining a patriarchal familial lineage. A comparative examination of family portrait photographs taken over different periods articulates these dramatic shifts in the age-old hegemony of Korean society. Before examining the photographs themselves, I provide some historical background on the practice of portrait photography in Korea, discussing its popularization through the development of photography studios in nineteenth-century Korea.

Brief Introduction to the Development of Photography Studios in Korea

During the Joseon period, portraits were made for the royal family and the *yangban* (양반). As with portrait paintings, portrait photographs were first the province of the upper

⁴⁶ Jihye Paek, *Sweet Homeui Giwon* (스위트 홈의 기원 *The Origin of the Sweet Home*), Sallim Jisik Chongseo 152 (Seoul: Sallim Books, 2005), 9–18.

classes, who had heard about photography from foreign sources. [Figure 3.2] Early photographic portraits resemble the traditional portrait painting of Joseon made exclusively for the royal family and the *yangban*. In one example from the first decade of the 1900s, a woman who appears to be a member of the royal family sits in the middle of a hall in one of the royal palaces. The woman stares directly into the camera while clasping her gloved hands. Her traditional Korean dress falls neatly on the luxurious carpet, indicating the exalted environment she inhabits. The carved arms of the chair and the heavy curtain behind her further indicate the nobility of the sitter. The soft light coming from the right side of the woman gracefully highlights her features. Even the folds of her dress seem carefully arranged for the occasion. The photograph's composition, the sitter's pose, and an emphasis on details resemble a traditional portrait painting of a queen of Joseon made in the late nineteenth century [Figure 3.3],⁴⁷ reflecting a sense of nobility in this practice, as well as the early aesthetic approach to photographic portraits.

When photography studios opened and multiplied in Korea in the late nineteenth century, the *yangban* had first access to photographic portraits. A weathered gelatin silver print shows an early style of family portrait taken in the *Gukjeoksajingwan* (Gukjeok Photography Studio) in the first decade of the 1900s [Figure 3.4]. A man with a mustache sits on a chair next to a small table with flowers on top. He wears a tailored suit with the chain of his pocket watch exposed on his vest. In the far right of the photograph, a woman wears a dark coat over a white dress, holding a scarf. Between the man and woman are four women in dresses commonly worn by Korean women until the mid-twentieth century. Two of them sit while the other two stand behind them. While the photograph is described as a family portrait by the Hanmi Museum of Photography, it is uncertain whether the man and woman on each side are the parents of the four women between

⁴⁷ Injin Choi, *Hanguk Sajinsa 1631-1945* (*한국사진사 1631-1945, The History of Korean Photography 1631-1945*), 169–175.

them, or whether the four women are in fact siblings. The attire, studio setting, and the frame, decorated with floral patterns, testify to the work as a portrait made for an elite family to be displayed in their home.

Portrait photographs eventually spread beyond the aristocrats and *yangban*.⁴⁸ The popularization of portrait photographs in Korea is closely related to the end of the seclusion act in Korea following the Treaty of Ganghwa (1876) and the Gapsin Coup (1884) in the late, destabilizing period of Joseon.⁴⁹ Seeing political and financial opportunities in these events, Japanese people began to move to Gyeongseong (present day Seoul) and Busan.⁵⁰ The expansion of Japanese power in East Asia intensified further with its defeat of China and Russia in the Sino-Japanese (1894-95) and Russo-Japanese (1904) Wars. The early development of photography in Korea, therefore, follows the history of Joseon's decline and its desperate effort to forge political alliances with either the Qing Dynasty or the Russian Empire as countermeasures to Japan's influence.

The Treaty of Ganghwa was signed between Japan and Joseon in 1876, after Japan's forceful opening of the port on Ganghwa Island. The treaty opened two additional ports to Japan,

⁴⁸ On the development of studio portraits in the first two decades of the advent of the medium, John Tagg argues that the portrait is “a sign whose purpose is both the description of an individual and the inscription of social identity. But at the same time, it is also a commodity, a luxury, an adornment, ownership of which itself confers status. ... The production of portraits is, at once, the production of significations in which contending social classes claim presence in representation, and the production of things which may be possessed and for which there is a socially defined demand. The history of photography is, above all, the history of an industry catering to such a demand: a history of needs alternatively manufactured and satisfied by an unlimited flow of commodities; a model of capitalist growth in the nineteenth century. Nowhere is this more evident than in the rise of the photographic portrait which belongs to a particular stage of social evolution: the rise of the middle and lower-middle classes towards greater social, economic and political importance.” See Tagg, “A Democracy of the Image: Photographic Portraiture and Commodity Production,” 37.

⁴⁹ For a brief historical overview of the late Joseon period, see Chapter One, section “Timeline of Major Historical Events in Korea since the Late Nineteenth Century.”

⁵⁰ For the historical outline of these events, see “Timeline of Major Historical Events in Korea since the Late Nineteenth Century” in Chapter I. Introduction.

allowing Japanese government officials and merchants to settle in Korea.⁵¹ The earliest presence of Japanese photographers is documented soon after the signing of the treaty, as Japanese residential areas were established in Gyeonseong and Busan and Japanese photographers came with the groups of officials and merchants settling in these cities.⁵² Kai Gunji and Honda Shunoske opened photography studios in 1882 and 1883, respectively, in Gyeongseong;⁵³ soon after, photography studios run by Korean photographers, namely Kim Yong-won (김용원), Hwang Cheol (황철), and Ji Woon-young (지운영), opened in Gyeongseong between 1883 and 1884.⁵⁴ However, Korean society was generally unstable in the years following 1884 due to political and territorial conflicts between the Joseon Court and delegates from Japan, the Qing Dynasty, and Russia.⁵⁵ This decreased the number of Korean clients of the studios, and the Korean photographers had to close their studios.⁵⁶ In 1907, however, the Korean ‘Western’ painter turned photographer Kim Gyu-jin (김규진) opened a new photography studio

⁵¹ Yong-gyun Nah, *Iljeshidae, Woorigajokeun* (일제시대, 우리가족은, *My Family during the Japanese Occupation*) (Seoul: Hwangsojari Chulpansa, 2004), 15.

⁵² Kyungmin Lee, “Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대한국의 초상, Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs),” 9.

⁵³ Injin Choi, *Hanguk Sajinsa 1631-1945* (한국사진사 1631-1945, *The History of Korean Photography 1631-1945*); Kyungmin Lee, “Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대한국의 초상, Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs),” 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

⁵⁵ The Gapsin Coup (갑신정변) occurred in December, 1884, when Japanese forces seized the Gyeongbok Palace in which the royal family resided. For the history of the conflict between the national and foreign powers in Joseon at the time, see E-wha Lee, *Obaeknyeon Wanggukeui Jongmal* (오백년 왕국의 종말, *The Fall of the 500 Year Old Dynasty*) (Paju: Hangilsa, 2003).

⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Japanese photographers such as Kawada Kiichi documented landmarks, harbors, and military facilities at the time. While Korean photo studios were closing down due to various difficulties, photographers of the Japanese studios in Gyeongseong and other main cities documented topographic information, major ports, and monuments in those cities. See Kyungmin Lee, *Gyeongseong, Sajine Bakhida: Sajineuro ilnun Hanguk Geundae Munhwasa* (경성, 사진에 박히다: 사진으로 읽는 한국 근대 문화사, *Gyeongseong, Imprinted on a Photograph: Reading Cultural History of Korea in the Modern Era*), 36.

Cheonyeondang Sajingwan, which became one of the most successful studios in Gyeongseong.⁵⁷

In the two decades following the official annexation of Korea in 1910, the number of photography studios increased significantly. According to a survey conducted in 1930, there were 1,887 photographers working in Korea, a sum including both Japanese and Korean photographers, of which 344 were working in Gyeongseong.⁵⁸ The survey showed that the number of Korean photographers increased to 168 in 1930,⁵⁹ almost equaling the 176 Japanese photographers active in Gyeongseong.⁶⁰ Along with the increase in the number of photography studios owned by Korean photographers in the 1920s, photographers began to exhibit their works by 1929, an indication of the popularization of the medium among not just the general public

⁵⁷ Kyungmin Lee, “Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대한국의 초상, Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs),” 14. The studio that opened in 1907 was the Cheonyeondang Studio discussed in Chapter One. Also see Lee, *Gyeongseong, Sajine Bakhida*, 91. However, Lee suggests that photographer named Oh Gyeong-Ok opened his photography studio in Gaeseong (currently in North Korea) in 1899, nine years earlier than Kim’s Cheonyeongdang.

⁵⁸ Among this number 344 were men while 15 were women.

⁵⁹ For various reasons, including the lack of available documents, the stylistic influences of the Japanese photography studios on studio photographs made in Korean studios have not yet been studied substantially by researchers. Nevertheless, the presence of studios owned and run by Japanese photographers allows for the possibility that some Korean photographers may have once apprenticed in those studios. For example, Oh Gyeong-Ok trained in a photo studio in Kyushu, Japan before he opened his own studio in Gaeseong in 1899. See Kyungmin Lee, *Gyeongseong, Sajine Bakhida: Sajineuro ilnun Hanguk Geundae Munhwasa (경성, 사진에 박히다: 사진으로 읽는 한국 근대 문화사, Gyeongseong, Imprinted on a Photograph: Reading Cultural History of Korea in the Modern Era)*, 92–93. For example, Oh Gyeong-Ok was trained in a photo studio in Kyushu, Japan before he opened his own studio in Gaeseong in 1899.

⁶⁰ Kyungmin Lee, “Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대한국의 초상, Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs),” 19. According to Lee, the general public became interested in photographic portraits in the early twentieth century. Nonetheless, the Confucius code of conducts that inhibited contact between adult men and women of no acquaintance barred many women from going to photography studios. A solution devised by these studios was to employ women photographers and assistants to take photographs of female customers. This is similar to the early years of photography in Europe and the United States, as female assistants were employed in part to welcome women and therefore increase the number of clients. The provision of services by female employees may have eased the experience of female clients in photo studios in terms of receiving consultation and instruction for their portraits. In Korea, there was a stricter enforcement in the segregation between unacquainted male and female adults in everyday life. The number of Korean woman photographers remained low during the colonial period as it was difficult for the woman photographers to deal with male clients. According to a report by the Governor-General, there were only four women photographers in Gyeongseong in 1930. The increase in the number of Korean photographers from three in 1884 to 168 in 1930 nonetheless indicates that the number of Korean clients sitting for portrait photographs increased tremendously in these years. See *ibid.*, 8-9, 25-26.

wishing to make commemorative pictures, but also the artistic circles beginning to explore the medium for their own creative practice.⁶¹

Photographic Portraiture of Rites of Passage

Following the Treaty of Ganghwa, the rapid decline of King Gojong's power resulted in 'diplomatic' turmoil between Japan and Joseon. In 1895, Japan began to interfere with the political decision-making and activities of the Court of Joseon.⁶² Soon afterward, Japanese officials in Korea began to apply pressure on the populace for transformation of the basic social and cultural fabric of Joseon, with the ultimate goal of converting it to an annex of Japan.⁶³

Although Japanese colonists took over the Court of Joseon and began controlling the royal family through its powerful military strategies, the modernization of the country required a different approach: rather than military power, cultural control involved transforming families. Upon the official annexation of Korea in 1910, an aggressive "modernization project" was launched,⁶⁴ related to Japan's colonial policies as well as their cultural influence on Korean elites. Terms such as *gaehwa* (개화, "modernization") and *shinyeoseong* (신여성, "new women") signaled the changes in family structures and the roles of specific family members that occurred

⁶¹ Ibid., 15. For instance, works by Jung Haichang (정해창) were shown at the *Solo Exhibition of Art Photography by Jung Haichang* (정해창의 예술사진개인전람회) in 1929.

⁶² E-wha Lee, *Obaeknyeon Wanggukkeui Jongmal* (오백년 왕국의 종말, *The Fall of the 500 Year Old Dynasty*), 45–46.

⁶³ Ibid., 295–318. The term "modernization" in Korea does not simply mean the construction of infrastructure or the forced land reform during the colonial period. Modernization also entailed exploitation of labor, forced migration, and military draft. Students in large cities, such as Gyeongseong, were required to speak Japanese in school and to change their names to Japanese ones.

⁶⁴ Nah Young-gyun, a scholar of English literature, recollected her father and her family's experience of the colonial period, explaining how the governor-general acquired a vast majority of the land from farmers. The land was sold to the Dongyang Cheokshikhoesa, which functioned similarly to the British East India Company during the British Raj. See Nah, *Iljeshidae, Woorigajokeun* (일제시대, 우리가족은, *My Family during the Japanese Occupation*), 76.

first within the elite class during the colonial period.⁶⁵ Educated ‘new women,’ for example, preferred the Westernized structure of houses, which included a living room and placed the kitchen near other rooms, to the traditional *hanok* (한옥, traditional Korean house), which did not have an equivalent of a living room⁶⁶ and separated the kitchen from other rooms. People’s preference for ‘Westernized’ housing also meant shifts in the relationships between family members: the living room was a familial space where the ‘modern women,’ represented by the daughter-in-laws of the elite class, and the ‘pre-modern women,’ represented by the mother-in-laws of the *yangban* class, experienced lifestyle clashes.⁶⁷ The changes in the Korean family therefore began with the changing spaces of homes, in turn closely linked to the changing relationships between family members and their use of these spaces.

Active participation in the “modernization” movements initiated by organizations and institutions under control of Japanese colonial powers was initially a product of upper-class aspirations. Indeed, the changing space of the home reflected economic divisions. According to Paek Jihye, a scholar of colonial Korea, objects such as pianos, gramophones, art catalogues, and Western-style furniture became admired decorations for one’s home, signaling wealth and comfort,⁶⁸ even as the general public suffered from poverty. Such a trend toward bourgeois domestic spaces highlighted the gap between the elites and the rest of the population under the rule of the Governor-General.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, interest in this standard of living crossed class lines. An exposition called *Gajeongbakramhoe* (가정박람회), modeled after the Exposition of Family

⁶⁵ For detailed analyses of the socio-political impact of Westernization and colonialism on Korean women, see Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

⁶⁶ Paek, *Sweet Homeui Giwon* (스위트 홈의 기원, *The Origin of the Sweet Home*), 78.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Paek referred in Young Taek Park, *Gajokeul Geurida: Geurimsokeuro Deuleon Gajokeul Eolguldel* (가족을 그리다: 그림 속으로 들어온 가족의 얼굴들, *Painting the Family: Faces of the Family in the Painting*), 76.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

held in Japan in March 1915, is a case in point. *Maeilshinbo* (매일신보, Daily Times), a newspaper company founded and operated by the Governor-General of Japan in Korea, organized the exposition, which opened in September 1915. *Gajeongbakramhoe* functioned as an educational exhibition showcasing the ‘new family,’ detailing where they lived, how they lived, what they did, what they wore, and family activities.⁷⁰ The exposition was a great success with unforeseen turnout: the organizers extended viewing hours and exposition dates to accommodate demand.

The exhibition suggested an ideal way to live as (middle-class) members of the ‘new family (신가정)’ in a colonial Korea modeled after Japan.⁷¹ While the exposition seemingly educated the public as to what constituted the modern family, it also conveyed a colonial desire to reform the nation. Partly, this was aimed at suppressing uprisings such as that of 1906, and also to legitimize the exploitation of resources and labor force.⁷² The reception of the exposition also reflected the yearning of Korean elites for the modernity they believed they experienced on visits to Japan.⁷³

One of the first necessary changes to bring this modernization to the lower classes was the “nuclearization” of the Korean family. Korean families at that point were typically extended; some still practiced polygamy. Contemporary writers such as Lee Gwang-su (이광수),⁷⁴ Ju Shi-

⁷⁰ Paek, *Sweet Homeui Giwon* (스위트 홈의 기원, *The Origin of the Sweet Home*), 21–24.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷² For Korean resistance against the impending colonization and support by the members of the upper class in Korea, E-wha Lee, *Obaeknyeon Wanggukeui Jongmal* (오백년 왕국의 종말, *The Fall of the 500 Year Old Dynasty*), 174–177.

⁷³ Nah, *Iljeshidae, Woorigajokeun* (일제시대, 우리가족은, *My Family during the Japanese Occupation*). Throughout this book, Nah describes the influence of Japanese education on her parents and other elite members of the group her parents associated with. While they felt despair and anger during the colonial period, Nah discusses how they wished to transform their own “backward” country into a modernized one, admiring the cultural “advancement” of Japan.

⁷⁴ Among pro-*Gaehwa* intellectuals, Lee Gwang-su was especially “anti-past” or “anti-tradition.” He has been criticized for insisting on “moral transformation” while ignoring “political transformation,” and as a result the

Gyeong (주시경), Yi In-Jik (이인직), and Moon Sang-woo (문상우),⁷⁵ emphasized the importance of children having prospects for a better life than their parents, and that this required adult children to become more independent. The writers argued that the practice of *johon* (조혼), underage marriage, was “primitive;” they further extended the risk beyond that of familial health, arguing that such family structures could destabilize the nation.⁷⁶ Many nationalist and independence activist intellectuals likewise believed that the stability of the individual led to the stability of the nation. This stability was to be found in the nuclear family, freed from the ‘uncivilized’ customs and traditions maintained within extended families.

Participating in the new cultural practice of family portraiture in photography studios implied a family’s affluence. Crucially, such families were willing and eager to become part of a new class signifying modernity itself. A portrait photograph of the writer Lee Gwang-su’s family exhibits several of the changes within family relationships. [Figure 3.5] The photograph shows Lee, his wife and son, and an American friend. This grouping expands on the family to include a commemoration of a friendship. Lee was an advocate of the modernization of the Korean people, placing a heavy emphasis on marriage and family.⁷⁷ His son is the central figure in the picture, centered and elevated to the height of the adults. This reflects the rising importance of children

movement remained as an “elitist discourse.” See Myung-a Kwon, *Gajok Iyagineun Oetteoke Mandeuloejinieunga* (가족이야기는 어떻게 만들어지는가, *How Family Stories are made*), Chaeksesang Mungo 4 (Seoul: Chaeksesang, 2000). In her book, Kwon, a scholar of Korean literature, examines the movement of *gaehwa* initiated by intellectuals during the colonial rule from a psychoanalytical perspective.

⁷⁵ Du-shik Jang et al., eds., *Ilsangsaenghwalgwa geundae gyeolhonjedo: Japjipyeon* (일상생활과 근대결혼제도 잡지편, *Everyday Life and the Modern Marriage: A Volume on Magazine Articles*), Hangukmunhwajaryochongseo 37 (Seoul: Minsokwon, 2010), vii.

⁷⁶ Paek, *Sweet Homeui Giwon* (스위트 홈의 기원, *The Origin of the Sweet Home*), 15–16; Hye-gyeong Kim, “Iljeha Oerinigieui hyungseonggwa gajokbyeonhwaew gwanhan yeongu (일제하 어린이기의 형성과 가족변화에 관한 연구)” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Seoul: Ewha Womans University, 1997), 104–106.

⁷⁷ Lee, a prominent writer of early twentieth-century Korea, was an independent activist until about 1921. In 1922, he became a writer for *Donga Ilbo* (*Donga Daily*), writing articles about the need to modernize before protesting against colonial power. He announced his “pro-colonist” conversion in 1938 and continued to write both fiction and newspaper and journal articles. Lee was abducted by the North Korean military during the Korean War in July 1950 and died in October of the same year.

and their education among Korean elites.⁷⁸ In addition, by including his American friend, the portrait articulates how Lee valued his association with the West through someone representing the “modern” man.

The most outstanding change observable in this photograph is stylistic. Compared to a full shot including the floor and props, such as the table, flowers, and curtain of Figure 3.4, the main focus in Lee’s family portrait is on the sitters’ upper bodies. Props have been eliminated and the background is completely dark. The light and dark contrast between the background and the sitters emphasizes their facial features, creating a much more intimate atmosphere. The composition and tonality of the photograph create a feeling of warmth and closeness among the sitters. This is in contrast to Figure 3.4, which shows the family members sitting and standing in alternate rows without any physical contact. Lee’s family portrait conveys the presence of warmth and intimacy between the father, mother, and child, as well as a family friend, suggesting what a modern family should be like.⁷⁹

While Joseon was rapidly declining, new photographic ‘traditions’ were being established. Family portraits of upper-middle class families taken for specific events, such as the hundredth day after birth, the first birthday, and the sixtieth birthday, started to appear in the early twentieth century.⁸⁰ A family portrait taken at a sixtieth birthday in the 1920s shows an elaborately prepared birthday table and the gathering of the extended family members for the occasion [Figure 3.6]. The lavish table and ‘Western’ attire of some of the men and boys indicate the high

⁷⁸ For the study of changes in the treatment of infants and children in the West, from indifference to nurturing, see “Mother and Infants” and “The Rise of the Nuclear Family” in Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

⁷⁹ In the May 1922 issue of the journal *Gaebyeok* (개벽), Lee wrote an article titled “Minjok Gaejoron (민족 개조론, The Theory of National Reformation),” which argued for ethical reformation of the Korean race. He had argued for the abolition of the Confucian doctrine long embedded in the Korean life, and thus was criticized for insisting on the importance of Confucian virtues for this reformation.

⁸⁰ According to Kim, family photographs taken during the early colonial period tend to include members of extended families.

social and economic status of at least part of the family. The emblem on the lower right corner of the paper frame marks the photograph as taken at the *Joil* photography studio (조일사진관) in Gongju.⁸¹

Family portraits taken in larger cities in the 1930s and '40s reflect changes in family size and structure. The family portrait photographs of this period generally appear simple and straightforward. They however signify a major shift in the middle-class Korean family. A family portrait photograph made in Gyeongseong in the 1930s shows parents and two children [Figure 3.7]. The man wears *yangbok* (“Western-style attire” which today generally means a man’s suit) while the woman wears a simplified (modernized) Korean dress. The older child wears a striped shirt sitting on his father’s lap, and the baby sits on his/her mother’s lap toward the center of the photograph. The plain background of the portrait is highlighted, creating a semicircle, which frames and encloses the family within. The tight composition cutting below the sitters’ waist emphasizes the closeness of the family members, placing the children in equally central positions as their parents. This implies their importance and accentuates the role of the parents as educators of the children, enabling them to eventually become members of modernized society.

This emphasis on representing children as symbols of a family’s—and a nation’s—future is even more prominent in the popular conventions of portraits taken on the hundredth day after birth and *dol sajin*. While taking baby pictures is common across the world, the specifically Korean practice of photographing the hundredth day after birth and the first birthday with a specially prepared birthday banquet emerged in the early twentieth century, becoming widely practiced in Korea in the 1960s.⁸² Although the hundredth day and the first birthday are also

⁸¹ The stamp shows a Japanese name in a Roman transcription, “Y. Sato.” This was possibly the name of the photographer.

⁸² Mi-suk Hong, “A Study of the Specialization of Baby photos According to the Development of Portrait Photography” (Seoul: Chung-Ang University, 2007); Yu-jin Jeong, “Babysajine gwanhan yeongu: Babysajin

specially celebrated in other parts of East Asia, such as China, these photographic practices have developed into an idiosyncratic cultural practice in South Korea.⁸³ Baby portraits reflect a desire to bring up a child as a better, modernized citizen, as Lee Gwang-su argues. The practice of portraiture on the hundredth day after birth and the first birthday therefore suggests how the modernization and industrialization of Korea involved reforming the place of the child within a household and the nation.

The Hundredth-Day Portrait: Origin & Historical Significance

Portraiture of children has been a common photographic practice throughout its history. Historians of photography, such as Mary Warner Marien, explain that the early practice of making portrait photographs of children was closely related to the imminence of death in general at the time, and specifically in reaction to the high infant mortality rates that preceded twentieth-century medical advances.⁸⁴ Making portrait photographs asserted both the existence of the child and its future potential. In filling this compelling psychological need, baby portraits quickly entered standard cultural practice in Europe and the U.S. Another crucial reason for the standardization of this practice was, according to Shawn Michelle Smith, the white middle-class's desire to record and exhibit racial superiority and heredity. Smith argues that the white middle-class attitude toward baby photographs has changed significantly since the popularization

studioeu pyohyeon styleul jungshimeuro (베이비사진에 관한 연구: 베이비사진 스튜디오의 표현 스타일을 중심으로)” (MA Thesis, Seoul: Sangmyung University, 2005), 18-31; Pyeong-gyu Ko, “Shinsaengasajin pyohyeonegwahan yeongu: album jejak (신생아사진 표현에 관한 연구: 앨범제작)” (MA Thesis, Seoul: Sangmyung University, 2005).

⁸³ In China, one month after birth, called *moon-yut*, is celebrated much more commonly than the 100th day. Similar to Korea, the biggest celebration during one's childhood is the first birthday. However, the elaborate makings of baby portraits for the 100th day and first birthday have been unique developments in South Korea. See “Chinese Baby Traditions,” *Babyzone*, n.d., <http://www.babyzone.com/babynames/china.asp>; “Chinese Birthday Celebrations”, n.d., http://www.knowledgegalaxy.net/chinese_birthday/chinese_birthday.html (Accessed August 18, 2011).

⁸⁴ Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, 62.

of baby portraits in the mid-century, as baby pictures came to emblemize race and racial hierarchies.⁸⁵ As Smith explains, baby photographs became a means to record and exhibit a child's character, "seen as the gift of the white woman's biological heritage in the latter half of the nineteenth century."⁸⁶

In Korea, making a portrait photograph of a baby on his/her hundredth day (*baeg-il sajin*) has become a common practice, even among many Korean expatriates. Although the historian of Korean photography Lee Kyungmin argues that the high infant mortality rate was the main reason for the development of these practices,⁸⁷ the photographic practice also has origins in the combination of folk tradition and photography's popularization in Korea in the early twentieth century.

When exactly families began to photograph *baeg-il sajin* and *dol sajin* is uncertain,⁸⁸ but celebrating a baby's hundredth day after birth has roots in the Confucian and shamanistic understandings of life on Earth.⁸⁹ According to tradition, life can only be conceived when blessed by the sky; therefore a newborn embodies the spirits of the sky and earth rather than humanness. Until the hundredth day, the newborn remains a spirit belonging to the heavens, not yet properly human. Upon its hundredth day of life the baby is reborn as a truly human being.⁹⁰ On this day, the family 'reports' the birth of their baby to their ancestors and shares special food

⁸⁵ Shawn Michelle Smith, "Baby's Picture is Always Treasured': Eugenics and the reproduction of whiteness in the family photograph album," 360.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 361, 363.

⁸⁷ Kyungmin Lee, "Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대 한국의 초상 Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs)," 27.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 28. Lee states that, due to the high infant mortality rate, special events for babies began to be practiced. Referring to Kang Deuk-hee, Lee argues that children were considered actual members of the family only when they pass their *dol* (first year). The *baeg-il sajin* and *dol sajin* contributed greatly to the dissemination of photography in Korean society.

⁸⁹ Mi-suk Hong, "A Study of the Specialization of Baby photos According to the Development of Portrait Photography," 10. *Baeg-il* literally means 100 days.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

with relatives and neighbors. Traditionally, the baby only wore white clothes until the hundredth day, for which a new celebratory multi-colored dress was worn.⁹¹

Although the origin of the hundredth day baby portrait can be traced back to folk tradition in Korea, the establishment of its photographic practice in the colonial period suggests a change in what children meant within the family, and therefore what family meant individually and for the nation's future. Again, Lee Gwang-su was an early proponent of this change. Several years before he turned from independence activism to pro-colonist, he argued that "civilization" meant "emancipation."⁹² The emancipation in question was that of children, who, in the Joseon period, had to "live, work, and die" for their parents.⁹³ He contended that children must become more independent to become better citizens than their parents. For Lee, and for many other Korean elites at the time, modernization meant civilization, and civilization depended on the future of children "emancipated" from the burden of supporting their extended families. It is with this belief that, during the late 1910s, Korean intellectuals actively began disseminating the notion that children are not merely "possessions" of their parents but individuals who need to be nurtured and properly educated.⁹⁴

Efforts to educate the public about the individuality of children were related in part to the Korean independence movement. For instance, Bang Jeong Hwan (방정환), an advocate of both

⁹¹ Dressing the baby in white is no longer practiced in Korea, as the reasons behind the celebration, including this folk tradition, are not widely known to most Koreans today. However, many examples of the *baeg-il sajin* and *dol sajin* show that babies wore the multi-colored dress on the occasion of *dol* rather than *baeg-il*.

⁹² Paek, *Sweet Homeui Giwon* (스위트 홈의 기원, *The Origin of the Sweet Home*), 15. Paek refers to Lee Gwangsu's article, "Janyejungsimron (자녀중심론, Thesis on Child-centered Family)" published in journal *Cheongchun* (청춘) on September 26, 1918.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Hye-gyeong Kim, "Iljeha Oerinigieui hyungseonggwa gajokbyeonhwaew gwanhan yeongu (일제하 어린이기의 형성과 가족변화에 관한 연구)." 104-106.

children and Korean independence active from the late 1910s until his death in 1931,⁹⁵ published essays and children's stories in journals such as *Gaebyeok* and Lee Gwang-su's *Cheongchun*. In 1923, Bang published the first children's magazine, *Oerinyi* (어린이, Children), dedicated to children impoverished under the colonial rule. Such an emphasis on the future of children in the Korean family transformed the roles of family members, turning the children's role from someone need to take care of and respect their parents to those who require adequate care. The baby portraits, as well as family portraits that placed children as central figures (as in Lee's family portrait [Figure 3.5]), therefore exhibit the prevailing changes in the Korean family, especially the changing notion of the role of children. They were now viewed as future leaders of the modernizing nation, those who could achieve independence for the Korean *minjok* (nation/ethnicity).⁹⁶

Nevertheless, although the change in the role of the child and childhood appeared and was disseminated by the Korean elites such as Bang, it was after the 1960s that these changes began to manifest in the familial relationships of the general public, transforming the focus of the family from the father to the child, generally the son.⁹⁷ This shift still emphasized familial lineage as sustained through the male members of the family, a remnant of the Confucius-inspired patriarchal tradition of Joseon. To examine the relation between this transformation, 'gendered' values, and the practice of photographic portraiture, in the following section I discuss the gender-differentiated practice of *baeg-il sajin* and its implications for a society undergoing nation building. This focus will illuminate how the modernization project of the second half of

⁹⁵ Geumju Kwon, "Bumojaneogwangye (부모자녀관계, The Relationship between Parents and Children)," in *Saero Bon Gajokgwa Hanguksahoe (새로 본 가족과 한국사회: 변화하는 한국가족의 삶 읽기, Family and the Korean Society: A New Assessment)* (Seoul: Kyungmunsa, 2009), 191.

⁹⁶ The meaning of *minjok* was discussed in Chapter Two.

⁹⁷ Geumju Kwon, "Bumojaneogwangye (부모자녀관계, The Relationship between Parents and Children)," 191.

the twentieth century absorbed the patriarchy embedded in the traditional Korean family and society into the ‘modernized’ context.

The Gender-Differentiated Practice of *Baeg-il Sajin*

The Korean War, from 1950 to 1953, halted various cultural activities in Korean life, including studio-made baby portraiture. Photography studios nevertheless proliferated in major cities after the war, and as the cost of photographic portraits became reasonable for the middle class, the public interest in making *baeg-il sajin* and *dol sajin* rose.⁹⁸ The infant mortality rate remained high throughout the 1950s and ‘60s, only beginning to subside in the ‘70s. Furthermore, having lived through the Korean War, parents desired to document the children that symbolized the continuation of life after the war ended. At the same time, the role of the parents as caretakers, nurturers, and educators for their children became standard for all economic classes.⁹⁹

The modernization/industrialization/capitalization project was re-launched by the military regime in the 1961, this time more compressed and intensive. The various institutions of the regime, such as the Association of Daehan Family Planning, launched propagandistic projects and campaigns to ‘modernize’ the population. Modernization and industrialization of South Korea, however, did not entail complete abandonment of values and beliefs maintained for almost six hundred years in Joseon. The practice of the hundredth-day portrait reflects this, maintaining the historical favoritism toward the male child in Korean society. By the mid-1960s, the stylistic convention of portraits of the male child’s hundredth day was established: a male child sits naked on a chair specially made for the occasion. Seated frontally, the baby’s genitalia

⁹⁸ Kyungmin Lee, “Sajincheopeul yeolda: ginyumsajineuroboneun geundae hangukeui chosang (사진첩을 열다: 기념사진으로 보는 근대 한국의 초상 Opening the Photo Album: Looking at the Portrait of Modern Korea through Memorial Photographs),” 28.

⁹⁹ Geumju Kwon, “Bumojaneogwangye (부모자녀관계, The Relationship between Parents and Children),” 191.

is exposed to the camera [Figure 3.9-10]. In Figures 3.9-10, the Korean word “백일기념,” meaning “the hundredth-day commemoration,” is written in Chinese characters (百日記念) with white acrylic paint on the side of the photograph.¹⁰⁰ In another photograph, the baby is fully clothed, but the front of his pants is open to display the genitalia [Figure 3.11]. The practice of the nude *baeg-il sajin* for male children does not contain a sexual connotation but a gendered one, announcing the parents’ pride in having a male child. For the family, the exposed genitalia exhibited the ultimate symbol of ‘manhood.’ The nude portrait was then put in a family album or frame to be displayed at home. On the other hand, female children, lacking phalli to celebrate, were usually fully clothed in their hundredth-day portraits [Figure 3.12].¹⁰¹ This gender-differentiated practice shows how a child’s gender was perceived as one of their most significant qualities, and was thus recorded in the photograph commemorating their admittance into full personhood.

The sexism witnessed in the nude portrait of a male child is part of the historical preference for male children in families.¹⁰² The photographic tradition of nude *baeg-il sajin* however, does not merely indicate familial pride. Traditionally, the roles of male and female members in families were clearly divided in Joseon society according to Confucian teachings such as the *Samgangoryun* (삼강오륜), the Confucian code of conduct on the relationship between king and court, father and child, husband and wife, adult and children, and between friends. A fundamental goal of these teachings was maintaining the patriarchy in the family and, within Korea, in the Joseon Court. They emphasized balance between men and women in the

¹⁰⁰ Young Taek Park, *Gajokeul Geurida: Geurimsokeuro Deuleon Gajokeui Eolguldel* (가족을 그리다: 그림 속으로 들어온 가족의 얼굴들, *Painting the Family: Faces of the Family in the Painting*), 27, 29.

¹⁰¹ Some families had nude portraits of female children, but these were posed in such a way as to avoid exposing their genitals in a direct, frontal manner.

¹⁰² Jin Guk Jeong, *Album Sajin 1920-1970* (앨범사진 1920-1970, *Album Photographs 1920-1970*) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2007), 192–3.

family, requiring obedience and devotion on the part of the female members to the male members, and of the younger members to the elder members of the family.

Assessing the popular imagery of girls in the West, Holland contends that there is a firm correlation between “a gender-differentiated childish identity” and the imagery of gendered babies.¹⁰³ Contending that current gender relations are the outgrowth of modernization in Western society, Holland continues “that we can now settle back into a post-feminist world where the brute facts of difference continue to impress us with their old, immutable forms.”¹⁰⁴ In this regard, the nude imagery of the male child becomes a visual expression of the “old, immutable forms” supporting the patriarchal lineage in Korean families, by identifying the phallus of a child as the symbol of that lineage. Indeed, the continued practice of the nude *baeg-il sajin* contributes to, rather than merely reflects, the conservation of the “old, immutable forms” of manhood in Korean society.

The gender-differentiated photographic practice of the hundredth-day portrait exhibits the relationship between a “modern” practice and a traditional value expressed via gender bias. At the same time, the patriarchal power structure reinforced in these baby portraits is closely related to the development of the capitalist economic system in South Korea, of which the “nuclearization” of the family was the basis. To transform the largely farming population into wage earners in export-oriented industries, the traditional extended family needed to be broken up into smaller units, so they could migrate freely to industrial cities.¹⁰⁵ Many of these ‘units’ were unmarried adult children, portions of whose wages would be sent to other members of the family. Male children, seen as more capable of heavy work, were thus viewed as catalysts for

¹⁰³ Patricia Holland, *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery*, 181.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ham, “Sahoebyunhwawa Gajok (사회변화와 가족, Social Changes and Family),” 61.

changing the social and economic status of their families.¹⁰⁶ By announcing the presence of a family “breadwinner,” the *baeg-il sajin* photograph becomes both a certificate and celebration of the continuation of the patriarchal power structure, as ‘enabled’ by the male child. Cultural sexism therefore was reinforced as the basis of the modern family, the most suitable familial unit for the nation's transformation from an agricultural to an industrial economy.¹⁰⁷

In his discussion of the connection between household structure and labor force, Immanuel Wallerstein suggests three main requirements that the accumulator of capital has in regard to the labor force. The accumulator, for example the military regime or *jaebeol* (family-owned mega-corporations), requires a labor force that can be mobilized anytime and anywhere, and will keep the cost level of the labor force as low as possible in order to maintain maximum profit.¹⁰⁸ In the 1960s and later, many young South Koreans left their rural hometowns for jobs in the city. As individuals or newly married couples, these small income-pooling households in new urban areas had heads of household willing to take up various available jobs. Such family units, better able to accept and endure harsh working conditions, were ideally suited to the requirements of the accumulator for maximum profit. This was the common picture of a family recently migrating to cities in South Korea during and after the 1960s.

Like Wallerstein, the sociologist Ham Inhee emphasizes that the “nuclearization” of families since the 1960s should not be viewed simply as a result of industrialization and urbanization. The changes that occurred to family structures and relationships are closely related to the change from collective tenant farming to wage labor performed by individuals in the

¹⁰⁶ Dong-Hyun Lee, “[불후의 명작 ①] ‘아들과 딸’ 남아선호사상 통렬하게 풍자하다,” *Ilgan Sports*, October 29, 2009, http://isplus.live.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.asp?total_id=3850353&cloc= (Accessed March 3, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, “Household Structures and Labour-Force Formation in the Capitalist World-Economy,” in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London & New York: Verso, 1991), 107-112.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

family.¹⁰⁹ South Korean life during the 1960s and '70s was largely dominated by “the discourse of economic development.”¹¹⁰ Harsh conditions, low wages, and long working hours were generally accepted as socially shared suffering that would eventually lead to economic growth.¹¹¹ The military regime, established by Park Chung-hee through a coup d'état he organized in 1961, continuously used the discourse of economic development to legitimize “the coup, militarism, nationalistic governance and the prolongation of his rule” throughout the 18 years of Park's presidency.¹¹² He launched a series of *Gyeongjegaebal 5gaenyeongyehoek* (경제개발 5개년 계획, Five-Year Economic Development Plan) to lure many young farmers and their children to urban areas and newly developed industrial cities. These efforts met with considerable success: in this period, families began to discipline themselves according to the will of the state, with the goal of becoming patriotic *gukmin* (Korean nationals).¹¹³ Much of this disciplinary governance was possible through the confrontational situation between the north and south of the peninsula at the time.¹¹⁴ During the military junta, moreover, the flow of communication in mass media was top-down and one-way: the state propagated this developmentalist ideology under extremely

¹⁰⁹ Ham, “Sahoebunhwawa Gajok (사회변화와 가족, Social Changes and Family),” 61.

¹¹⁰ Byeong-hyeon Shin, “1960, 70nyeondae sanoephwagwajeongeseo nondongjaeuleui sahoejeok jeongchseonge yeonghyangeul michin juyo yeoksajeok damrondeul (1960, 70년대 산업화과정에서 노동자들의 사회적 정체성에 영향을 미친 주요 역사적 담론들, Major Discourses Affecting the Social Identities of Workers during the Industrialization of the 1960s and '70s),” in *1960-70nyeondae nodongjaeui saenghwalseggyewa jeongchaeseong* (1960-70년대 노동자의 생활세계와 정체성), ed. Jong-Gu Lee, Nodongsa Yeonguchongseo 2 (Paju: Hanul Books, 2005), 94–95.

¹¹¹ Gyeong-A Shin, “Sanoephwayihu Il-gajok munjaeui Damronjeok Jihyeongwa Byunhwa (산업화 이후 일-가족 문제의 담론적 지형과 변화),” in *Il•Gajok•Gender: Hangukeui Sanuphwawa Il-Gajok Dilemma* (일•가족•젠더 한국의 산업화와 일-가족 딜레마, *Work, Family, Gender: Industrialization and Work-Family Dilemma of Korea*) (Paju: Hanul Books, 2009), 90.

¹¹² Byeong-hyeon Shin, “1960, 70nyeondae sanoephwagwajeongeseo nondongjaeuleui sahoejeok jeongchseonge yeonghyangeul michin juyo yeoksajeok damrondeul (1960, 70년대 산업화과정에서 노동자들의 사회적 정체성에 영향을 미친 주요 역사적 담론들, Major Discourses Affecting the Social Identities of Workers during the Industrialization of the 1960s and '70s),” 94. “...경제발전 담론은 일관된 요소로서 등장했고, 군사쿠테타를 비롯한 군사주의 및 국가주의적 통치와 집권연장을 정당화하는 데 이용되었다.”

¹¹³ In South Korea, the term *gukmin*, which literally translates to nationals, is used to refer to Korean citizens; *shimin* (citizens) is limited to the residents of a city.

¹¹⁴ Chapters Two and Four discuss the life under the military junta and its control over people through abuse of anti-Communist policies.

strict censorship. The degree to which the state intervened in private life, especially in forming the structure of the family and the relationships between its members, was overwhelming.¹¹⁵

The Park regime considered the significant increase in population after the Korean War a threat to the rapid growth in the Gross National Product. To control population growth, the government inaugurated the Family Planning Measure (가족계획사업) in 1961.¹¹⁶ This was followed by the *Mojabogeonbeop* (모자보건법, Mother-Child Health Act) in 1963, through which abortion was legalized.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, parents in low-income households were forced to undergo sterilization.¹¹⁸ The government also tried to lower the birth rate by educating the public through various campaigns conducted by the newly established Ministry of Health and Society and the Association of Daehan Family Planning. For these campaigns, the institutions took advantage of visual materials, especially in the form of posters, the government's favorite means to 'educate' the public. The poster-calendar of 1968 produced by the Ministry of Health and Society and the Association of Daehan Family Planning shows a mother with a son and a daughter [Figure 3.13]. On the bottom of the poster-calendar, a sentence encourages the use of female contraceptives. By only including the figure of the mother and not the father, and only encouraging the use of female contraceptives, the poster emphasizes the women's responsibility for family planning, again underscoring gender-differentiated roles around which the modernization process was organizing itself.

¹¹⁵ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 60–61.

¹¹⁶ “국가기록원 나라기록 > 주제별 검색 > 국정분야별검색 > 보육/가족/여성 > 인구보건정책 > 인구정책 > 가족계획사업,” 국가기록원 (*National Archives*), n.d., <http://contents.archives.go.kr/next/content/listSubjectDescription.do?id=002608>.

¹¹⁷ The title of the act deliberately puts the state's will to intervene over the rights of the mother (and only the mother).

¹¹⁸ Gyeong-A Shin, “Sanoephwayihu Il-gajok munjaeui Damronjeok Jihyeongwa Byunhwa (산업화 이후 일-가족 문제의 담론적 지형과 변화),” 91.

In the 1970s, the government introduced the catchphrase “Let’s not discern the gender of the child (fetus), but have only two children to raise them well.” In one poster, a photograph of a family shows parents and two daughters [Figure 3.14]. The catchphrase on the poster and the picture of two daughters suggest that the government is discouraging gender favoritism.

However, the real problem the government was facing in family planning was that, because most households desired at least one male child, they tended to bear children until they had a son in the family. The campaign took an even more extreme approach in the 1980s with the catchphrase “A well-bred daughter stops the parents from being envious of ten sons.” A poster made in the 1980s shows a mother and daughter with that phrase written in red on the child’s waist [Figure 3.15]. Again, the father figure is missing in the poster, emphasizing the woman’s role as family planner, caretaker, and educator of the child, while the father works to fulfill the goal of the military regime—the government’s ideal of economic advancement.

The nuclear family was therefore the ideal structure for achieving the aims of the military junta, providing both flexibility for maximizing the labor force and proving easier to govern. The gender division of family roles was promoted to accelerate both the transformation of family and economic growth through the implementation of various campaigns such as *gagyebusseugiundong* (가계부쓰기운동), which encouraged wives to be more concerned with their expenses and savings by placing them in charge of household bookkeeping.¹¹⁹ By the early 1970s, industrialization was in full force, and the third Five-Year Economic Development Plan was implemented by President Park. Anticipating a large-scale migration, the Park government carried out the mass development of apartment housing in the southern region around the Han

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

River, which was largely unused at the time.¹²⁰ Most of the new housing was designed to accommodate nuclear families; many of the units were two- and three-bedroom apartments.¹²¹ Thus, although the “nuclearization” of the traditionally extended family was initiated and promoted by Korean elites at the turn of the twentieth century as a way to modernize Korea and thus enable it to regain independence, it was not until the Park regime that official measures were used to limit the number of children in a household. Meanwhile, this transformation of the family retained and even depended on traditional gender roles, the patriarchal structure of which extended to the relationship between the *gukmin* and military regime, harnessing the metaphor of the strong father looking after his sons.¹²²

The nude portraits of male babies symbolize this patriarchal lineage in the family as well as the nation state: the baby will be taken care of by the female members of the family, allowing him to grow as an individual who will in turn fill his role as a strong head of the family and country. As South Korea was in a cease-fire with its communist counterpart in the north, the child would devote three years in his early twenties to military service.¹²³ The nation also required him to become a *saneopilkkun* (산업일꾼) upon his discharge; the term was frequently used during the military regime to refer to a diligent, hardworking person, whose efforts and sacrifice to the nation would become the basis of its economic development. Unionization was banned across the country during the Park regime, and workers endured excruciating hours. Such

¹²⁰ The development of marshy land south of the Han River is often referred to as “the Miracle on Han River.”

¹²¹ Gil-Seong Park, Myeong-Gu Kang, and Jong-Gu Lee, *1960nyeondae Sahoebyeonhwa Yeongu: 1963-1970 (1960년대 사회변화 연구: 1963-1970 A Study on Social Changes in the 1960s: 1963-1970)* (Seoul: Baeksan-Seodang Publishing, 1999), 55–98. The prices of most of these “small” apartment units south of the Han River (강남) have increased dramatically over the past three decades, becoming one of the most expensive areas of South Korea. The units have become too small for the high-income families in the area, and most of the apartment buildings have undergone or are slated for ‘reconstruction’--transformation into luxury high-rise apartments.

¹²² Myung-a Kwon, *Shigminji ihureul sayuhada (식민지 이후를 사유하다: 탈식민화와 재식민화의 경계, Thinking Post-Colonial)* (Seoul: Chaeksesang, 2009), 265.

¹²³ The regular term for military service since then has decreased to 24 months; although it is to be reduced further to 18 months in 2012, the current government is expected to rebuke the change from 24 months.

hard work was considered a requirement of *saneopilkkeun*, while other family members also endured the absence of their spouses or parents. Therefore, by assuring families' devotion to a nationalistic cause, the state was granted the exploitation of its own people in the name of modernization.

National campaigns and development plans encouraged the *saneopilkkun* to take pride in their hard work.¹²⁴ What was again excluded from nation-wide acknowledgement and encouragement were the efforts and sacrifice of female workers during the years of rapid industrialization.¹²⁵ Often daughters of the rural working class, these female laborers were now displaced in urban areas and working in various sectors of industry to support their rural families.¹²⁶ Much of their salaries went back to those families, often for funding the education of the first male child in the family. This kind of familial sacrifice was such a widely shared experience that it was the basis for a TV drama series explicitly making a point of the inequality these different gender roles promoted [Figure 3.16]. The series, *Adeulgwa Ttal* (아들과 딸, *Son and Daughter*), airing in 1992-1993, was hugely successful.¹²⁷ Much of the story unfolded around the different expectations placed on the twin son and daughter of a rural family, and their lives after they move to Seoul. The daughter is expected by her family, especially her

¹²⁴ Chang-hwan Jeon, "1980nyeondae baljeongukgaeui jaepyeon, gujojojeong, geurigo geumyungjayuhwa (1980년대 발전국가의 재편, 구조조정, 그리고 금융자유화, Restructuring, Workout, and Deregulation of Financial Institutions in the Developing Nation in the 1980s)," in *Park Chung-hee modelgwa shinjayujueui saieseo: Sanyeophwa yinyeomeui jaegochalgwa daeaneui mosaek II* (박정희 모델과 신자유주의 사이에서: 산업화 이념의 재고찰과 대안의 모색 II, *Between the Park Chung-hee Model and Neo-liberalism II*), ed. Gyu-cheol Yoo (Seoul: Hamkkeilneunchaek, 2004), 87–88.

¹²⁵ Eun Cho, "Sanoephwawa yeoseongeui imnodonghwa eukseong: 60nyeondae ehu saengsanjikkwa samujik yeoseongnodonggeul jungshimeuro (산업화와 여성의 임노동화 특성: 60년대 이후 생산직과 사무직 여성노동을 중심으로, The Significance of Industrialization and Female Wage Workers: A Focus on Post-1960s Female Manufacturing and Office Workers)," in *Hangukeui saneophwawa sahoemyeonhwa* (한국의 산업화와 사회변화, *The Industrialization and Social Changes in South Korea*), by Gwang-ho Yoo et al. (Seongnam: Hanguk Jeongshin Munhwayeonguwon (한국정신문화연구원), 1990), 143–144.

¹²⁶ Dong-Hyun Lee, "[불후의 명작 ①] '아들과 딸' 남아선호사상 통렬하게 풍자하다."

¹²⁷ Ibid.

discriminating mother, to sacrifice her opportunities for her twin brother although she excelled in school and work. Her sacrifice is taken for granted by the people in the rural town. After a series of confrontations and trials, the daughter becomes a successful writer, providing cathartic satisfaction for the many female viewers who underwent similar situations in the past decades. But this was only a TV series. In reality, such sacrifices for family, and for the nation, have largely been left unacknowledged. In the long run, the immediacy of the phallic imagery in the hundredth-day baby pictures remained a symbol of the preferential bias toward male children.

The ‘Conventionalization’ of *Dol Sajin*

The first birthday of a child is *dol* (돌) in Korean, literally “anniversary” or “annual commemoration.” In Korea, the *dol* is one of the most important rites of passage in a lifetime, traditionally celebrated with relatives and neighbors.¹²⁸ As with the practice of the hundredth-day portrait photographs, families began to photograph the *dol* ceremony in the early twentieth century; the ceremony is still practiced in Korea.¹²⁹ The photograph of the *dol* ceremony has traditionally been a portrait of the baby sitting in front of an elaborately prepared birthday table called the *dol sang* (*dol* table). One of the earliest examples of the *dol* portrait is a photograph by Kim Gyu-jin of his son Young-gi photographed in 1912 [Figure 3.17].¹³⁰ The boy sits behind a *dol sang* decorated with stacks of rice cakes, fruits, and flowers, symbolizing the parents’ wish for the longevity, abundance, and wealth of the child. Behind him is a traditional folding screen,

¹²⁸ Mi-suk Hong, “A Study of the Specialization of Baby photos According to the Development of Portrait Photography,” 14. The tradition of this celebratory event is also known to be a transitional practice. The practice of taking first birthday photographs as a rite of passage is arguably also found in China. Hongdae MA thesis on *dol* photographs.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³⁰ Kim, an established painter, opened the photography studio *Cheonyeondangsajingwan* (천연당사진관, Cheonyeondang Photography Studio) in Gyeongseong in 1907. The studio became very successful, contributing significantly to the development of commemorative photographic practices such as the *dol sajin*. Injin Choi, *Hanguk Sajinsa 1631-1945* (한국사진사 1631-1945, *The History of Korean Photography 1631-1945*), 190–191.

featuring Korean ink paintings.¹³¹ A small rectangular piece of paper, reading “Young-gi *cheotdolginyeom* (Commemoration of Young-gi’s first birthday)” in Korean, is glued onto the lower center of the picture.¹³² The photograph is mounted on an elegantly decorated paper frame, which is stamped with the name of the photographer and studio in English and Chinese characters on the bottom. The photograph indicates that the convention of *dol sajin* was already established by 1912, although the table is decorated with fewer items than later examples to be discussed shortly.

The highlight of the *dol* ceremony is a special event called *dol jab-ee* (돌잡이). The baby is led by parents to choose an item among several objects displayed in front of the baby on the *dol* table. In the *dol* photograph by Kim, for example, a large pen brush is placed to the right of his son on the table [Figure 3.17]. Each object symbolizes a different future path for the baby. The objects prepared for the *dol jab-ee* traditionally include a pen brush, a bow, a bowl of rice, a book, money, and a hank of cotton yarn. The different objects symbolize what path the child will go down as an adult: the pen brush for scholarship or public office; the bow for a military career; rice and money for abundant food and wealth; cotton yarn for longevity.¹³³

Until middle-class households acquired portable cameras, *dol* portraits were taken at home by professional photographers by appointment. The portrait was then developed and printed by the professional photographers in their studios. An example from the 1950s shows the baby in front of the *dol* table with typical *dol* dishes and decorations [Figure 3.8]. Paper money is placed all over the table to encourage the boy’s prosperity. Compared to Kim Gyu-jin’s

¹³¹ For middle class households, it was customary to own folding screens and display them on special occasions. The themes of the screen paintings for festive events were often longevity, harmony, and love.

¹³² As Korean was read from right to left in the early twentieth century, it is written “럼기돌칫기영.”

¹³³ The *dol jab-ee* objects have been modified in recent days depending on the interest of the parents. For example, if the parents hope for the baby to be a professional golfer or a popular singer, they would include a toy golf club and a microphone.

photograph of his son, the *dol* table has become much more elaborate. By the 1970s, however, many families had portable cameras at home, and took their own *dol* portraits.¹³⁴ The *dol* photographs in the 1970s show the *dol sang* at the babies' homes, taken by family members [Figure 3.18-3.19]. The photographs are now in color, but the objects in the photographs, such as the folding-screens and the *dol sang*, have not changed greatly since 1912, the year that Kim made his son's *dol sajin*, or since the 1950s iteration.

Changes in the *Dol Sajin*, 1990s-Present

While most *dol* photographs of the 1970s and '80s taken at home resemble each other in scenery—the *dol sang* and folding-screens are constants [3.18-19]—since the 1990s many middle class families have been holding *dol* banquets at reception halls and hotels, organized by professional caterers. The details of the *dol* banquet and portraits are negotiated between the parents, the *dol* banquet planner, and photographers several weeks, or even months, prior to the party.¹³⁵ The planner oversees the overall coordination of the party, from invitations and the preparation of *dol jab-ee* to entertainment provided by a professional event host. Contract photographers at the venue take portraits with the *dol* table prepared by the employees [Figure 3.20].¹³⁶

As more families bought cameras and used color film, photography studios have needed to differentiate their aesthetic from conventional *dol* photographs that could be taken at home. Photography studios also started to market themselves with elaborate portfolios and distinctly

¹³⁴ Mi-suk Hong, "A Study of the Specialization of Baby photos According to the Development of Portrait Photography," 32-33.

¹³⁵ Hyun-ju Oh, *Kkumeul jjikneun studio* (꿈을 찍는 스튜디오, *The Studio that Captures Dreams*) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2010).

¹³⁶ Mi-suk Hong, "A Study of the Specialization of Baby photos According to the Development of Portrait Photography," 51-55.

decorated studios. Rather than focusing on individual shots of the *dol* table, studios began to promote the creation of *dol* albums. Since the early 2000s, photography studios specializing in such baby portraits have opened up throughout South Korea,¹³⁷ providing special packages for the *dol* portraits. Clients contact the studios to plan the *dol* portraits and usually visit the studio before the *dol* banquet. The photographs taken in the studio prior to the celebration then decorate the banquet venue, framed and displayed on tables or as hanging screens [Figure 3.20].

Photographers attend the *dol* banquet as well to photograph the event itself, including the *dol* table portrait and the *dol jab-ee*. As part of the *dol* album package, the family usually returns to the studio to make more photographs, including family portraits.

In expanding the range of what photographers would do for the *dol* ceremony, the industry hoped to maintain its preeminence. In another tactic to prevent erosion of their clientele, baby photography studios began to adopt the appearance of residential houses, as seen in Figure 3.21. Many of these studios are located in residential rather than commercial areas to make it more accessible and approachable for mothers and children. The studios provide various different backdrops: for example, a photography studio in Gwangjin offers different shapes of windows and nautical scenes for baby portraits [Figure 3.22-23]. In a photography studio from Changwon, various colored curtains, teddy bears, plants, and a throne are offered as props and background [Figure 3.24]. These examples reflect the profound changes the industry has made to survive the shift from film to digital photography. They appear to be succeeding; out of the 32 photography studios surveyed by the editor-in-chief of the Korea Association of Photography,

¹³⁷ As of 2010, Oh Hyun-ju claims that there are approximately 20,000 photography studios in South Korea, although the government states that there are over 9,000 studios. Thousands of photography studios closed when the market transitioned from film to digital photography in early 2000s, the same time that baby photography studios were becoming popular. Most studios offer baby portraits. See Oh, *Kkumeul jjikneun studio* (꿈을 찍는 스튜디오, *The Studio that Captures Dreams*), 6.

Oh Hyun-ju, 17 specialize in baby portraits, and among these more than ten exclusively only make baby portraits.¹³⁸

While a growing number of photography studios began to offer special services for baby portraits, venues hosting *dol* banquets sought out clientele by conjuring increasingly lavish celebrations since the late 1990s. A *dol sajin* from the early 2000s shows an elaborate *dol* table with balloons in blue and cream [Figure 3.25]—the color code for male babies. In addition to expanding the table and decorations, planners have also begun to use elaborate themes for the banquets; for instance, a newly popular theme is that of the “Royal Family,” for which the entire family of the child celebrating its *dol* dress up as a ‘Western’ aristocratic family. Sometimes the themes are simpler, yet remain filled with signifiers of wealth, social status, and gender. Figure 3.26 is a family portrait taken at a *dol* party organized by professional planners employed by the caterer. The color theme of the party is pink, commonly used for girls, and the entire family is dressed in pink—a pink vest as part of the father’s formal dress suit and pink dresses for the mother and baby girl. The room is decorated with pink ornaments and flowers, with a pink wall-sized poster. In another photograph taken during a girl’s *dol* banquet, the father wears a black dress suit and the mother and daughter wear white dresses [Figure 3.27], evoking wedding attire. As in Figure 3.26, the party room is decorated with flowers and other ornaments.

For girls’ *dol* banquets, an overt emphasis is placed on this pink or cream color scheme and the girls’ dresses closely resemble their mothers’, a parallel to the thematic use of blue for boys’ *dol* celebrations. The importance placed on the color scheme, and on the matching of the child to the parent of its own gender, highlights the significance of gendered treatment of Korean children. The gendered party theme and activities are designed to reflect a child’s relationship with its parent of the same gender and what is expected of them as male or female members of

¹³⁸ Oh, *Kkumeul jjikneun studio* (*꿈을 찍는 스튜디오*, *The Studio that Captures Dreams*).

the family and society. The banquet therefore presents the girl and the boy as gendered “trainees, displaying the characteristics they share with adults, learning to take their place in an appropriately gendered adult world.”¹³⁹

The parents and children usually change outfits at least once during the *dol* ceremony and for the portraits. For the *dol* portrait, the mother and children (and sometimes the father) wear traditional Korean dress, with the child celebrating the *dol* in the multi-colored dress seen in even the earliest *dol* portraits [Figures 3.8 and 3.9]. More recently, the birthday babies change their outfits during the party: they wear ‘mini’ tuxedos or dresses, and then change into traditional dress for the ceremony of *dol jab-ee*. In some cases, male children wear an outfit that resembles the dress of the king of Joseon [Figure 3.28]. These details are captured by photographers for the *dol* album. Among the photographs taken at the *dol* banquet, the family portrait is framed and hung in people’s houses, and digital photographs of the event are posted on parents’ blogs and Facebook pages.¹⁴⁰

The recent trends in the *dol* ceremony and portraiture follow several aspects of the Korean family of the new millennium. As with the sitters of studio portraits in the early twentieth century, they want the photographer to depict them as ideally as possible. What has changed since is the more elaborate setting and dress for the event. The *baeg-il sajin* and photographic portraits of nuclear families in the first half of the twentieth century captured the changing concept of the child’s role in the family as someone who will not only grow as an independent being, but also become a leader of both the family and the nation.¹⁴¹ In the 2000s, while portraits

¹³⁹ Patricia Holland, *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery*, 187.

¹⁴⁰ This ritual of “costume play” is unique in that people in Korea, albeit with a growing number of exceptions recently, usually do not have occasions to wear elaborate Western-style dresses or tuxedos except for their own weddings.

¹⁴¹ Hye-gyeong Kim, “Iljeha Oeriniגיעui hyungseonggwa gajokbyeonhwaewa gwanhan yeongu (일제하 어린이기의 형성과 가족변화에 관한 연구),” 105–112.

of babies have become extremely elaborate, they still express the basic desire for children to fulfill these expectations, now by “acting out” at least the essential role of a gendered person, and, if the resources are available, performing the fantastical costume-play of a “Royal Family.” The increase in the amount of time and money invested in the *dol* ceremony also indicates the willingness of parents in preparing such an elaborate ritual. Furthermore, it suggests the increasing wealth of the average family, as more have the financial capability to provide “top-of-the-line” ceremonies for their children. Potentially, even when the financial capability is lacking, the willingness to sacrifice and incur debts to fulfill other’s expectations of the family as guardians and supporters of the child drives the continuation of this trend.

Recent *dol* portraits also reflect the dramatic changes in family planning over the course of the twentieth century. While the military government implemented intensive family planning campaigns and measurements between the 1960s and ‘80s to lower the birthrate, such interference has decreased significantly since the 1990s. In 1971, the average birth rate was 3.7 per household in urban areas and 4.7 in rural areas;¹⁴² as of 2008, the number has decreased to 1.2 per household.¹⁴³ The common practice of holding an extremely elaborate *dol* party, comparable to that of a wedding, demonstrates the relationship between the decrease in the number of children per family and the increase in parents’ expenditures: most parents now have only one or two children for whom to provide attention, time, and money.

Moreover, the multi-stage ceremony with a professional *dol* host, party, and portrait-making, reflects the change in the ceremony from a basic rite of passage to a large-scale

¹⁴² Korean Institute for Family Planning, *Ingu mit Gajokgyehoek Tonggyejaryojib* (인구 및 가족계획 통계자료집, *Statistics on Population and Family Plannign in Korea*), (Seoul: Korean Institute for Family Planning, 1978), 1:137.

¹⁴³ Younhee O, “출산율 1.2 명... 한국 ‘세계 꼴찌,’” *Chosun Daily*, November 13, 2008, http://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2008/11/13/2008111300061.html. (Accessed August 15, 2011); So-yeon Kim, “한국 출산율 1.22 명... 여전히 세계 최저,” *The Hankyeoreh*, November 18, 2009, <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/women/388393.html> (Accessed August 15, 2011).

entertainment. The ceremony now celebrates the children while at the same time offers an escape from the social and economic pressures of everyday life, as families spend a festive day as members of a royal family. Thus, while the exuberantly catered *dol* banquets and *dol* albums of recent years continue to symbolize the status of the baby and his/her future prospects, the event and its trappings also represent an initiation to the highly class-conscious Korean society.

Family Photographic Portraits with Grown-Up Children

The occasion of the *dol* (or weddings) is not the only time sitters dress up in formal dresses and tuxedos for photography shoots: families with adult children also choose to wear dresses and tuxedos for family portraits. In a family portrait made in the 2000s, the father sits in an armchair wearing a formal dress suit while the mother sits on a stool in a white dress holding a bouquet of white flowers [Figure 3.29]. The male child stands behind the mother in three-quarter view, wearing a black suit that resembles the father's. The daughter, in the center of the photograph, stands with her left hand resting on the back of the father's chair and her right hand on her hip, so that her body is positioned diagonally between the parents. She has an open-mouth smile, an expression that uplifts the mood of the portrait. The background of the portrait appears to be painted, giving an illusion of a study with a large painting hung on the wall. The chiaroscuro effect of the backdrop yields a soft, dreamy impression. Overall, the photograph appears highly composed, and was likely retouched by the photographer; most studios digitally manipulate portrait photographs.¹⁴⁴ While *dol* portraits are expressions of young families' hopes and expectations through performance of a fantasy, this family portrait with grown-up children also appears to present what they perceive as an ideal: a happily united nuclear family with

¹⁴⁴ Oh, *Kkumeul jjikneun studio* (꿈을 찍는 스튜디오, *The Studio that Captures Dreams*).

elements showing wealth and sophistication. The portrait becomes a kind of totem of the yearning for “hwamokhan gajeong (화목한 가정)”, “harmonious family.”

The desire for a “harmonious family” is related to a particular stage of one’s life. When children grow to reach the age of mandatory military service or get married, parents wish to make family portraits before the child leaves their home.¹⁴⁵ Research conducted on family portraits by Kim Mi-Ae shows that mothers expressed the most enthusiasm during the photo shoots of their family portraits. Kim argues that, for the mother of the family, the portrait exhibiting her “harmonious family” celebrates her role as a wise, nurturing mother, which may help her navigate the changes that come with children leaving the home.¹⁴⁶ Figure 3.30, for instance, shows a family consisting of parents, three grown-up daughters, and a son. Three family members sit in the front row and three stand behind them. As in Figure 3.29, the background of the photograph is painted, giving an illusion of a luxuriously decorated house. What is most striking about the photograph is that the mother sits in the center of the photograph. The father sits on an armchair to her left, and to her right sits a daughter. In the second row, the son stands directly behind the mother and the two daughters stand on either side of him. While the father’s position in the armchair may symbolize his familial authority, the mother is the central figure of the “harmonious family.” As Kim contends, the photograph, hung in the living room, may function as a response “to the confused state [both physical and psychological] of the middle-aged mother,”¹⁴⁷ and at the same time provide affirmation of her success as a wife and mother.

¹⁴⁵ Mi-Ae Kim, “Gajoksajine Gwanhan Han Yeongu (가족사진에 관한 한 연구: 사회적·조형적 관점에서 본 1990년대 스튜디오 가족사진, A Study on Photographic Family Portraits)” (MA Thesis, Seoul: Hongik University, 1998), 27.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 28.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 29. “이 시기에 집중된 대형 가족사진은 중년기 여성들의 혼란된 감정을 정리해주는 역할을 한다는 측면에서 하나의 통과의례로 볼 수 있다.”

The dress, pose, composition, and backdrop of recent family portraits show that “harmony,” “luxury,” and “sophistication” are some of the key themes families wish to convey through their portraits. These characteristics suggest in turn that this portrayal is a matter of role-playing, rather than a reflection of reality. Families also choose to make more relaxed and less ornamental family photographic portraits, articulating different aesthetic preferences than those this chapter has so far examined. Figure 3.31 shows a larger family; the older parents and adult children with their spouses are likely gathered for the parents’ anniversary or a 60th or 70th birthday. The dark, painted backdrops seen in Figures 3.31-32 have been replaced by a plain white one that provides a brighter mood. The family members are also dressed much more casually than the previous examples with their coordinated white T-shirts and dark pants. All the family members smile with their teeth showing, something rarely witnessed in the ‘formal’ portraits discussed above. The members are seated closely while forming an elliptical shape that conveys a sense of stability and harmony. However, even these kinds of family portraits made in photography studios are still greatly affected by the photographer’s vision, reflecting their alternative aesthetic and marketing approach. In fact, the studio owner and photographer of Figure 3.31 states that his unique marketing strategy—he also encourages his clients to make family portraits annually on the parents’ anniversary—has helped his studio grow in the competitive market.¹⁴⁸ Thus, while such photographic portraits may appear different, the aesthetic elements of studio portraits are, in general, largely affected by the photographer, who still wishes to portray “harmony” in the family, a traditional value cherished throughout the twentieth century.

¹⁴⁸ Oh, *Kkumeul jjikneun studio* (*꿈을 찍는 스튜디오, The Studio that Captures Dreams*), 184–185.

Seeing the Other Side: ‘Alternative’ Family Portraits by Lee Seon-min and Kim Oksun

The chapter has so far examined the practice of baby and family studio portraits throughout different periods of the twentieth century and more recent days. There are however photographic works that portray the Korean family outside the setting of photography studios, as contemporary Korean artists working in the medium of photography have been exploring the issues of the Korean family that one does not find in idealized portraits. This section discusses the works of two contemporary artists who deal with the ‘real’ scenes and issues related to families in South Korea today.

The photographic practice of taking baby and family portraits has been a cultural ritual since the early twentieth century in Korea. As artifacts, these kinds of pictures illuminate the values, desires, and aspirations of the modern Korean family. These idealized family pictures are however not a mirror reflecting the realities of South Korean families.¹⁴⁹ Lee Seon-min (이선민, b.1968), an artist working in the medium of photography, has photographed the everyday life of numerous families *in situ*. Unlike the idealized ‘exhibition’ of families and babies this chapter has assessed above, Lee’s photographs capture families in their homes while they conduct the most mundane activities, such as eating a meal.

In her series *Yeojaeui Jip* (여자의 집, *Woman’s House*), Lee shows individual families in their houses, titling each work with the name of the woman of the house. For example, *Cheon Sun-ryang’s House* (천순량의 집, 2006) shows a room in which Cheon and her husband are having a meal [Figure 3.32]. The highly detailed photograph exhibits the various items of a household in what appears to be a single room functioning as the living room, bed room, and dining room in one. A portable dining table is placed in the middle of the room with a typical

¹⁴⁹ Marianne Hirsch states “photographs can more easily show us that we wish our family to be, and therefore what, most frequently, it is not.” See Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, 8.

Korean meal of cooked rice and some side dishes. Cheon and her husband sit on the floor by the table (the traditional Korean dining style) as if they are about to start their lunch. They both look at the camera while the husband holds a small glass of alcohol. Furniture and various items are visible behind them. Their TV screen shows what looks like a scene from a movie. Framed calligraphy in Chinese characters and a clock are hung on the wall. A cabinet full of photographs is located behind the husband. Inside the cabinet, old and new photographs of family members, including children and grandchildren, are on display. An old portrait of Cheon and her husband is also on view, exhibiting the passing of time ‘enshrined’ in the cabinet. Through what appears to be a snapshot, Lee has made a portrait that depicts an everyday scene. While studio portraits of families with married children often depict the children who no longer live with the parents, Lee has portrayed the reality of an old couple whose children have long parted from them. It is a completely un-idealized portrait of the family, inviting us to scrutinize their life as it may be grasped from the details of the photograph.

Another photograph by Lee depicts a more special family event. In a photograph of Lee Sun-ja’s family (*Lee Sun-ja’s House*, 이순자의 집, 2004) during an annual ancestral ritual, in which the descendants pay homage to their ancestors who in turn look after them if they are ‘satisfied’ with the descendants’ ‘worship’ [Figure 3.33], three women stand outside the room where the ritual is taking place. Two of them are peeking inside, while a woman sitting on the floor turns her face away from the room. Inside the room, typical dishes for an ancestral ritual are placed on a table, to which a man bows. Other members of the family, including the children, stand by the bowing man. The photograph shows a typical scene of an ancestral ritual. Only men are allowed to conduct and attend the ritual, even though women spend days preparing the special dishes. In contrast to the studio portrait in which the mother is the central figure of the

family [Figure 3.30], Lee's photograph of Lee Sun-ja's family illustrates a familial event where women are excluded from participating, but required to provide their labor for the men. It is uncertain which one of the three women is Lee Sun-ja, but as the three women are equally excluded from participating in the ritual, despite their significant contribution, the name becomes a synonym for "woman" (as the title of Lee's series *Woman's House* encompasses the titles of individual photographs). Lee's work is an honest portrait of a family in which the men and women fulfill their duties in this gendered tradition. While the women of the family have fulfilled their roles as the actual preparer of the event [Figure 3.34], their expressions in both Figure 3.33 and 3.34 show a hint of discontent, exhaustion, and aloofness.

As if conforming to the gendered practice of the nude portraits of male babies expressing the 'superiority' of their gender and gender role, the women in these photographs only play supporting roles in the familial event. In Figure 3.33 the portraits of sons and grandsons hang above the door to the room. Two of the portraits show the babies in the costume of the king of Joseon. These baby portraits are hung where the portraits of the elders or ancestors are traditionally situated. Lee's picture of Lee Sun-ja's home thus illustrates the familial lineage of ancestors, parents, children, and grandchildren—one that connects only the male members of the family. According to the art critic Park Young Taek, the expected role of the mother as family caretaker allows society to degrade the value of her labor: "here, the ideology of family is used to create gendered labor and make women become economically dependent on men."¹⁵⁰ Traditionally, however, it is usually the husband's mother who expresses a preference for male descendants. It would therefore not be surprising if it was Lee Sun-ja herself who hung the portraits of her grandsons on the wall. Lee's "family portrait" of Lee Sun-ja's family thus shows

¹⁵⁰ Young-taek Park, 249.

how the patriarchal ideology of family becomes self-perpetuating through the combined practices of ancestral ritual as well as baby portraits.

The issues of the changing Korean family, including the ‘aged nuclear family’ and gender bias within the family, are the underlying subjects of Lee’s snapshot series. Her photographs focus on ‘typical’ Korean families whose lineages have continued through the bearing of male children. As much as the Korean family tries to maintain a patriarchal lineage, the changes that have been occurring under globalization are significant. The Korean news media, expressing the concerns of the Korean government, argues that the decreasing birth rate is the most critical consequence of the changing life style of today.¹⁵¹ This decrease entails a rise in the number of single adults and in the average age of people getting married (for the first time). Furthermore, the ‘face’ of the Korean family is increasingly not just Korean, as there has been a surge in the number of marriages between Koreans and non-Koreans.

These “international marriages” are a subject for the artist Kim Oksun (김옥선, b.1967). *Candy and Ray* (2002), a photograph in Kim’s series *Happy Together*, depicts a couple in their living room: the woman, Candy, looks directly into the camera while the man, Ray, stands by the corner of the room looking at Candy’s back [Figure 3.35]. As with Lee Seon-min’s photographs, Kim’s work allows the viewer to peer into the domestic, intimate space of this ‘atypical’ family in South Korea. That terms such as *gukje gyeolhon* (국제결혼, international marriage) has become a regularly used one in Korean indicates how marriages between Koreans and non-Koreans have been differentiated from ‘typical’ marriages between Koreans.¹⁵² Nonetheless, the

¹⁵¹ So-yeon Kim, “한국 출산율 1.22 명... 여전히 세계 최저”; O, Ibid.; Nak-Yeon Won, “한국 출산율 193 개국 중 꼴찌,” *Joongang Ilbo*, May 22, 2008,

http://article.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.asp?ctg=12&total_id=3154658 (Accessed August 28, 2011).

¹⁵² Young Taek Park, *Gajokeul Geurida: Geurimsokeuro Deuleon Gajokeui Eolguldel* (가족을 그리다: 그림 속으로 들어온 가족의 얼굴들 *Painting the Family: Faces of the Family in the Painting*), 261–262.

living room of Candy and Ray shows ‘typical’ items found within ‘typical’ families in South Korea: a cabinet displaying bottles of whiskey and Korean wine, a potted orchard, floral-patterned curtains, and a faux ‘exotic’ carpet.

However, in a nation established based upon the legitimacy of *danilminjok* (single-ethnicity), emphasized by the first President Sygman Rhee’s *Ilminjueui* (일민주의, “One People Principle” or “United-citizenism”) as the foundation of the Korean nation in 1948, “international marriages” have been considered a breach of conduct, a threat to national stability.¹⁵³ The attitude toward international marriage in Korean society has therefore been less than generous; personal experience of this bias drives the artist’s examination of it.¹⁵⁴ In *Oksun and Ralf* (2002), the artist and her foreign husband sit in their living room [Figure 3.36]. The lethargic pose and expression of both Oksun and Ralf, as well as the seemingly insignificant items sprawled on the traditional Korean tea-table between them, articulate the mundaneness of the everyday life of a married couple in South Korea. In her artist’s statement, Kim points out that the percentage of international marriages in South Korea among ‘all’ marriages is over 13% as of 2007.¹⁵⁵ Kim’s work was initially conceived as an exploration of her own experiences in an international marriage, which entails numerous issues not usually experienced in a ‘typical’ Korean household, such as visa status and differences in language, customs, and traditions.¹⁵⁶

Kim’s *Happy Together* series looks at marriages between Korean women and non-Korean men. However marriages between Korean men and non-Korean women are equally

¹⁵³ Ou-Byung Chae, “Non-Western Colonial Rule and Its Aftermath: Post-Colonial State Formation in South Korea” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2006), 175–176; Young Taek Park, *Gajokeul Geurida: Geurimsokeuro Deuleon Gajokeui Eolguldel* (가족을 그리다: 그림 속으로 들어온 가족의 얼굴들, *Painting the Family: Faces of the Family in the Painting*), 263.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Oksun Kim and Seung-gon Kim, “Happy Together: Photographer Kim Oksun (해피투게더-사진가 김옥선),” *iPHOS Webzine*, August 27, 2004, http://webzine.iphos.co.kr/webzine/features/features_step03.asp?lrg_no=0&menu=15&ins_no=701 (Accessed June 1, 2011).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

controversial in Korean society. *Gukje gyeolhon*, the term generally used for marriages between Korean women and non-Korean men, is now also used for marriages between Korean men and non-Korean women, mostly South East Asian or ethnic Korean women from China. The number of international marriages between Korean men and non-Korean women began to rise after South Korea re-established diplomatic relations with China in 1992.¹⁵⁷ These marriages particularly concern unmarried men in rural areas where there was a significant “shortage” of eligible women. In the 2000s, *damumhwa* (다문화), which means multi-cultural in Korean, became a commonly used term to refer to relationships between Korean men and South East Asian women.¹⁵⁸

Despite growing opposition to such marriages, an issue entangled with the larger issues of migrant workers, citizenship, and racism, the number of Korean men marrying South Asian women has increased from 1,593 in the 1990s to approximately 19,000, amongst which 10,392 involve marriages between Koreans and Vietnamese between 2000 and 2005.¹⁵⁹ Marriage between Korean men and Korean Chinese women (조선족, *joseonjok*) has similarly increased from 37,171 in the 1990s to 70,163 between 2000 and 2005.¹⁶⁰ With this increase, various social, political, and health issues specific to the *damunhwa gajok* (multicultural family) have surfaced: a series of amendments have been made to the citizenship and legal status of foreign spouses over the past two decades, yet issues of exclusion from social welfare and health programs

¹⁵⁷ Hye-Kyung Lee, “International Marriage and the State in South Korea: Focusing on Governmental Policy,” *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 1 (February 2008): 110–111.

¹⁵⁸ Recently, artists such as Shin Hye-sun (1975-) have photographed the portraits of *damunhwa* families in rural areas.

¹⁵⁹ Hye-Kyung Lee, “International Marriage and the State in South Korea: Focusing on Governmental Policy,” 111.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

persist.¹⁶¹ These are however only several aspects of the issues involving *damunhwa gajok*: among others, abuse and violence against foreign wives and the phenomenon of ‘fake marriages’ (between Korean men and *joseonjok* women, for employment purposes) have become critical.¹⁶²

As discussed, the practice of family and baby portraiture in Korea has reflected the changing values and structure of the family in the twentieth century while also articulating the desire to maintain the patriarchal power structure and the obsession to be part of the ‘proper’, affluent class. With the growing antagonism against the *damunhwa* in South Korea, Shawn Michelle Smith’s study of baby photographs in the nineteenth-century United States offers a comparative perspective. Smith argues that baby pictures came to emblemize race and racial hierarchies in the late nineteenth century U.S.¹⁶³ The social impact of eugenics was hence also the basis of the popularization of baby photographs at the time. The white middle class considered baby photographs as a means to exhibit the “superiority” of the white woman’s biological heritage.¹⁶⁴ According to Smith, “‘baby’s picture’ [became] a kind of racial document invested with sentimental aura in the family photograph album.”¹⁶⁵ As the nude portraits of male babies have shown, baby portraits in Korea have also symbolized superiority. With the surge of *damunhwa* and the anti-*damunhwa* sentiment in Korean society, family and baby portraits may become “a kind of racial document.”

¹⁶¹ Hye-Kyung Lee, “International Marriage and the State in South Korea: Focusing on Governmental Policy,” 112–115; also see, for example, Hyun-sil Kim, “Social Integration and Health Policy Issues for International Marriage Migrant Women in South Korea,” *Public Health Nursing* 27, no. 6 (December 2010): 561-570.

¹⁶² Hye-Kyung Lee, “International Marriage and the State in South Korea: Focusing on Governmental Policy,” 114. Fearing “fake marriages” and human trafficking, Cambodian government temporarily “barred its citizens from marrying South Korean men, after two dozen women were sold into marriage” by brokers in March 2010. See The Associated Press, “Cambodia: Ban on Marriage to South Korean Men,” *New York Times* (New York, March 20, 2010).

¹⁶³ Shawn Michelle Smith, “‘Baby’s Picture is Always Treasured’: Eugenics and the reproduction of whiteness in the family photograph album,” 360.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 361, 363.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 369.

In South Korea, the show windows of photography studios exhibit photographs that most ideally represent their oeuvre. The studios often hang family and baby portraits as well as portraits of famous residents, such as TV personalities or politicians, in the area. The family and baby portraits often show different stages of familial development, such as some with parents and small children and others with grown-up children. [Figure 3.37-38] They are almost always entirely ethnically Korean, unless the sitter is famous. A *damunhwa* family does not appear inside the show window. Thus, as with the eugenic practice of baby portraits in the U.S. in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the portraits reproduce “racial inheritance.”¹⁶⁶

Baby and family portraits of the Korean family from the colonial period to the present day express a complex desire for modernization and economic advancement while upholding patriarchy in the family and the state. These portraits display not only the changes in photographic practices but also the ways in which familial desire has been ‘cultivated’ by the colonial government (via the elites) and later the military government, in order to control the population. Today, photographic portraits of babies and families express the desire to display a “harmonious” and affluent family that resembles the high society of the imagined West, the fantasy of which is performed at *dol* banquets and photography studios. The vernacular practices of baby and family portraiture have shown how such familial desires are closely connected to social and political shifts in the nation-state. This context only heightens the importance of approaches outside the cultural norms, such as those used by artists including Lee Seon-min and Kim Oksun, exploring the realities of the Korean family rarely presented in commercial photographic portraiture. The ‘alternative’ family pictures of Lee and Kim express what is at stake for the contemporary Korean family—the ‘heritage’ of patriarchal lineage, gendered labor, *damunhwa*, and its future in South Korea.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 361, 363.

CHAPTER FOUR

PHOTOGRAPHS OF CIVIC RESISTANCE IN SOUTH KOREA: 1960, 1987, AND 2008

Social movements in South Korea, led mostly by university students from the 1960s through the '80s, acted as seeds of democratization, resulting in dramatic changes in the political system of the nation state and future civil movements. Yet the general public had conflicted responses to these movements. On the one hand, they were viewed as a collective endeavor and a personal sacrifice for the cause of democratization during the military regime; on the other, they were often viewed as pro-communist, and hence pro-North Korean, threats to social stability and the rapid economic development initiated by Park Chung-hee. Ultimately, an element catalyzing general public support for the social movements was a vicarious experience of the events, particularly of its human casualties, through the medium of photography.

Focusing on three of the most significant social movements in South Korea since the Republic's 1948 foundation, this chapter reconsiders their photographic practices. Photographs of these events not only informed the public of relevant 'facts' but also became a battleground upon which the movements' legitimacy and effectiveness were judged by the wider Korean community. In this chapter, I propose that perceptual and experiential changes in South Korean photographic practices have altered the ways in which the public, both the active participants and the non-participating majority of citizens, has experienced social movements since the turn of the twenty-first century. This argument is pursued through a historical and comparative study of the social movements of 1960, 1987, and 2008 in South Korea. To provide background for the history of ideological conflicts and anti-authority movements in South Korea, I introduce photographs of the Yeosun Rebellion by Lee Kyung-mo. Lee's work, the precedent for photographs of social movements to come in the following decades, also reveals the ideological

fissures between different intellectual and political groups in Korea upon the country's independence that are the context of continuing ideological clashes in South Korea. I then discuss historical accounts of the 4.19 Revolution of 1960 and the connection between that revolution and the photograph of a martyred student, Kim Ju-yeol. This in turn leads to a discussion of media-related actions stemming from Park Chung-hee's coup d'état in the following year; during the military junta, all forms of publication, including photography, were censored. Photojournalists nonetheless took pictures of the student and labor movements, which escalated in the mid-1980s. In this section I discuss the state of photojournalism under the military junta's Emergency Measure in the 1960s through 1980 and provide examples of images that needed to wait several years to be published for the first time.

In the next section, I examine the iconic photograph of Lee Han-yeol, another student killed during a protest, and how the photograph came to ignite and represent the June Democratization Movement of 1987, ultimately impacting the political system of South Korea. Rather than simply tracing the history of individual social movements and photographs from these movements, I analyze the public use of iconic photographs of martyred students to establish a historical connection between the 4.19 Revolution of 1960 and the June Democracy Movement of 1987. Examples of iconic photographs from other social movements, namely the Pulitzer-winning photograph of the Kent State Shootings by John Filo and the photograph of dying Hector Pieterse by Sam Nzima at the Soweto Protest in South Africa, are discussed to assess how a photograph can dominate the ways in which an event is received by the public, and affect the lives of the photographer and subjects after its propagation.

The final section examines the changes in the photographic practice of the social movement, from photojournalistic newspaper pieces to digital photographs created by

participants and shared through online social networks. Further, the continued influence of the social movements is discussed in light of the series of massive candlelight vigils held in June 2008 against the policies of the current government. Here, the historical connection between the movements of 1960 and 1987 becomes critical in assessing the specific characteristics of photographs of the 2008 candlelight vigils. I conclude the chapter by discussing the changes in social movements as seen in other societies, comparatively assessing the social effects and changes brought to Korean society as well as to the practice of photography itself.

Photographs of Ideological Conflicts and Civic Resistance from 1945 to 1960

The Korean War changed the methods, subject, and discourse of photography, prompting many photographers who practiced *yesulsajin* (art photography) to move toward “Realism,” as discussed in Chapter Two. Although Korea attained independence in 1945, the country was divided into two and occupied by the United States and the Soviet Union shortly after it was liberated from Japan on August 15. The period between the U.S-Soviet occupation and the Korean War, about five years, was a time of ideological clashes and political conflicts resulting in the deaths of many confused civilians caught between socialist-communist groups and pro-American, anti-communist forces.¹

The Yeosun Rebellion of 1948 was an offshoot of this turmoil, initiated by a group of military officers in the 14th Regiment of the Korean Army and joined by over 2,000 soldiers in the cities of Yeosu and Sunchoen in the Joen-nam Province. The mutinous soldiers in Yeosu and Suncheon garrisoned several other cities in the Joen-nam Province although these were later recaptured by the military forces of Syngman Rhee’s government. The Yeosun Rebellion, led by

¹ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 159, 163.

Lieutenant Kim Ji-hoe and other officers belonging to the Workers Party (남로당) established in 1946, was waged in resistance to the military order to suppress the April 3rd civic rebellion in Jeju Island. That rebellion, commonly called the 4.3 Incident, opposed Syngman Rhee's move to establish the Republic of Korea by excluding the Soviet-occupied regions of the country [Appendix A].² Many former independence activists, such as Kim Gu, also opposed the U.S. occupation of the South, now supported by Rhee, who was originally against it.

The Yeosun Rebellion resulted in the deaths of over 1,200 civilians and 800 soldiers in the cities of the Joen-nam Province, and led to prolonged guerilla warfare between the Rebellion Forces and the military until the Korean War broke out in 1950.³ The photographer Lee Kyung-mo (이경모), an early practitioner of straight photography, experienced first-hand the rising tensions between right-wing and leftist groups in Gwangyang; he took pictures of these uprisings from 1945 onward. Lee's photographs for the series *Yeosunsageon* (여순사건, *Yeosun Rebellion*)⁴ in the cities of Yeosu, Boseong, Damyang, and Gwangyang in October 1948 are important visual documents articulating the political turmoil experienced by civilians of the Honam region [Appendix A].⁵ Lee's photographs, taken between 1945 and 1950, show many of the salient scenes from this social drama: a meeting of village residents on the day of liberation, discussing the future of the nation [Figure 4.1]; the mobilization of armed students in a pro-Rhee youth group [Figure 4.2]; scenes from massacres during and after the Yeosun Rebellion [Figure

² Syngman Rhee, strictly pro-U.S. and anti-communist, became the first president of the Republic of Korea in 1948 following the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945. He had spent many years in the United States, receiving B.A.s from George Washington University and Harvard University, and a Ph.D. from Princeton University.

³ Byeong-jun Jeong, "Introduction" in Kyung-mo Lee, *Manifestations of an Age of Turbulence: Photographs by Lee Kyung-mo* (격동기의 현장-이경모 사진집).

⁴ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 166.

The Yeosun Rebellion is also referred to as Yeosun Incident or Yeosu-Suncheon Incident in English.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 166–167.

4.3]. Lee's pictures were a precedent for the powerful photojournalistic work that instigated critical changes in Korean society in the second half of the century.

Lee Kyung-mo is one of the few photographers who do not fall into the contemporary division between 'socialist' photographers, most of whose members belonged to the Workers Party, and those who desired distance from the communist ideology and practiced *yesulsajin*.⁶ Lee was the director of photography at *Honamshinmun* (호남신문, *Honam Newspaper*), a local newspaper in the Joen-nam Province, from 1946 to 1950.⁷ Some of the photographs taken during the Yeosun Rebellion were published in *Honamshinmun*, and his photographs of the Rebellion are the only known photographs documenting those events.⁸ In one photograph, a row of female students holds bamboo spears at the opening event of a right-wing student organization called *Daedong Cheongneyondan* (대동청년단) in June 1948, four months before the Yeosun Rebellion [Figure 4.2]. Lee's dramatic perspectival angle expresses the intensity of adolescent girls in traditional Korean dress holding weapons called *jukchang* (bamboo spears), with which they were trained to fight against 'socialists'; the imagery indicates the rising tension in the region, and evinces the ideological choices presented even to adolescents at the time. The photograph also captures the irony of the situation, with the forceful stance of the 'militarized' girls contrasting with their 'de-militarized' clothing.

Lee's aesthetic approach, as seen in the composition of Figure 4.2, is less apparent in his photographs of the Yeosun Rebellion [Figures 4.3-4]. Here, Lee does not exhibit a particular style but focuses more on the depiction of casualties. For example, while in Figure 4.3 Lee

⁶ Kyung-mo Lee, *Manifestations of an Age of Turbulence: Photographs by Lee Kyung-mo* (격동기의 현장-이경모 사진집).

⁷ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 150. The newspaper is now called *Gwangju Ilbo*.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

directly faced his subjects, survivors collecting identified corpses in a foliated alley, Figure 4.4 was taken at an angle not solely for an aesthetic purpose but to include the line of bodies ‘displayed’ for identification. As all of his examples indicate, Lee does not focus on a single subject but captures ‘the scene’ instead.⁹ This approach differs from the *Saenghwaljuui* Realist conveyance of virtues such as familial love and humanity, often achieved by focusing tightly on individuals. In contrast to Limb Eung-Sik’s photograph of a war orphan [Figure 2.8], for instance, Lee’s photographs of the Korean War included a scene of a helicopter landing (or ascending) at a site soon to become Panmunjom, a Joint Security Area. This is a much more ‘straight’ approach to the subject, eschewing sentimentalist effects [Figure 4.5].¹⁰ Lee’s oeuvre thus articulates the ways in which photography in South Korea developed through picturing civic resistance (although it was also a mutiny in this case) against the state. Critics such as Jeong Byeong-jun and Park Peyong-jong therefore consider Lee’s work reportage photography rather than *Saenghwaljuui* Realism.¹¹

Over the next decade, the impact of photography in social movements became greater. In July 1953, U.S. and North Korean military personnel gathered at Panmunjom to sign the Korean Armistice Agreement signaling the end of the Korean War. At this point, Rhee was in the fifth year of his presidency. Following the Japanese occupation, Rhee had practiced the political strategy of ‘tolerance’ toward *chinilpa* (“pro-Japanist”) intellectuals and politicians to gain support for the foundation of the Republic of Korea without consent from the political leaders in

⁹ The *Yeosun* Rebellion is considered to have caused a collective trauma in the region of Honam, encompassing the Jeon-buk and Jeon-nam provinces, located in the southwest of South Korea. For historical revisions of the Rebellion see Deuk-jung Kim, “*Bbalgaeng-ee*”eui tansaeng: *Yeosunsageongwa Bangonggukgaeui Hyeongseong* (‘빨갱이’의 탄생: 여순사건과 반공국가의 형성, *The Birth of “Commies”: The Yeosun Rebellion and the Formation of an Anti-Communist Nation*) (Seoul: Seonin, 2009); Jung-seok Seo, “Syngman Rhee and the Yosun-Suncheon Incident (이승만과 여순사건),” *Yeoksabipyong* 86 (Spring 2009): 302-338.

¹⁰ Chapter Two provides in-depth discussions on Limb’s image.

¹¹ Jeong, “Introduction,” *Manifestations of an Age of Turbulence: Photographs by Lee Kyung-mo* (격동기의 현장-이경모 사진집), PAGE to be confirmed; Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Seongujadeul* (한국사진의 선구자들), 167-169.

the North, part of an effort to legitimize the establishment of ‘the half country’ and to secure his office.¹² Under Rhee’s protection, the *chinilpa* groups avoided trials and retained their wealth and political power.¹³ As a result, the new nation state preserved “the repressive state infrastructure inherited from the Japanese, on the one hand, and turned a blind eye to or even encouraged the emergence of a rightist autocracy, on the other.”¹⁴ Consequently, fearing political challenges and the punishment of *chinilpa* officers, officials persecuted the *Banmintekwi* (반민족행위특별조사위원회 [반민특위]), a national committee preparing to prosecute them.¹⁵ *Banmintekwi* members were arrested and accused of being communists.¹⁶ This event is critical in that it marked the beginning of the use of this ideological divide as a political strategy to persecute political opposition and protect the *chinilpa* in power.

By the mid-1950s, sections of the public began to express their discontent with the Rhee government as his anti-communist policies continued to harshly persecute left-leaning intellectuals and their families. Furthermore, some members of the public felt deceived by

¹² Jung-seok Seo, “Chongron: Chinilpaewi yeoksajeok jonjaeyangtaewa geukwubangongdokjae (총론: 친일파의 역사적 존재양태와 극우반공독재, The history of ‘Pro-Japanists’ and Anti-Communism of the Extreme Right),” in *Inmulboneun chinilpa yeoksa* (인물로 보는 친일파 역사, *The History of Pro-Japanists through Individual Activities*) (Seoul: Yeoksabipyongsa, 1993), 10. For a discussion on Rhee’s presidency, see Korean Democracy Foundation, *Hanukminjuwhaundongsa 1* (한국민주화운동사, *1 The History of the Korean Democracy Movement I*) (Paju: Dolbegae, 2008), 55-103.

¹³ Korea Democracy Foundation, 33-34.

¹⁴ Atul Kohli, “The Rhee Interregnum: Saving South Korea for Cohesive Capitalism,” in *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 64.

¹⁵ Jung-seok Seo, “Chongron: Chinilpaewi yeoksajeok jonjaeyangtaewa geukwubangongdokjae (총론: 친일파의 역사적 존재양태와 극우반공독재, The history of ‘Pro-Japanists’ and Anti-Communism of the Extreme Right),” 10–11.

¹⁶ Kim Gu, one of the strongest opponents of Rhee in the 1950 election, was assassinated by Ahn Du-hee, a second-lieutenant of the Korean Army, 20 days after the attack on the *Banmintekwi*. Ahn was freed after the Korean War, and was believed to be protected by the Rhee government. The historians Jeong Byeong-jun and Bang Seong-hee found a document from the National Archives and Records Administration that revealed Ahn was a member of Counterintelligence Corps (presently U.S. Army Counterintelligence Corps Korea Field Office) and the extreme right-wing organization called Baekeuisa (백의사). See Hwa-dong Seo, “Ahn Du-heeuneun mi bangcheopdaeyowon...baekeuisa danjangi amsaljishi (‘안두희는 미 방첩대요원...백의사 단장이 암살 지시’, Ahn Du-hee, a member of Counterintelligence Corps...the President of Baekeuisa ordered the Assassination),” *Hanguk Gyeongje*, September 5, 2001.

Rhee's cooperation with and official promotions of former pro-colonialists turned anti-communists, as Rhee had been a leading figure of the independence movement since the 1910s.¹⁷ Even prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, the crash of the agriculture-based economy initiated a flight to urban areas,¹⁸ a situation only exacerbated by the War; by the end of the War, the unemployment rate had skyrocketed.¹⁹ By the late 1950s, the public knew of numerous incidents of violence incited by mobs hired by Rhee's government against political opposition and civic groups. Public discontent, particularly among students, further increased as Rhee repeatedly made amendments to the Constitution extending his presidency. By 1960, less than seven years after the end of the Korean War and fifteen years since independence, Rhee had served three consecutive terms and hoped to serve another.²⁰

Less than a month before the election, Rhee was guaranteed victory when his only opposition candidate died of an illness. The election was therefore orchestrated by the government to install Lee Gi-bung, a loyalist and political heir of Rhee, as Vice President. On March 15, 1960, the government declared that Rhee and Lee Gi-bung had been elected with 100% and 79% of the vote, respectively.²¹ This was however the result of various fraudulent actions taken by the government: campaigning by the opposition Democratic Party (민주당) was violently disturbed by mobs hired by the leading Liberal Party (자유당). One fourth of the votes were cast before election day, and ballots were cast openly as people were forced to vote in groups of three to five. To further secure the election of the Rhee/Lee team, ballot boxes were

¹⁷ Korea Democracy Foundation, 33-34. The former pro-colonialist continued to serve high-ranking positions: in 1960, 70 % of the highest-ranking officers had been working for Japanese police. See Sung-Joo Han, *The Failure of Democracy in South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 11, as referenced by Kohli, "The Rhee Interregnum: Saving South Korea for Cohesive Capitalism," 66.

¹⁸ Korea Democracy Foundation, 89-103.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

²⁰ The Constitutional Law of South Korea has been amended nine times through the present day. During the Rhee presidency, it was amended four times.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

swapped with fixed boxes brought by the mobs.²² Fed up with such blatantly illegal actions by the government, angry citizens came out into the streets of cities across the country. High school students gathered in various cities, including Cheongju, Daegu, and Busan [Appendix A], protesting in collaboration with junior high school students. In fear of further public expressions of discontent, the Rhee administration ordered schools to close for several days and set a curfew starting at 5 pm.²³

The most violent attack against student protesters occurred on election day in the city of Masan in the southeast of Korea [Appendix A], where hundreds of junior high and high school students marched peacefully in protest at the fraudulent election. Despite the absence of violent actions, the police force fired teargas grenades and guns to break up the march. Eight people were killed, over eighty people seriously injured, and an unknown number went missing in Masan.²⁴ The next day, journalists from Seoul, Busan, and Daegu, as well as from overseas, gathered in Masan to report on the police brutality. Meanwhile, upon learning what had happened in Masan, people gathered in Seoul to protest against the Rhee government. Weeks passed, yet the government continued to suppress and ignore the will of the people.

About a month later, however, a newspaper photograph began to propel further protests across the country. On April 11, a body was found floating in the sea near the Central Pier of Masan by fishermen. The body was of one of the missing students from the Masan march, Kim Ju-yeol, from the city of Namwon. His mother had already spent 20 days searching for him in Masan.²⁵ Kim's mutilated body revealed that a police teargas grenade, still embedded in his face, pierced his brain through his left eye. To conceal Kim's body, the police had tied stones to the

²² Ibid., 104, 113.

²³ Ibid., 115.

²⁴ Ibid., 114-115.

²⁵ Dong-II Ahn, *Saeroun 4.19 (서로운 4.19 New 4.19)* (Goyang: Wisdom Publishing, 2010), 129–130.

ankles and thrown it into the sea off Masan. Heo Jong (허중), a photographer for the *Busan Ilbo* (*부산일보*, *Busan Daily*), was able to photograph Kim's floating body before it was taken out of the water [Figure 4.6]. On April 12, 1960, Heo's photograph of Kim ran on the pages of the *Busan Ilbo* and *Donga Ilbo* (*동아일보*, *Donga Daily*), catalyzing expansive student protests which were joined by professors and the general public in the following weeks.²⁶

While other photographs depict Kim's body after it was taken out of the water [Figure 4.7], the photograph of the floating body was chosen for the news report. The photograph shows an undistinguishable haziness of dark matter surrounding a human figure, of which only the head, shoulders, and arms are recognizable. Kim's head is clearly discernible, the crew-cut hairstyle typical of high school students at the time (and of many still today). Though not clearly recognizable, Kim, as did other high school students, must have worn the high-collared, colonial-style school uniform, which would have had his name embroidered on the left chest.²⁷ The most striking image is Kim's face. His features are entirely unrecognizable except for a blurry, grayish substance protruding from where his eyes should be. Except for his arms, the dark water hides the rest of his body. Heo's photograph, among other photographs of Kim, was chosen for publication because it 'abstracted' the mutilated and bloated corpse to an acceptable degree for publication while nonetheless effectively conveying the violence of the Rhee government in the face of public protest.²⁸ The shocking yet oddly eerie photograph of the upright floating body

²⁶ Heo Jong died on March 22, 2008, and his obituary in news media commemorated him as the photographer who brought forth the 4.19 Revolution. See Il-Gyun Lee, "'Choerutanbakhin Kim Ju Yeol' Segye alryoetdeon Heo Jong ssi Byeolse ('최루탄 박힌 김주열' 세계에 알렸던 허중 씨 별세, Heo Jong, Who Informed the World about Kim Ju Yeol Dies)," *Gyeongnam Dominilbo* (*경남도민일보*), March 23, 2011, <http://www.idomin.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=248275>. (Accessed Oct. 21, 2009). Also see Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (*한국신문사진론*, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 58–59.

²⁷ The colonial-style uniform was commonly worn in South Korea until the mid-1980s.

²⁸ Chang, 58-59. It was reported that Kim's body was 'stolen' from the morgue by the police for several days, hence making it impossible to hold a proper funeral. In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Kim's death and the discovery of his body, Kim Ju-yeol *Chumosauphoe* (김주열 추모사업회), a foundation memorializing Kim Ju-yeol,

indicted the brutality with which the police force not only killed Kim but also abandoned his body.

Heo's photograph generated rage against the police and the corrupt government. Upon the discovery of Kim's body, protests erupted from April 11 to 13 in Masan, but they were dispersed when the police force opened fire. In Seoul, protesters, consisting mostly of university students, gathered for massive demonstrations. A demonstration by Korea University students on April 18, 1960 against the fraudulent election and student murders in Masan was violently attacked by the Anti-Communist Youth Group, a group of gang members hired by the Rhee government. Jeong Beom-tae, a photojournalist working for *Chosun Ilbo* (조선일보, *Chosun Daily*) at the time,²⁹ photographed the streets where Korea University students were shot. In one of the photographs, dead and wounded students lie in the street in front of the Cheonil Department Store [Figure 4.8]. Next to them is a military jeep with a man, most likely a member of the Anti-Communist Youth Group, in the driver's seat. In fear of further attacks by armed forces, passersby did not seek medical attention for the casualties. The photograph was published immediately in *Chosun Ilbo*. The shootings of Korea University students, now witnessed through photographs, provoked a counter-reaction in Seoul the next day, a massive march led by thousands of university students from the Congress Hall to *Gyeongmudae*, the old Office of the President of the Republic of Korea.³⁰ The march was once again broken up by the police, firing

organized a commemorative funerary procession of March 15, 2010 that started in Masan and ended in Namwon, his hometown and burial place. See Won-jun Ahn, "Kim Ju-yeol yeolsa jangrye opshipnyeonmane chirunda (김주열 열사 장례 오십년만에 치른다, Kim Ju-yeol's Funeral After 50 Years)," *Segye Ilbo* (March 11, 2010). <http://media.paran.com/sdiscuss/newsview2.php?dirnews=724582&year=2010&key=hit&link=newshitlist.php> (Accessed March 11, 2010).

²⁹ Jeong Boem-tae became one of the leading figures of *Saenghwaljuui* Realism in the 1960s and '70s. His *Saenghwaljuui* Realist work is discussed in Chapter Two.

³⁰ The Office was moved to the current one, Cheongwadae, in 1961.

directly at students. This protest ended in the massacre of over 125 students;³¹ this day is remembered as the Bloody Tuesday of the Democratic Revolution, more generally referred to as the 4.19 Revolution.

The impact of these photographs catalyzed the public, but alarmed the Rhee government. Therefore, the government prohibited photographs of the 4.19 Revolution from running on the pages of major newspapers. The Martial Law, in effect from April 20, censored reports on the Revolution, but some newspapers, such as *Chosun Ilbo*, filed reports on April 21³² without photographs of the dead and dying students on the streets of Seoul.³³ These pictures were later published by groups such as the 4.19 Revolution Library.

Witnessing casualties among their own students, university professors organized a demonstration on April 25. More than 300 professors from 27 universities joined to respond to the massacre of students on April 19. The professors declared a “national emergency” and called for the impeachment of President Rhee.³⁴ They also protested against the false government accusation that their students were communists and demanded the prosecution of the people involved in the fraudulent election.³⁵ The demonstration was supported by ordinary citizens,³⁶ who began to join the marches in massive numbers. As more and more civilians joined the marches, the Chief Martial Law Administrator, Song Yo-chan (송요찬), ordered the Army to

³¹ For the background, testimonies, and aftereffect of the 4.19 Revolution, see Jeong-nam Kim, *4.19 Hyukmyung (4.19 혁명, The 4.19 Revoltion)* (Seoul: Korean Democracy Foundation, 2004) and *4.19 Hyukmyungsa (4.19 革命史, The History of 4.19 Revolution)*, (Seoul: 4.19 Hyukmyung Ginyumsauphoe [4.19 혁명기념사업회], 2003).

³² See Chosun Daily of April 20, and 21, 1960 on Newsbank Image at <http://image.newsbank.co.kr/imp/news/view.aspx?shotdate=19000101-19601231&type=01&all=4.19+%ud601%uba85&idm=1884206> (Accessed on March 11, 2010).

³³ The protests that followed weeks after the Revolution (and after President Rhee’s impeachment) were more easily documented by press photographers and were allowed to be published in newspapers.

³⁴ Jeong-nam Kim, *4.19 Revolution* (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2003), 90-91. Also see Korea Democracy Foundation, 135-141.

³⁵ Jeong-nam Kim, 92-93.

³⁶ As with the previous chapters, I use the term “ordinary citizens,” “the public,” “the general public,” or “the wider public” to refer to the majority of the Korean people, who were not directly involved in the events discussed in the chapter. The term also excludes military personnel and government officials.

stop firing at the protesters and organized a meeting between student representatives and Rhee.³⁷ Having lost the support of the elite class, military officials such as Song, and the U.S. Embassy, Rhee was pressured by the Congress to step down, which he did on April 26.³⁸ The Vice-President, Chang Myon (장면), took over the government as Prime Minister, and Youn Bo-seon became President, although this was to change shortly.³⁹ The 4.19 Revolution thus brought the first Republic and the era of Rhee and his followers to an end; however, the remnants of ideological clashes remained deeply entrenched in Korean society.

Lee Kyung-mo's photographs of the Yeosun Rebellion are among the rare reportage depicting the political conflicts between independence and the Korean War. The instability in post-war Korean civil society, culminating in the 4.19 Revolution, was sparked by a photograph of a young protestor's corpse. Amid the turmoil of the early nation-building period, photography was therefore not merely a record of civic movement and state reaction but a catalyst for such movements. The indexicality of the photograph became a certificate of police brutality, justifying civic resistance against the state; indeed, many believe that the photograph of Kim Ju-yeol was the single most powerful catalyst for the 4.19 Revolution, rather than news reports detailing the series of protests against the fraudulent election or the death toll.⁴⁰ A similarly powerful photograph did not appear until 27 years after the revolution, as photography, especially photojournalism, entered a "dark period" due to the strict censoring of publications by the military junta. The following section outlines the historical accounts of the military junta and

³⁷ Korea Democracy Foundation, 130, 142. Song was known to have been favored by the U.S. Military Headquarters in Korea, which added more pressure on Rhee. Also see Jeong-nam Kim, 95.

³⁸ Korea Democracy Foundation, 142.

³⁹ The period of two years following the 4.19 Revolution was the only time that the administration employed the parliamentary system, which was headed by a prime minister rather than a president.

⁴⁰ Il-Gyun Lee, "'Choerutanbakhin Kim Ju Yeol' Segyee alryoetdeon Heo Jong ssi Byeolse ('최루탄 박힌 김주열' 세계에 알렸던 허중 씨 별세 Heo Jong, Who Informed the World about Kim Ju Yeol Dies)"; 민병욱, "김주열 열사 범국민장 마산향서 눈물 속 엄수," *경남도민일보*, April 11, 2010, http://www.idomin.com/news/article_View.html?idxno=314543 (Accessed April 11, 2010).

discusses the significance of that period as anticipating a major democratization movement once again catalyzed by a single photograph.

Emergency Measure and Photography under Military Censorship

The 4.19 Revolution that toppled the Rhee administration was eventually subsumed by a military coup on May 16, 1961, led by Lieutenant General Park Chung-hee, who officially became President through an election in 1963. The military rule that began in the midst of civil unrest after the Revolution was to continue for another decade under his loyalists after Park's assassination in 1979. Under the junta, photographers had to submit to strict rules for publication and exhibition.⁴¹ Photographers, particularly photojournalists, had to self-censor their works in order to avoid the notorious KCIA (Korean Central Intelligence Agency) interrogations.⁴²

Park's administration dramatically improved the nation's previously agriculture-based economy. His military regime sought to build a 'modern' nation state compatible with others through export-oriented industrialization. Park, a draconian anti-communist, launched a series of Five-Year Economic Development Plans in January 1962, ironically modeled after those of Chairman Mao, which focused on the urbanization and industrialization of rural areas. A decade of the development of an export-oriented economy resulted in the rise of the annual GDP growth rate from 4.94 % in 1961 to 11.7% in 1968.⁴³

⁴¹ For example, the photographer Choi Min-shik, who photographed slum areas in Busan, was accused of spying by the police on multiple occasions. See Min Shik Choi, *Najeundaero Imhan Sajin: Naeui Insaeng, Naeui Sajin* (낮은 데로 임한 사진: 나의 인생, 나의 사진, *Photographs that Looked to the Low: My Life, My Photography*) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2009), 40.

⁴² Chang states that this is the second period that photojournalists underwent hardships, the first being the period under Japanese colonial rule. Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 58.

⁴³ "GDP Growth annual % statistics - countries compared," *NationMaster*, n.d., http://www.nationmaster.com/red/graph/eco_gdp_gro_ann-economy-gdp-growth-annual&int=-1&id=ks&date=1961.; "GDP Growth annual % statistics - countries compared," *NationMaster*, n.d., http://www.nationmaster.com/red/graph/eco_gdp_gro_ann-economy-gdp-growth-annual&int=-1&id=ks&date=1968

Although Park's modernization efforts were successful, the rapid development was possible only because of the harsh working conditions and extremely low wages of the labor force, underscoring the lack of even the most basic labor laws and guidelines during the 1960s and '70s.⁴⁴ The severe exploitation of both light and heavy industry workers, who were mostly migrants from rural areas, continued in the name of economic advancement. This was compounded by regional antagonism (*jiyeokjueui*); industrial development centered in Seoul and the southeastern region (Youngnam) where Park and his successors were from, and was neglected in other regions, including the Honam region containing the cities of the Yeosu Rebellion. Dissenting voices were suppressed by the military regime, allowing business owners to resist unionization. Anyone critical of the military regime was regarded as a threat to the economic advancement touted as the most important mission for the nation.

To suppress public discontent, the military government imposed censorship on most social, cultural and political outputs. On May 16, 1961, all press materials fell under the Park regime's Martial Law, which issued an edict that controlled the activities of journalists. Article Three of the Martial Law ordered all press, publication, and reports to be censored.⁴⁵ In the 1970s, Emergency Measure Decree No. 1 mandated pre-inspection of articles, reports, editorials, cartoons, and photographs by military officials before they went out to the press.⁴⁶ Most weekly or fortnightly photography magazines and journal publishers had to close down due to this strict censorship.⁴⁷ Photographs of the 4.19 Revolution, such as that of Kim, were therefore too provocative for reproduction in mass media, even though the Park regime also considered the

(Accessed November 18, 2010). The GDP of the Republic of Korea further rose from 2,764 million won in 1970 to 1,023,937 million won in 2008, which is a 370-fold increase.

⁴⁴ For in-depth analysis of early labor movements in Korea, see Jang Jip Choi, *Labor and Authoritarian State: Labor Unions in South Korean Manufacturing Industries, 1961-1980* (Seoul: Korea University Press, 1989).

⁴⁵ Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (*한국신문사진론*, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 58

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

Rhee administration corrupt and incompetent.⁴⁸ For example, the military regime banned the publication of photographs of student protests against the establishment of official diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan in 1965.⁴⁹ The censored newspaper photographs then would run as black, or blank, rectangles in newspapers; these were called “brick photographs (벽돌사진).” The typography of news layouts was fixed in those days, and censorship of already typeset materials meant taking out of the whole type block from the page, leaving the space empty. This was referred to as printing “bricks,” hence the term “brick photograph.”⁵⁰

A later example is the ban on photographs of the May 18 Gwangju Democratic Uprising in 1980, against the military coup of General Chun Doo-hwan, a civic uprising that ended in the massacre of over 200 civilians by the military forces.⁵¹ The Martial-Law troops, specifically trained for riot control, began marching in to Gwangju by the afternoon of the 18th, blocking all major road entrances to the city. The troops began to open fire at protesters as well as passersby; the violent containment of the civic movement lasted until May 27. Photojournalists from other cities went to Gwangju to report on what they initially thought were student demonstrations. As they realized that the situation was becoming a violent seizure of the city by the Martial-Law

⁴⁸ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁹ The event was, however, photographed by the Japanese photographer Kuwabara Shisei, and then printed in various publications. For Kuwabara’s work made in South Korea since 1964, see Shisei Kuwabara, *Chwalyoungeumji: Hanguk-gyeokdongeui 4bansegi (촬영금지: 한국 격동의 4 반세기)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 1990); Kuwabara Shisei, *Kuwabara Shisei: Naegabarabon gyukdongeui Hanguk (구와바라 시세이: 내가 바라본 격동의 한국)* (Seoul: Noonbit, 2008); Shisei Kuwabara, “이웃사촌: 구와바라 시세이,” Blog, *이웃사촌*, July 23, 2008, <http://ho2994.egloos.com/m/3363506> (Accessed May 20, 2010).

⁵⁰ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron (한국신문사진론, Discourses on Korean Press Photography)*, 61.

⁵¹ The Martial Law Command announced that the number of civilian deaths was 144, a number disputed by various political groups and researchers. According to the May 18 Memorial Foundation, 154 deaths and 70 missing persons have officially been recognized by the government. Claims of deaths and missing persons still far outnumber the official counts. See “Statistics on 5.18 (5.18 민중항쟁 > 5.18 역사알기 > 관련현황),” *The May 18 Memorial Foundation*, n.d., <http://www.518.org/main.html?TM18MF=A030106> (Accessed January 26, 2010).

troops, the military regime sent intelligence agents to each newspaper company to censor what was published about the Uprising.⁵²

Shin Bok-jin, a photojournalist based in Gwangju, risked his life to document the Uprising, chronicling the troops' violence from windows in the building where he hid. One photograph shows the troops marching on Geumnam-ro, a major road in downtown Gwangju [Figure 4.9]. On the other side of the road, divided by military vehicles, protesters, captured and stripped by the troops, run with their hands on their heads. Another photograph shows masked people examining the corpses of casualties as they lay in plywood coffins in a large room [Figure 4.10]. Possessing film that could reveal facts about the ten-day massacre placed Shin in great danger; to prevent their confiscation, Shin hid the film in an earthenware pot and buried it.⁵³ Only in June 1988, eight years after the Uprising,⁵⁴ was his photograph published on the front page of the first issue of the *Jeon-nam Ilbo*.⁵⁵

Once Park rose to power, newspaper companies began to reduce the number of reportage photographs reproduced in their papers. For instance, reportage photographs made up only 3.1% of all photographs reproduced in the *Hanguk Ilbo* in 1966, two years after the Decree went into effect, while portraits of individuals comprised 60.3%.⁵⁶ This statistic indicates that the military regime tried to avoid any possible stimulation of public discontent, particularly by controlling photographic images reproduced in newspapers. In 1973, 3.5% of photographs reproduced in the

⁵² Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 66.

⁵³ Bok Jin Shin, *Gwangjueun Malhanda-Eoneu Sajingijagabon 5.18 Hangaenggwa 6wol Hangaeng: Shin Bok Jin Sajinjip* (광주는 말한다-- 어느 사진기자가 본 5.18 항쟁과 6 월 항쟁: 신복진 사진집) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2006), 9–10.

⁵⁴ The Korean term for the Movement is “6 월민주항쟁 (June Resistance for Democracy)” or “6 월 민주화운동 (June Democratization Movement).” I used the English term “June Democracy Movement,” a common English translation, in this dissertation.

⁵⁵ Bok-jin Shin, *Gwangjueun Malhanda* (광주는 말한다, *Gwangju Speaks*) (Seoul: Noonbit, 2006), 10. Shin's photographs were used at the hearings of the Gwangju Democratic Uprising, and as evidence of false testimony by military and government officials related to the massacre.

⁵⁶ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 144.

Dong-a Ilbo were reportage, whereas portrait and stock photographs comprised 55.6 % and 14.7 %, respectively.⁵⁷ In general, censorship of news photographs resulted in an increase of portrait photographs as well as of photographs depicting sporting events and leisure activities. By 1996, the third year of the civilian government, reportage photographs made up 55.5 % of all photographs published in the *Hanguk Ilbo*.⁵⁸

The infiltration of anti-communist ideology into every aspect of Korean life—extending to the mandatory military drills at high schools—allowed the military regime to practice such sweeping censorship.⁵⁹ Antithetical to the Cultural Revolution of China, yet equally violent and oppressive, the Emergency Measure reigned over freedom of speech. College students were frequent subjects of random search by undercover police. Carrying a book that hinted at Marxism would jeopardize not only one’s life but also that of immediate and extended family members, and continuous state interrogation and condemnation of the whole family as ‘ideologically impure.’ The military government thus used the motto of economic advancement and anti-communist ideology and ‘intolerance’ to control the populace and punish those individuals or groups that opposed them, echoing the political tactics of the Rhee administration.

The general public experienced considerable difficulty situating themselves in the political arenas after the Korean War and the coup d’état that followed the 4.19 Revolution. Korean society at the time was experiencing “compressed modernization,” a grueling process for the working class but an impressively lucrative period for corporations and the newly forming upper-middle class. Such changes materialized simultaneously with the conflicts of the Cold War

⁵⁷ Ibid., 145.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 144.

⁵⁹ Gyoryeon (교련), military drills, was a subject taught in high school since the 1950s and became a mandatory subject in 1969, focusing on pre-military exercises for male students and emergency medical treatment for female students. This ‘subject’ was slowly eliminated from the curriculum in the late 1990s and is expected to be renamed “Safety Education (생활안전)” as an elective in the new curriculum of 2012. See “고등학교 ‘교련’ 역사속으로,” *The Hankeoreh* (Jan. 28. 2007), <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/schooling/186952.html> (Accessed Mar. 6, 2010).

in the form of frequent terror attacks and threats by North Korea, which helped the military regime to legitimize intolerance toward non-conformist political leaders and intellectuals. Therefore, the public tended to organize around regional interests rather than class-based politics. For fear of being labeled “*bbalgaengee*,” euphemistically translated as “commies,” many subscribed to extreme right-wing politics, less concerned with the ruling party’s political agenda than with developments in their own regions.

Many regional developments were therefore not just economic but political products of the military regime.⁶⁰ Unbalanced industrialization and land development contributed to rising regional antagonism between the Youngnam (southeast) and Honam (southwest) regions—a situation which remains at the heart of major political debates in South Korea.⁶¹ The numbing effect of rapid industrialization and urbanization resulted in geographically, ideologically, and economically split identities among Koreans.⁶² This ‘splitness’ went beyond North and South, communism and democracy:⁶³ the conflict in Korean postcolonial politics was a direct result of the lack of any ‘recovery period’ from Japanese colonial rule. Without resolving various problems created by the fall of Joseon and the colonial occupation, the South Korean nation state strove toward the goal of industrialization and economic advancement envisioned by Park.

⁶⁰ These productions focused on intensive urbanization and a real-estate boom in the 1970s and '80s.

⁶¹ The three military presidents, Park Jung-hee, Chun Doo-hwan, and Roh Tae-woo were all from the Youngnam region. A strong regional and political alliance was established during the Park era; one of the strongest alliances is called the TK Line, an acronym for a political lineage and network formed by politicians from Taegu (now Romanized as Daegu) in Kyungsang (Gyungsang) region.

⁶² For a discussion on the ideology of development, see Immanuel Wallerstein, “After Developmentalism and Globalization, What?” *Social Forces* 83, no. 3 (Mar 2005): 1263-1278. Referenced in Byung Doo Choi, “Shinjayujueewa gongganwhangyung jeongchaekui byunwha (신자유주의와 공간환경정책의 변화 Neloliberalism and Changes in Spatio-Environmental Policy),” in *Hanguk Minjujuuiui Hyunshilgwa Dojeon (한국민주주의의 현실과 도전, Reality and Challenge of Korean Democracy)*, edited by Minjuwhaundong ginyum saupshoe. (Paju: Hanhulbooks, 2007), 155.

⁶³ For a further discussion of the conceptualization of the colonial structure that continued through the junta, see Ou-Byung Chae, “Non-Western Colonial Rule and Its Aftermath: Postcolonial State Formation in South Korea” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2006), 12. Chae argues “a triadic colonial structure constituted by the colonizer, the colonized, and ‘the West’” existed in Korea.

To suppress the expressions of people dealing with such complex issues during the nation-building period, censorship was a useful, and necessary, tool for the military regime.⁶⁴ It was also a major obstacle to the publication of illustrated news magazines along the lines of *Time* or *Life* in the U.S. during the almost three decades of the military regime.⁶⁵ This absence of illustrated magazines contributed to the broad absence of discourse on documentary photography during the period. As examined in Chapter Two, photographers during this period identified their approach with Realism rather than documentary, as did critics and historians. As the photography historian Park Pyeong Jong argues, the works of *Saengwhaljuui* Realists tended to focus on trivial activities, familial relations, and children,⁶⁶ partly to avoid agitating the military regime with representations of obviously negative aspects of Korean society. The absence of widely disseminated photographic images of socially negative issues, including military and police brutality against civilians, from the 1960s through the '80s, is crucial to understanding the shock such images carried for the general public when they finally viewed such photographs—including the iconic image of another martyred student activist, the fallout from which dramatically affected the June Democracy Movement of 1987.

The Photograph of Lee Han-yeol and its Iconicity

The various censorial measurements adopted by the Park regime placed journalists in a difficult situation. If an article appeared to be reporting something the regime did not want the public to know, the editor along with the writer of the article were brought to the KCIA offices

⁶⁴ The state repression is, however, also argued to have helped various protest groups form alliances for future democracy movements, the result of a “dialectical interplay between authoritarian regimes and social movements.” See Paul Y. Chang, “Unintended Consequences of Repression: Alliance Formation in South Korea’s Democracy Movement (1970-1979),” *Social Forces* 87, no. 2 (December 2008): 651-677.

⁶⁵ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 60.

⁶⁶ Pyeong Jong Park, *Hanguk Sajineui Jasaengryeok* (한국사진의 자생력), 13-15.

for interrogations. At the same time, the public was becoming increasingly critical of newspaper companies and journalists for being incompetent. As a result, despite various efforts by journalists to pursue their occupation, many left the field; for example, 134 journalists were forced out of their jobs after participating in a series of protests against censorship in 1975.⁶⁷

Chun Doo-hwan, the successor to Park and the figure responsible for the massacre at Gwangju in 1980, continued to enforce censorship on all types of publications, particularly photography. As discussed, reproduction of photographs of the Gwangju Democratic Uprising was banned nation-wide, except for those depicting violent actions on the part of the protesters; thus available public imagery cast the event as an unruly riot by citizens of Gwangju against the rest of the nation.⁶⁸ Eventually, however, cracks began to emerge in the façade created by official censorship. Chang Chung-Jong, a veteran photojournalist in South Korea, argues that the Chun regime believed it could distract the public, journalists, and overseas press from their oppression of democracy movements through a major positive international event.⁶⁹ Beginning with the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, the government, media, and soon the public began to consider sporting events as opportunities to display the nation's advancement in the global arena. However, these events were unable to mask discontent in universities and workplaces against the Chun regime. By the mid-1980s, students were frustrated by the opposition leaders, namely Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, for their failure to actively promote direct presidential elections. A number of these students reacted violently at a political gathering in Incheon in May 1986, leading to more organized, continuous student protests in the next twelve months. Therefore,

⁶⁷ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (*한국신문사진론*, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 62.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 66. Most of the Gwangju photographs were only reproduced after the June Democratic Movement of 1987. The 5.18 Gwangju Democratic Uprising, the official term for the protest and the killings, had been called the Gwangju Satae (Gwangju Incident) for many years, obfuscating the nature of the event.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 68–69.

although photojournalism remained heavily censored, if not self-censored, student and labor movements expanded and snowballed into widespread civil democratization movements.

The turning point for the democratization movement came with the deaths of two university students. In January 1987, a Seoul National University student, Park Jong-cheol, was killed during an interrogation in the notorious *daegongbunsil*, “interrogation room,” at the National Police Agency. Park drowned during “water torture,” although police claimed that he died of shock after an interrogator hit a desk.⁷⁰ Students, professors, and many others gathered for a massive memorial at Seoul National University, which led to a series of rallies on the major streets of Seoul. Encouraged by this united effort by the public, journalists declared a new “freedom of the press.”⁷¹ From then on, according to Chang, more photojournalists began to breach the restrictions on press materials delineated by the military government. They attended student protests, the sites of violent exchanges with the police of teargas grenades and Molotov cocktails.⁷² Nevertheless, these photographs were still not published in most newspapers and journals.

On June 10, 1987, however, *Joongang Ilbo* (*Joongang Daily*) reproduced a photograph in their *sahoemyeon*, the Society Section, which would change not only media censorship but also the fate of the military regime and Korean society as a whole. The photograph of a student protester, Lee Han-yeol, was taken by the photojournalist Chung Tae-won, Reuters’s director of photography for the Korea office at the time.⁷³ The image shows two young college students in front of a demonstration on the afternoon of June 9, 1987 [Figure 4.11]. A masked student, Lee

⁷⁰ Seong-ho Shin, “Geyongchale Josabatdeon daehaksaeng shocksa (경찰에서 조사 받던 대학생 ‘쇼크死’, A Student Dies of ‘Shock’ during a Police Interrogation),” *Joongang Ilbo*, January 15, 1987, sec. Sahoemyeon.

⁷¹ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 70.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Young-Sik Kim, “Seulpumeul ditgoston jakgaeui naeumhan shiseon (슬픔을 딛고선 작가의 냉엄한 시선),” *Wolgan sajin* (월간사진) (June, 2007).

Jong-chang, holds Lee Han-yeol, who is collapsing after being hit by a teargas grenade in the side of his head.⁷⁴ This photograph, showing blood dripping from Lee Han-yeol's head, was supposedly too "graphic" to be published in the newspaper; more importantly, the photograph of such violence against students was clearly going to generate anger against the military regime and more sympathy for the students. Publishing the photograph meant that the director of photography at the *Joogang Daily*, Lee Chang-seong, was risking his life, as persecution, often in the form of torture, was a common practice of the National Police Agency as well as of the Agency for National Security Planning (former KCIA).

As Chung and Lee Chang-seong expected, the photograph ignited a series of massive civic protests thereafter, throughout the month of June. The photograph of Lee Han-yeol united students, religious leaders, intellectuals, and the general public for the sake of bringing democracy to South Korea. The day after the photograph's publication, both students and other citizens took to the streets to protest Chun's military regime. Thousands of middle-class white collar workers, the "tie troopers," joined demonstrations that lasted 19 days [Figures 4.12-13]. Criticism from the international community of the government's violent suppression of student and labor movements also pressured the military regime to concede to public demands in fear of jeopardizing preparations for the 1988 summer Olympic Games to be hosted in Seoul. Ultimately, the head of the ruling Democratic Justice Party, Roh Tae Woo, a former Army General, announced on June 29, 1987, that the presidential election to be held the next year would be a direct election guaranteeing individual electoral rights.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Roh promised to release

⁷⁴ The teargas grenade penetrated Lee's skull, putting him in a coma until his death on July 5.

⁷⁵ The two candidates from the oppositional parties, Kim Young Sam and Kim Daejung, failed to agree upon who would be the unifying candidate against Roh Tae Woo. As a result, despite the 'success' of the June Democracy Movement, Roh won the direct election in December, 1987.

Kim Dae-jung, the democracy activist (and future President, from 1998-2003) who was serving a life sentence. Finally, Roh announced an end to censorship of the press.⁷⁶

The photograph of Lee Han-yeol collapsing quickly came to be regarded as an icon of individual and collective sacrifice for democracy, an image summoning the tumultuous era of the Korean civic struggle against militarism. As Heo Jong's photograph of Kim Ju-yeol is held as the signal image igniting the 4.19 Revolution,⁷⁷ the photograph of Lee Han-yeol is now one of the most critical pieces of photojournalism in the last quarter of the twentieth century.⁷⁸ The photograph revealed the breach of civilian protection, the metaphorical wounding of a collective body. Following its publication, the photograph was reproduced on large banners student activists hung on the façade of campus buildings [Figure 4.14]. It was also reproduced on handkerchiefs and scarves used by student activists and distributed to the general public.⁷⁹ The power of this image therefore resides in how it engendered tremendous empathy from ordinary citizens, the participation of whom restrained the Chun regime from declaring martial law and bringing troops to the streets of Seoul.⁸⁰

While the power of the Lee's image is significant in generating an unprecedented participation of public involvement in civil movements, historians of modern Korean history, journalists, and critics have mostly overlooked how the photograph was able to bring forth the collective power of the people.⁸¹ There in fact exist numerous other images of student protests,

⁷⁶ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 71.

⁷⁷ Il-Gyun Lee, "'Choerutanbakhin Kim Ju Yeol' Segye alryoetdeon Heo Jong ssi Byeolse ('최루탄 박힌 김주열' 세계에 알렸던 허종 씨 별세, Heo Jong, Who Informed the World about Kim Ju Yeol Dies)."

⁷⁸ Young-shik Kim, "Seulpeumeul ditgo seon sajingaeui naengeomhan shiseon (슬픔을 딛고 선 사진기자의 냉엄한 시선, The Stern Gaze of the Photographer Who Overcame Sorrow)," *Wolgan Sajin* (*Monthly Photography*), June 2007, http://www.monthlyphoto.com/webzine/st-jr_pt_view.asp?m_seq=15&s_seq=34&page= (Accessed February 6, 2008).

⁷⁹ Chung-Jong Chang, *Hangukshinmunshajinron* (한국신문사진론, *Discourses on Korean Press Photography*), 71.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ The photograph of Lee has not been discussed in a strictly art historical context, or even in the history of photography, but rather in the context of the history of photojournalism and democracy movements in South Korea.

including some of Lee Han-yeol from both before [Figure 4.15] and after [Figure 4.16] he was hit by the teargas grenade. The choice of the image of Lee Han-yeol collapsing in the arms of Lee Jong-chang by Chung, by the photography department, and by the public to symbolize the June Democracy Movement, was therefore a deliberate selection from many options.

Assessing what makes an iconic photograph and what it means to have an iconic photograph attached to a social cause allows for an understanding of the values and ethos of the public who embrace it. First, the term “iconic image” should be defined. According to communications studies scholars Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, photojournalistic icons are images that appear “in print, electronic, or digital media that are widely recognized and remembered, [and] understood to be representations of historically significant events, activate strong emotional identification or response and are reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics.”⁸² What is depicted in the photograph should clearly be understood by the viewer as a specific event that they are familiar with; most important in this definition is the image’s ability to “activate strong emotional identification or response.” Lee Han-yeol’s photograph activated enormously powerful emotional identification on the part of the public, as well as a response that spread nationwide. The image quickly became a call for collective obligation,⁸³ a patriotic value particularly honored in Korean society since the independence movement. Lee Han-yeol’s photograph had also been reproduced in the form of woodcut prints, such as those created by the *Minjung* artist Choi Byeong-su also for reproduction on activist banners,⁸⁴ as part of the *Minjungmisul* (민중미술, people’s art) movement [Figure 4.17].⁸⁵

⁸² Robert Hariman and John Luis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 27.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ A more recent Western example that turned into posters and flags is the photograph depicting the protester Carlo Giuliani demonstrating against the G8 Summit in Genoa taken by Dylan Martinez on July 20, 2001. The photograph shows Giuliani lying dead by a pool of blood on an asphalt street. Similar to the photographs of Kim and Lee, the

Other photographs of students killed in social protest provide a comparative angle on the transnationality of such imagery. The best-known example in the U.S. is John Filo's Pulitzer-winning photograph of the Kent State shootings [Figure 4.18]. On April 30, 1970, President Nixon, breaking campaign promises of U.S. withdrawal from conflicts in southeast Asia, announced the military's invasion of Cambodia. The move led to a resurgence of student anti-war protests. At Kent State University, students burned down the campus ROTC building, prompting Ohio governor James Rhodes to call the National Guard to the campus. On May 4, 1970, the Ohio National Guard fired gun shots at student protestors and bystanders, killing four and wounding nine.

Filo, a Kent State student of photojournalism at the time, took pictures at the scene that include the iconic image of the fourteen-year-old runaway Mary Ann Vecchio, who attended the protest, crying over the body of Kent State student Jeffery Glenn Miller, who died instantly after being shot through the mouth. Confused students walk by or turn to look at what happened. As with the photographs of Kim Ju-yeol and Lee Han-yeol, Filo's photograph of the Kent State shootings ran on the front page of many newspapers on May 5, including the *New York Times* [Figure 4.19]. On May 6, students at 115 colleges across the U.S. went on strike against the shootings at Kent State and the continued violence in South East Asia that prompted the initial Kent State protests.⁸⁶ While photographs such as that of General Loan executing a Vietcong

photograph of Giuliani was published the next day on the front page of newspapers, becoming an iconic photograph of the anti-capitalist movements in Europe at the turn of the millennium: those newspapers include the British newspapers the *Guardian*, *The Times*, the Spanish *El País*, *El Mundo*, the French *Libération*, the Greek *E. Kathimerini*, and the Italian *La Stampa*. On the photograph of Giuliani, see Antigoni Memou, "'When It Bleeds, It Leeds': Death and Press Photography in the Anti-Capitalist Protests in Genoa 201," *Third Text* 24, no. 3 (May 2010): 341-351.

⁸⁵ For a further discussion on the Minjung movement, see Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

⁸⁶ Vicki Goldberg, "Photography View: In a Rifle's Flash, a Lasting Icon of a Nation's Pain," *New York Times*, sec.2 (April, 30, 1995).

suspect, taken by Eddie Adams [Figure 2.6], albeit contrasting reception,⁸⁷ and Ron Haeberle's images of the My Lai massacre [Figure 4.20], influenced U.S. anti-war sentiment in the late 1960s and early '70s, Filo's photograph was visual proof that "the war came home."⁸⁸

Comparable to Rhee's closing of schools after the photograph by Heo Jong ran on the front page of newspapers on April 10, 1960, Ronald Reagan, then Governor of California, ordered the California state college system to close until May 11.⁸⁹ Retrospectively, the Kent State shootings foretold the internal turmoil of the U.S. in the 1970's, from anti-Vietnam War sentiment to race riots in Watts in August 1965 and Detroit in 1967, from the Watergate scandal and subsequent resignation of President Nixon, to New York City's declaration of bankruptcy.

Although Filo's photograph catalyzed a series of protests across the nation, it also reflected the conflicted views of the populace on student protests against the Vietnam War and other U.S. military engagements in Southeast Asia. "Newsweek published a poll asking who was primarily responsible for the student deaths. Eleven percent said the National Guard; 58 percent said the students."⁹⁰ In an interview published in *Life* magazine in 1995, Vecchio stated that, having been brought back to her parents' home by the FBI after her father recognized her in the photograph, she received much hate mail that condemned her as a radical and Communist who should have been shot as well.⁹¹ In part, such opinions of the anti-war movement were part of the "Red Scare" mentality prevalent in the U.S. throughout the Cold War. In addition, they reflected the growing consciousness of class and race divisions due to tremendous disparities based on both skin color and economic status, dividing those who were able to avoid the draft from those

⁸⁷ Adams and Buell, *Eddie Adams: Vietnam*, 144-147; Vicki Goldberg, *The Power of Photography: How Photographs Changed Our Lives* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 226-229.

⁸⁸ Goldberg, "Photography View: In a Rifle's Flash, a Lasting Icon of a Nation's Pain."

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Joe McNally and Janet Mason, "Caught in Time," *Life* 18, no. 5 (May 1995): 39.

who were sent to fight in Southeast Asia. These ideologically conflicted public opinions, applied to active student protests, are very similar to the context of the student protests in South Korea and elsewhere around the world.

One crucial difference between Filo's Kent State photograph and that of Lee Han-yeol by Chung Tae-won is the effect created by the exact moment captured. Filo's photograph depicts death through someone else's recognition of it as a past action. Chung's photograph, by seemingly capturing the action of death in process through the imagery of collapse, produces a sense of slow-motion, "as-you-watch" horror in the viewer. The death at Kent State was confirmed by Vecchio's 'silent' scream, echoing the shock felt by the public at seeing such a death. Lee's collapse, on the other hand, defers death; the visual shock comes from the violence itself, not the result of that violence. Through the photograph, Lee is caught forever in the limbo of unconsciousness as he falls into the arms of Kim. The teargas grenade which penetrated Lee's skull resulted in a month-long coma, until he died on July 5. The photograph reflects that limbo between life and death: Lee has not yet fallen or closed his eyes completely, blood dripping from his head but not yet flowing on the ground.

The photograph "suspend[s] its subjects, and ourselves, somewhere between life and death, thereby offering a permanent deferral of the otherwise fatal onset of passing time."⁹² Lee's limbo signified in the photograph therefore continued to echo the unstable state of democracy in South Korea over later decades, and has come to symbolize the spirit of the continuing democracy movement for younger generations. A woodcut reproduction of Lee's photograph has been used during pro-democracy student rallies to remember not just the state-sponsored violence but also the sacrifice made by activists since the foundation of the Republic of Korea. The iconic image of Lee continued to commemorate and propagandize the efforts of student

⁹² Batchen, "Life and Death," 108.

activism. A stylized painting of the photograph has been reproduced on banners, as has a painting by Choi Byeong-su of Lee's ID portrait—which was also used at his funeral. These works based on the photographic image are used depending on the nature of events and where the users wish to place more emphasis—either to acknowledge the decades of student democracy movements that culminated in June 1987 or to commemorate Lee's death.

The continued struggle for democracy in South Korea symbolized by Lee cannot yet close its eyes and die, despite the guarantee of direct presidential elections and promises of continued economic advancement. Indeed, as the election went to the incumbent party leader and Chun successor Roh, due to a vote split between two opposing candidates, student and labor movements continued to agitate through the early 1990s.

The notion of deferred death is potentially comparable to a number of Christian iconic images, in particular those of Christ dying on the cross and the Pietá. Lee's falling body resembles that of the dead Christ being carried by two men in *The Entombment of Christ* (1602-1603) painted by Caravaggio [Figure 4.21]. For viewers familiar with this religious narrative, the photograph may conjure up the life of the sacrificed Christ. While that narrative has the murdered man resurrected on the third day following his entombment, Lee's death resulted in political reformation officially ending the military regime. Although former-General Roh became President, he attained office through a vote rather than military politics. Likewise, the imagery of Lee Han-yeol in the arms of Lee Jong-chang recalls Michelangelo's Pietá in the Basilica of San Pietro for people exposed to such religious iconography—in other words, to Christians and those in predominantly Christian societies.⁹³

⁹³ The comparison was made by an American art historian attending the 2010 CAA Annual Conference in Chicago on February 12, 2010.

Although Protestantism has spread vastly throughout South Korea over the course of the late twentieth century, such visual comparisons were not made directly by critics writing on the photographs. Rather, the general public read into the image the national civic struggle of the previous century against colonialism, occupation, war, and military oppression. According to the National Statistical Information Service of South Korea in 2005, 53.1 % of the overall population is religious. Over 34 % of this religious population is Protestant Christian, 20.6 % Catholic, and 43 % is traditional Buddhist.⁹⁴ The Protestant influence has been conspicuous in South Korea since the Korean War. However, when Lee Han-yeol died on July 5, 1987, the public funerary procession of Lee was followed by a shamanic ritual (위령제) intended to nurture his spirit before it embarked on a journey to *jeoseung* (저승), the world that exists for the dead on the other side of this world [Figures 4.22-23]. The shamanistic ritual was closely associated with the *Minjung* Movement (People's Movement), a politico-cultural movement that celebrated "the people," "the commons," or "the multitude," to use Antonito Negri's term. Therefore, comparing the Lee photograph to Christian iconography risks depoliticizing and decontextualizing the image from the history of the democratization movement in South Korea, and the history of the image itself. Superimposing an over-generalized religious icon onto Lee's image, that of an unfamiliar "Other" for Western viewers, results in superficial pictorial adherence rather than historical contextualization. Furthermore, the artworks made from the photograph of Lee employ the aesthetics of *Minjungmisul*. The black and white woodcut print of Lee's photograph emphasizes the raw and rough qualities of the medium, popular among adherents of *Minjungmisul* for its "humble" qualities and stylized aesthetics.

⁹⁴ "국가통계포털 (Korea Statistical Information Service)", n.d., <http://kosis.kr/nsp/index/index.jsp> (February 25, 2010).

The photographs of Kim Ju-yeol, Lee Han-yeol, and Jeffrey Miller have shown the power of photographs that depict the deaths of student activists to evoke dramatic reactions from citizens empathizing with those activists, even as the historical significance and the afterlife of the photographs differ. A similar example offering a specific historical significance comes from South Africa. The photograph of Lee Han-yeol illustrates the brutality of the military regime. A photograph of Hector Pieterse, who was gunned down by police during a protest in Soweto, a township on the outskirts of Johannesburg, in South Africa, summons the whole of the racial violence practiced by the colonial regime and the civic resistance of the Apartheid years. The photograph was taken by Sam Nzima in Soweto on June 16, 1976, and was published in the newspaper *The World* [Figures 4.24-25].

The photograph shows the 12 year-old victim carried by Mbuyisa Makhubu, alongside Pieterse's sister Antoinette Sitole. Her mouth is wide open as she runs towards the camera in an outcry of shock and devastation. The photograph ran on the front page of *The World* and in British newspapers the next day, resulting in international outrage against the Apartheid regime. Unfortunately, there was also tremendous backlash against Nzima, who for the following two decades had to suffer police harassment and fear of persecution.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, he recovered the rights to the photograph in 1998, shortly after the African National Council Party leader Nelson Mandela became President of South Africa. In 2002, the Hector Pieterse Museum opened two blocks away from where he was shot in Soweto. June 16, the day of the Soweto Protest and Pieterse's death, is commemorated as National Youth Day in South Africa.

On August 23, 2006, the photograph of Pieterse became part of another significant moment, this one in reference to American politics, when then-Senator of Illinois Barack Obama

⁹⁵ Jerome Cartillier, "How one photograph changed the world," *Mail & Guardian*, June 15, 2006.

was photographed visiting the Hector Pieterse Museum in Soweto.⁹⁶ En route to visit his paternal grandmother in Kenya, Senator Obama, the only black member of the Congress at the time and one of the most prominent Black political figures in the U.S. after only two years in national office, visited the Museum to pay his tribute to the sacrifice of Pieterse and other protesters. With his arm around Antoinette Sitole, Obama stands in front of the enlarged black-and-white photograph of Pieterse, calling the photograph one which changed “the destiny of South Africa” [Figure 4.26].⁹⁷ The press photograph of Obama with Sitole creates a palimpsest of the racial politics across centuries and continents. What this event signified for many of the viewers was the hope created by a young, competent, and articulate politician who identifies himself as a descendent of Africa, both invoking and bringing a new dimension to the memory of worldwide struggles by blacks for justice, freedom, and equality.

The photograph of Obama and Sitole in front of the photograph of a dying Pieterse transforms the trauma of systematic racial oppression in South Africa into hope for the empowerment of the oppressed on a global level.⁹⁸ Looking at the photograph retrospectively, after Barack Obama was elected the first black president of the U.S. in 2008, that hope seems partially justified. Yet the history of racial struggles in South Africa and the U.S., and around the world, is far from over. For all the promise captured in the photograph, South Africa has a staggering rate of HIV/AIDS infection and mortality,⁹⁹ while racially-tinged criticism accompanies Obama’s move in the Presidency. The photograph of Pieterse, although comparable to Lee’s photograph, therefore gains another distinct layer of meaning for the history of civic resistance against racist politics. Hence, although the photographs of Lee, Miller, and

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “South Africa - Statistics,” *UNICEF*, n.d., http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southafrica_statistics.html#76 (Accessed September 2, 2011).

Pieterse have become national icons of civic resistance against state injustice, their significances and meanings are unique to their specific political and cultural histories, then and now.

Most of the photographs of democratization and labor movements, however, did not become icons like Lee Han-yeol's. In South Korea, two books on the photographs of workers' movements were published in 1989 and 1991, a few years after the June Democracy Movement, by *Sahoesajinyeonguso* (사회사진연구소, The Research Institute of Social Photography). The photographers were part of the generation of intellectuals that worked closely with workers, many of them leaving universities and 'infiltrating' factories to gain first-hand experience, examine the work environment, and help workers unionize.¹⁰⁰ Although the photography books *Nodongja, Gangchoelgwa Nunmuleuibit* (노동자, 강철과 눈물의 빛, *Workers, The Light of Steel and Tears*, 1989) and *Daphara, Jeonsegyenodonja* (답하라, 전세계 노동자, *Response, The Workers of the World*, 1991) document the everyday struggle of workers in heavy industry factories and the protests they organized with labor activists [Figures 4.27-28], the books did not receive much attention from the wider public, especially in comparison with the attention the photographs of Kim and Lee received.¹⁰¹ Despite the greater volume and the variety of subjects of the books, they remain functionally rare and esoteric publications of workers' photography.

Such modest public response to the photography books has several causes. First, the photographs published in the books did not circulate in mass media, whereas the photographs of Kim and Lee were reproduced in various different publications immediately after they were taken. While a photograph needs to be widely recognized and accepted as a representation of

¹⁰⁰ Gyeong-mal Baek, "Hwajetambang: Camerae heemangeul damseumnida-Sahoesajinyeongusoreulchataseo (화제탐방: 카메라에 희망을 담습니다-<사회사진연구소>를 찾아서)," *Tongilhanguk* 100 (1992): 104-105.

¹⁰¹ I thank Shin Chunghoon for introducing the work of Sahoesajinyeonguso to me.

historically significant event to become iconic, the books' photographs depict the labor movements that followed the June Democracy Movement by a few years, receiving less attention from the general public as the heat of the 1987 movement had subsided. As if to signify the futility of the labor movement's attempts to sustain the progressive triumph of the June Democracy, the photographs in the books were not reproduced in news journals, either individually or in groups. The photographs were therefore not "reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics," a criterion of an iconic image suggested by Hariman and Lucaites.¹⁰² Furthermore, the photographers tried to emphasize the dignity of the workers by focusing on individual labor and eschewing representations of their suffering [Figures 4.29-30]. Hence, unlike the photographs that became icons during the era of civic resistance, the photographs of workers hold less shock and empathy value. Format was also a problem, as the book's structure made it difficult for the viewer to construct a coherent story out of the photographs of the various workers' groups and individuals. The similarity of many of the photographs prevented a single image from standing out as an icon.

This lack of iconic significance in a single photograph, due in part to format, continues today. Currently, Koreans are viewing photographs of similarly charged incidents and movements, yet no iconic photographs have emerged as a result of the new viewing environment: a screen, conveyed by the internet, digitally. The following section examines the changes in the photographic documentation of social movements in 2008 and why the practice no longer produces iconic images symbolizing such events.

¹⁰² Hariman and John Lucaites, 27.

Perceptual and Experiential Changes in the Photographic Practice of 2008 Candlelight Vigils

Student protests and rallies continued through the 1990s, but the media began to report much less on violent clashes between student and labor activists and the police, especially towards the end of the decade. Political currents had transformed radically in this period as the non-mainstream, left-wing political leader Kim Dae-jung became President in 1998. He was succeeded by another left-leaning former human-rights attorney, Roh Moo-hyun, in 2003. Since the turn of the millennium, with such changes in the political arena, social movements became much more cross-generational and non-violent.¹⁰³ Major gathering places, including the City Hall Square, which was filled with student activists in June 1987, saw a mass mobilization of crowds for the Korea-Japan World Cup game in June, 2002. Rather than protesting, crowds blasted out music and repeated cheers for the Korean soccer team. Figures 4.31 and 4.32 depict such a scene. The places where Lee Han-yeol and his fellow protesters once threw stones and Molotov cocktails against tanks and teargas grenades were filled with cheering crowds wearing red T-shirts, the color of the Korean team uniform and their supporters, the Red Devils. While scholars such as Han Sang-jin viewed such a collective fervor as a sign of improved civil consciousness resulting from the nation's economic, cultural, or athletic achievement,¹⁰⁴ others identified the phenomenon with totalitarian conditioning, a kind of collective hysteria removed

¹⁰³ For an analysis of civil society and civil social movements in South Korea in 1990-2000, with a focus on the Citizen's Alliance (시민연대) movement in 2000, see Jang Jip Choi, "Democratization, Civil Society, and the Korean Social Movement in Korea: The Significance of the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000 General Elections," *Korea Journal* 40, no. 3 (Autumn 2000): 26-57.

¹⁰⁴ See Sang-jin Han et al., (*2002 World Cup ehueui*) *Munhwashiminundongbaljeonbangan Symposium* ((2002 월드컵 이후의) 문화시민운동발전방안 심포지엄, *Symposium for the Development of Civil Movements since 2002 World Cup*) (Seoul: Seoul National University Education Research Institute, 2003); " " 월드컵 이후 시민의식 개선됐다 " ," *Donga Ilbo*, September 17, 2003, <http://news.donga.com/3//20030917/7982950/1> (Accessed November 5, 2009).

from reality.¹⁰⁵ However, the mobilization of ordinary citizens in massive numbers during the World Cup games, possibly the first such gathering since the June Democracy Movement of 1987, alerted the public that people were still able and willing to come together for a common cause.

This was reflected later in the year in the fallout from an incident that June. Two 14-year-old girls were struck and killed by a United States Army armored vehicle on a civilian road in Yangju, located north of Seoul, on June 13, 2002. The tragic event that killed Shim Mi-seon and Shin Hyo-sun was largely overshadowed by the World Cup games that followed, although it did arouse anti-American sentiments; however, after the drivers of the vehicle were found not-guilty of manslaughter, a candlelight vigil was held on November 26, which turned into a series of vigils in major cities across the country [Figure 4.33] for which thousands of people gathered in the places where they cheered during the World Cup games. Most of these events remained non-violent, with many participants being high school students. The candlelight vigils continued through the end of 2002.¹⁰⁶

By then, the large empty space in front of the City Hall in Seoul had become a landmark for assemblies over a common interest or cause. Originally intended as a roadway, the space, a place of civic protests and gatherings since the early twentieth century, was renovated and reopened in May 2004 with a grassy field for public use. From May to August in 2008, the City Hall Square, and various other gathering spots across the nation, was used for holding a series of

¹⁰⁵ Dong-yeon Lee, "Bulgeun angmawa jucheheongseong: nationalising styleui chiyhyanginga (붉은악마와 주체성: 내셔널리즘인가 스타일의 취향인가, The Red Devils and Formation of Subjectivity: Nationalism or Taste in Style)," *Munhwa Gwahak* 31 (2002): 165, as referenced in Hyejong Yoo, "The Candlelight Girls' Playground: Nationalism as Art of Dialogy, The 2008 Candlelight Vigil Protests in South Korea," *Invisible Culture* 15 (Fall 2010): 63.

¹⁰⁶ The 2002 candlelight vigil was one of the first non-violent, cross-generational, and meta-ideological (although also joined by anti-American groups) protests against authority, reflecting the changes in civil society and political consciousness since the late 1990s. See Ho-Ki Kim, "Changes in Ideological Terrain and Political Consciousness in South Korea," *Korea Journal* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 2005): 117-136.

candlelight vigils protesting both the import of U.S. beef from cattle over thirty months old—which carries a higher risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or “mad cow” disease—and the neoliberal policies of the newly elected President Lee Myung-bak.

The first of these candlelight vigils was initiated by a group of 51 high school students from seven youth organizations in Cheonggye Gwangjang (Cheonggye Square) on April 18, 2008, the day the Lee government announced that the U.S. and Korea sealed an agreement on the import of U.S. beef. The students also protested against school policies, such as the mandatory attendance of the “0-hour class” or self-study session, that make the school environment even more competitive.¹⁰⁷ Similarly-minded people began to organize candlelight vigils in May, many planned and promoted on the Korean internet message board Agora, provided by the popular internet portal Daum.¹⁰⁸ The main reason for the months of candlelight vigils was not simply objections to the import of U.S. beef, but rather the way the agreement was made without disclosure to the public, reflecting the general lack of communication from the government on administrative and political issues considered critical by the public, such as education, food, and the environment. The protests were further fueled by the Prime Minister and President’s announcement on the strengthened safety measurements for the beef, which were considered temporary and ill-planned by the public. These protests in the form of candlelight vigils expanded rapidly across the country. On June 10, the commemorative day of the June Democracy Movement, over 80,000 people (the police estimate; organizers estimated 100,000

¹⁰⁷ Su-jeong Kim, “A Study on the Photographs of Candle [sic] Demonstrations (with a focus on the five major daily newspapers)” (MA Thesis, Seoul: Sangmyung University, 2009), 16. “...0 교시, 우열반, 학교자율화를 반대하는 청소년연대...”

¹⁰⁸ In May, a petition for the impeachment of President Lee was posted on Agora by a high school student with the username “Andante,” receiving positive responses from other users. As many as 1.3 million users signed the petition in 40 days. See Hyejong Yoo, “The Candlelight Girls’ Playground: Nationalism as Art of Dialogy, The 2008 Candlelight Vigil Protests in South Korea,” 50–51.

people), gathered in Seoul for a candlelight vigil.¹⁰⁹ Between the months of May and August, people held candlelight vigils over 100 times in Seoul alone, and 2,359 times countrywide.¹¹⁰

Newspapers had been publishing photographs of candlelight vigils, albeit in varying amounts, since the announcement of the U.S.-Korea agreement on beef imports.¹¹¹ However, newspapers and TV, ‘traditional’ media for older generations, were not the main mode through which the public viewed the vast majority of these photographs. Rather, participants and spectators acted as creators and ‘publishers’ of many of the candlelight vigil images. Protesters were equipped with digital cameras in cellular phones, camcorders, and even laptop computers for immediate postings of news in both words and images [Figure 4.34]. Photographs depicting the peaceful gathering of people at candlelight vigils were posted on message boards of major portal sites, personal blogs, and online social network services.

In response to the growing number of assemblies, participants, and locations, heavily armored police units began to appear at the vigils, blocking and encircling the crowd. By late May, the police force started using *salsucha* (water carriers) to break the assembly by shooting water directly at protestors [Figures 4.35-36], replacing the teargas grenades used in the 1980s.¹¹² By the evening of June 10 the police blocked the Sejong-ro, the major road leading to Gyeongbokgung (Gyeongbok Palace),¹¹³ with massive shipping container boxes; this resulted in

¹⁰⁹ Hyun-woo Lee, “Jeongchichamyero yuhyeongeuroseoeui chotbuljiphoe: daepyoseongui byeonhwa (정치참여 유형으로써의 촛불집회: 대표성의 변화, Candlelight Vigil as a Type of Political Participation),” in *Hangukgukjeongchihakhoe Haksukdaehoe Balpyonmunjip* (한국국제정치학회 학술대회 발표논문집) (Seoul: Hangukgukjeongchihakhoe, 2008), 20.

¹¹⁰ Su-jeong Kim, “A Study on the Photographs of Candle [sic] Demonstrations (with a focus on the five major daily newspapers),” 16.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 24. For example, in the month of May, the “progressive” newspaper *Hankyoreh* included 30 photographs of candlelight vigils while the “conservative” *Chosun* published 13 photographs.

¹¹² In the U.S., by contrast, hoses and water cannons were used against peaceful human rights protests in the South in the 1950s and ‘60s; they are however no longer used, given that association, while teargas began to be used in more recent years.

¹¹³ The Gyeongbok Palace is the main royal palace complex that housed the royal family and court of Joseon.

clashes between the candlelight vigil participants and the police force, many ending in injury.¹¹⁴

For example, Figure 4.37 shows an injured man facing a police unit called in for riot control.

There is blood running down the side of the man's forehead and his hand. He holds his hand up in the air as if he is pleading for non-violence. Protesters photographed and recorded the events such as the one depicted in this photograph and quickly posted them on their blogs, Agora, and other photo- and video-sharing websites such as Afreeca [Figures 4.38-39].¹¹⁵ Because the images transmitted were typically participant-sourced, the candlelight vigils of 2008 transformed the nature of communication, from mass media to 'personal' media; this came to be called "*Il-in* Media (1인 미디어, one-person media)."¹¹⁶ When a violent confrontation between the police force and protesters occurred, one would first hear about and watch what was happening, live on Afreeca or other online postings by individual protesters, before TV news programs or newspapers reported on them.¹¹⁷

Significantly, the quality of many of the photographs posted and shared online were not in any way inferior to those taken by photojournalists. For example, Figures 4.35 and 4.36, photographed by a blogger-protester and shared on his blog, depict the *salsucha* shooting water at protesters gathered in Seoul in the morning of June 10. Compared with Figure 4.40, a

¹¹⁴ Conservative newspapers and pro-American organizations accused the participants of candlelight vigils of instigating violence, some arguing that the assemblies have been secretly organized by pro-North Korean activists who brainwashed the public into believing that consuming American beef (over 30 months) would expose them to "mad cow" disease. See Seok-woo Lee and Shi-young Park, "'Hwajangpum, teokbokido gwangwubeyong wyihoem' jeondan bburyeo ('화장품, 떡볶이도 광부명 위험' 전단지 뿌려, Disseminating Fliers that Say 'Cosmetics and Teokboki Exposing to Mad Cow Disease')," *Chosun Ilbo*, May 3, 2008, 8.

¹¹⁵ *Afreeca* is short for "A Free Camera." The website was later banned for weeks by the Korea Communications Standards Commission (방송통신심의위원회); it however reopened and is still used widely by Koreans today.

¹¹⁶ Although Cyworld, a Facebook-like social networking site popularized in South Korea in the early 2000s, had been the most used SNS in South Korea (with 25% of the population having a Cyworld mini-homepage), it was not utilized for the purpose of candlelight vigils. Facing the popularization of other social network services, such as Facebook and especially Twitter, the number of Cyworld users decreased from 19 million in 2008 to 18 million in 2009. Twitter, a potentially ideal mode for "*Il-in* Media" had not yet been launched in South Korea.

¹¹⁷ During the days of violent police control, channels operated by individual protesters were interrupted, preventing recording of the scenes.

photograph published on *MoneyToday* online, Figures 4.35 and 4.36 are not obviously ‘amateur’ photographs. Figure 4.35 shows very clearly what is going on in the photographs, focusing on the operation of the water carrier: the water carrier is shooting water at protesters, who are ducking down to avoid being hit directly. One of the protesters tries to shield him-/herself with a portfolio case, an indication that he/she joined the protest after an art class. In Figure 4.36, the protester/photographer managed to capture the water carrier shooting water from behind police vehicles blocking the crowd refusing to disband. Figure 4.40 shows a crowd protesting in front of a vandalized police vehicle on which a police unit stands. Although Figure 4.40 seems to have been taken with a wide-angle lens, given the distortion of the perspective, all three photographs depict crowds confronted by police units with the clear and crisp quality of high-resolution digital images. The significant improvements in digital technology and the immediate adaptation of users to those changes was thus crucial to the spread—and validity—of *Il-in* Media during these months. Indeed, the rise of *Il-in* Media revealed the limits of ‘traditional’ mass media that maintained “one-way” communication amidst the live, interactive communication between protesters, who were at the same time acting as reporters, photojournalists, and writers.

Moreover, *Il-in* Media and the ‘live’ posting of photographs and footage offered people interested in this civic movement outside South Korea, particularly expatriate Korean citizens experiencing it overseas, vicarious access to the events as they unfolded. As an expatriate following the movement closely in the United States, I found the individual postings of photographs capturing mass protests and rallies invaluable, providing instant news from the many different sites of the movement. As a member of Korean society, there is a desire to participate despite not being physically present in the country; the experience of these events through others’ varying experiences helped form a sense of solidarity, albeit a virtual one. Most

significantly, the photographs taken by ordinary citizens participating in the movement evidenced a huge gap between how the public and the government understood the role of citizens. For protestors, citizenship's duties and rights include the questioning of government policies and their arbitrariness, a questioning seen as the basis of a civil society. For the government, hoping to recapture the rapid development of the Park regime, such civic reactions to government policy had to be treated, once again, as a threat to national security, economic development, and diplomatic relations with the United States. Viewing the internet postings of my fellow citizens, it was clear to me that many considered the government's reaction a sign of regression for a democracy built upon the sacrifice of compatriots such as Kim Ju-yeol and Lee Han-yeol.

The candlelight vigils of 2008 have transformed the way Koreans form collective resistance against the state when it fails to communicate with the public.¹¹⁸ So too have the ways in which that resistance is performed, documented, and shared by the vast majority of citizens, transforming the nature of social movements in South Korea.¹¹⁹ Protesters no longer mainly consist of 'hard-core' student and labor activists, often easily condemned as 'commies' by conservative groups. Instead, new terms such as "*chotbulsonyeo* (candlelight girls)" and "*yumochabudae* (stroller troopers)" have emerged to characterize the changing demographics of participants in social movements in South Korea. Instant assemblies and protests, resembling "flash-mob" activities, may be initiated and organized by any interested person who had the means to connect with others sharing the same concerns online.

However, this has also shifted the direction of photography documenting social movement. The large number of photographs and reports posted and shared online frequently

¹¹⁸ Hyun-woo Lee, "Jeongchichamyero yuhyeongeuroseoeui chotbuljiphoe: daepyoseongueui byeonhwa (정치참여 유형으로써의 촛불집회: 대표성의 변화, Candlelight Vigil as a Type of Political Participation)."

¹¹⁹ Jeong-hee Cho and Jang-muk Kang, "Network jeongchiwa online sahoeundong (네트워크 정치와 온라인 사회운동: 008년 '미국산 쇠고기 수입 반대 촛불집회' 사례를 중심으로, Network Politics and Online Social Movement)," *Hangukjeongchihakhoebo* 42, no. 3 (2008): 311-332.

depict the same events and perspectives due to sheer sample size. With so many images available, no single photograph has been singled out as an icon for the candlelight vigils of 2008. Instead, certain types of images create a kind of mass symbolism. Photographs of many people holding candles at night [Figure 4.41], of young students holding pickets [Figure 4.42], and bird's-eye-view shots of vigils [Figure 4.43] all share a collective association with the movement.

Meanwhile, the sharing of photographs online exhibits the characteristics of the “revolutionary demands in the politics of art,” imagined by Walter Benjamin in his seminal article, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”¹²⁰ As no one was killed during the 2008 vigils, there is an absence of photographs carrying the shock value present in photographs such as those of Kim Ju-yeol and Lee Han-yeol. The events of 2008 and their chronicling signal that the days of iconic photographs produced by heroic photojournalists have passed, ushering in images and image-makers that create a very different viewing experience.¹²¹

These different experiences account for the lack of iconic photographs produced during the social movement of 2008. The photographs of the candlelight vigils show the transformation in the practice of photography of social movements in South Korea. The process of taking photographs of candlelight vigils, posting them online and viewing other postings becomes,

¹²⁰ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 218.

¹²¹ For discussions on the flow of digital photography on the internet, see Jonas Larsen, “Practices and Flows of Digital Photography: An Ethnographic Framework,” *Mobilities* 3, no. 1 (March 2008): 141-160.; Dong-Hoo Lee, “Digital Camereas, Personal Photography and the Reconfiguration of Spatial Experiences,” *The Information Society* 26 (2010): 266-275; and Marvin Heiferman, “Has Facebook Killed the Photo?,” *Art in America* 99, no. 4 (April 2011): 55-61. Various MA theses also assess the issues particular to the Korean situation regarding digital photography, “digital culture,” and candlelight vigils: see, for example, Jang Hee Kim, “A Study of the Transformation in Internet Cultural Contents through the Entrance [sic] of Digital Cameras: Based on the Personal Homepage Media Providers Cyworld and Blogs” (MA Thesis, Seoul: Sogang University, 2005); Gyi-young Yang, “Characteristics of Digital Culture in Candle [sic] Rallies” (MA Thesis, Jeonju: Jeonbuk University, 2008); Jong Hyun Park, “A Study on the Expression and Thinking Method of Digital Photo Image with Emphasis on the Environmental Change in Media and the Meaning of Art Works” (MA Thesis, Busan: Pusan National University, 2009); and Tae Jin Kim, “A Study of the Process of the Formation of the Online Public Opinion and Transformation to the Political Power: A Case Study of ‘Minerva’ on the Online Public Sphere” (MA Thesis, Busan: Pusan National University, 2009). The titles of the theses and transliteration of their names have been provided by individual authors.

according to Mark B. Hansen, a matter of “production [and consumption] of the digital image in and as the processural embodiment of information.”¹²² While the photographs of Kim and Lee became icons symbolizing the suffering and struggle of citizens working toward democracy and justice, the hundreds and thousands of digital photographs posted and shared online “embody” information: through the process of individual participation in candlelight vigils, by connecting an unknown number of other users, and by disseminating the information online. Digital photographs of the candlelight vigils resist symbolism in that they do not stand for something but instead activate an “embodiment” of information taking place in various online communities and message boards. Likewise, ‘cyberspace’ venues such as Agora and Afreeca have become sites of resistance, no less significant than the physical sites of assemblies; they provided the ‘birth place’ of the discourse of civil resistance in 2008.¹²³ Hence, while physically separate, many online readers, viewers, and commentators participated, virtually, in the protests as they proceeded online.¹²⁴

The change from photographs reproduced in newspapers and journals to personal postings of digital photographs online, viewed on computer screens or smart phones, also means changes in the physicality of photography. In the case of the 2008 candlelight vigils, no longer was the photograph a paper object but, rather, was manifested as pixels on a liquid crystal display. This physical change also transformed the ‘traffic’ of images. The online circulation of protest images by ‘citizen journalists’, as opposed to the reproduction of the photograph of Lee

¹²² Mark B. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 36.

¹²³ Sang-gil Lee, “Inmineun eoteoke malhago itneunga (인민은 어떻게 말하고 있는가, How Does the Public Speak),” in *Gwangjangeui munhwaeseo hyeonshileui jeongchiro (광장의 문화에서 현실의 정치로, From the Culture of the Square to the Politics of Reality)*, ed. Dong-jin Seo (Seoul: Sanchaekja, 2008), 58–59, 64.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 31. “...the digital calls on us to invest the body as that ‘place’ where the self-differing of media gets concretized. ... If the ‘digital’ names the self-differing condition of media par excellence (since it has no ‘natural’ physical support), then the process of embodiment must form an integral part of it: embodiment is necessary to give it a place, to transform its endless self-differing into a concrete experience of today’s informational (or “post-medium”) environment.”

Han-yeol by Chung Tae-won in newspapers, demonstrates that today “[t]he goal of any one image may not be to sum something up, but to trigger others in response.”¹²⁵ While the photograph of Lee summed up the struggle for democracy in South Korea in the 1980s, the photographs of 2008 candlelight vigils triggered other citizens to respond.

With the vast majority of citizens participating in the candlelight vigils online rather than in situ, the 2008 protests involved as many or more ‘spectators’ as ‘actors.’ In a concept similar to that of the “embodiment of information,” Jacques Rancière argues that being a spectator is not simply occupying a passive position that fails to materialize as action.¹²⁶ Rather,

Emancipation [of this fixed position of a spectator and actor] begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection. It begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions. The spectator also acts, like the pupil or scholar. She observes, selects, compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of place... They are thus both distant spectators and active interpreters of the spectacle offered to them.¹²⁷

In other words, the virtual participants who obtained news about the candlelight vigils online and then engaged in discussions, observed, selected, compared, and interpreted the information offered to them and connected it with other things they had seen and experienced, ultimately leading to particular actions—i.e., the embodiment of information. Hence, what is distinctive about the movement of 2008, compared to those of 1960 and 1987, is the ways in which many citizens once considered non-political voluntarily and involuntarily became agents in the social

¹²⁵ Heiferman, “Has Facebook Killed the Photo?,” 56.

¹²⁶ Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. George Elliott (New York: Verso, 2009), 17.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

movement:¹²⁸ “[e]very spectator is already an actor in her story; every actor, every man of action, is the spectator of the same story.”¹²⁹

In discussing protest photographs taken by *reformasi* protesters in Indonesia in 1998-1999,¹³⁰ Karen Strassler also argues that “what is foregrounded [in a photograph] is the indexical connection the photograph establishes between an original, embodied act of witnessing and future acts of witnessing via the image.”¹³¹ The photograph, therefore, “reserves and transmits the subjective act and moral force of seeing” and enables an act of seeing “to be extended and collectivized.”¹³² In the case of the South Korean candlelight vigil in 2008, an act of seeing was extended and collectivized through various online network services: people posted their photographs and footage, and others re-posted these photographs and footage in different communities. The dissemination of images was truly instant, and even major media companies were unable to compete with the *Il-in* Media.

Moreover, unlike 1960 and 1987, no one was able to dictate which knowledge was to be accessible to whom, while the spectator also became the producer of information, on and offline. As they were both spectators and participants, information creators and providers, the users of those online services also acted as watchers of censorship online, recording posts before they could be deleted by website administrators concerned about possible state prosecution. The kind of censorship that existed during the military regime was therefore unimaginable in this

¹²⁸ The participation of women, especially high-school aged girls and young mothers have been noticed by the researchers of the 2008 movement; see Young-ok Kim, “Yeosong, Gukga, Chotbul (여성, 국가, 촛불, Woman, Nation, Candlelight),” 203; Su-mi Eun, “Chotbulgwa hanguksahoe jungsancheungeui jahwasang (촛불과 한국사회 중산층의 자화상, Candlelights and the Self-Portrait of Korean Middle-Class),” in *Geudaeneunweo chotbuteul keusheonayo (그대는 왜 촛불을 끄셨나요, Why Did You Blow Out Your Candles)*, ed. Dong-jin Seo et al. (Seoul: Sanchaekja, 2009), 225.

¹²⁹ Rancière, 17.

¹³⁰ The term *reformasi* refers to reform or reformation. It may also refer to the post-Suharto era beginning in 1998.

¹³¹ Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*, 211.

¹³² *Ibid.*

environment, despite certain degrees and modes of censorship online.¹³³ Endless discussions were held on portal sites like Daum and on individual blogs, which were linked together with various functions that made the postings more accessible for users. In short, the various online network services enabled access, exchange, dissemination, manipulation, and detection of information. The internet-user participants in this social movement became, in Vilém Flusser's term, "a knot" tying "scatter[ed] parts together."¹³⁴

The outcome of the protests does not appear radical in comparison to those of 1960 and 1987. Likewise, none of the thousands of digital photographs that circulated and were posted on the internet communities became iconic or widely-known. There were internet rumors that a young female protester was murdered by a police officer during a rally, but it quickly disappeared, as internet rumors tend to; meanwhile, the imported beef from the United States is being sold in Korean supermarkets today. However, it is hard to deny that the *process* of the movement was truly radical. Therefore, it was greatly feared by the government. Members of the governing Grand National Party accused internet users of posting false information about the beef imports and the dangers of "mad cow" disease. This soon led to formal accusations and trials; for instance, Park Dae-Sung, whose online handle was Minerva, was tried for falsely accusing the government of pressing financial institutions to control foreign currencies, influencing a drop in overseas investment in South Korea. He was later acquitted of this charge. The Congress, the majority members of the Grand National Party, proposed a "New Media Law," which was enacted, partly to facilitate censorship on the internet. Rumors spread of the presence of hundreds of government-employed users of major online portal sites who are paid to post

¹³³ The Korea Communications Standards Commission censors materials published and posted online which may contain materials infringing, for example, the National Security Law and the restrictions of Korea Food & Drug Administration.

¹³⁴ Vilém Flusser, "The City as Wave—Trough in the Image-Flood," *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 322.

comments criticizing the candlelight protests and various other issues. Even if this proves to be another online legend, it is clear that the internet is feared by the government as the most powerful tool for opposition. The South Korean government is sensitive of online criticism and subversion although not as much as states without freedom of internet access or those that attempt to curtail that access in times of political threat, as seen in virtually every nation that has been part of the “Arab Spring.”

The Potentiality of Social Movements Using Social Network Services

In South Korea, one no longer finds iconic photographs of social movements that are comparable to the photographs of Kim Ju-yeol and Lee Han-yeol. This is not due to an absence of casualties in recent protests; for example, in January 2009 six people were killed during a protest on the rooftop of the building they rented for their stores [Figures 4.45-46]. The occupants were forced to move out when a developer bought the building, and they resisted by squatting on the roof in protest of the redevelopment plan. During a violent clash between the occupants and the police force, a fire broke out, killing five protestors and one policeman. This tragedy is remembered as the Youngsan Disaster (용산참사). However, unlike the deaths of the student protesters Park Jong-chul and Lee Han-yeol, which have been regarded as a sacrifice on behalf of the people, the Yongsan occupants’ deaths were ‘prohibited’ from becoming sacrifice: their lives were treated as *homo sacer*, a term in Roman law referring to people who are barred from the society, can be killed by members of the society, but should not be sacrificed for religious rituals.¹³⁵ Indeed, no one was claimed to be responsible for their deaths, since none of

¹³⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 72, 90. *Homo sacer* and Yongsan squatters/protesters were compared by Han Bo-hee during his lecture on the work of Agamben and Slavoj Žižek at Inmun-Sup in Fall 2009.

the organizers or conductors of the violent ‘crackdown’ was charged or prosecuted.¹³⁶ The photographs of the event, such as Figure 4.45 depicting one of the protesters about to be engulfed by the waves of fire coming toward him, were therefore denied from symbolizing ‘civil sacrifice’; without such symbolization, the photograph was unable to become an icon. Moreover, similar to candlelight vigil photographs, many different versions of photographs depicting the event were available on internet news sites, decreasing their shock value.

Although not icons, the candlelight vigils of 2008 did show the potentiality of the ‘new’ form of social movement as more expansive, participatory, and ‘instantly’ organized through the development of information technology.¹³⁷ The possibilities for a new form of social movement have manifested across the world as mobilization through online communities has become a global phenomenon. As discussed in Chapter One, Egypt and Tunisia have successfully deposed long-term dictatorial Presidents Hosni Mubarak and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, respectively, through protests benefitting from communication using social networking services (SNS), namely the popular online community Facebook.¹³⁸ Tunisians and Egyptians, as well as Syrians, Yemenis, Libyans, and other citizens involved in the “Arab Spring” have used Facebook and

¹³⁶ In many sites of real-estate redevelopment in South Korea, developers hire so-called “contract mobs” to ‘handle’ residents who refuse to move out. This was the case at the Yongsan site, triggering the violent confrontation between the squatting protesters and the police force.

¹³⁷ However, there also has been criticism against the 2008 candlelight vigils, especially in reference to how the participants of this social movement, middle-class families, did not form close alliances with other groups such as workers and underprivileged groups. For critical assessments of the 2008 social movement, see Nam-shin Lee, “Areumdaun chotbuli Homevermaejang apeuro oji mothan kadalgeun--bijeonggyujik tujaeng saopjang nodongjaga barabon chotbul (아름다운 촛불이 홈에버 매장 앞으로 오지 못한 까닭은--비정규 투쟁 사업장 노동자가 바라본 촛불, The Reason Why Candlelights Couldn’t Come to Homever),” *Naeileul yeoneun yeoksa* 33 (Fall 2008): 144-152; Eun, “Chotbulgwa hanguksahoe jungsancheungeui jahwasang (촛불과 한국사회 중산층의 자화상, Candlelights and the Self-Portrait of Korean Middle-Class)” 215-233; Bo-gyeong Kim, “Cheonggyecheonun yeojeonhi dyopyohitda: Baloeneul heoyongbatgi mothan saramdeul (청계천은 여전히 덮여 있다: 발언을 허용 받지 못한 사람들에 대하여, Cheonggyecheon Is Still Covered: About the Ones Who Are Not Allowed to Speak),” 234-246; and Young-ok Kim, “Yeosong, Gukga, Chotbul (여성, 국가, 촛불, Woman, Nation, Candlelight),” 201-214, in *Geudaeneunweo chotbuteul keusheonayo (그대는 왜 촛불을 끄셨나요, Why Did You Blow Out Your Candles)* (Seoul: Sanchaekja, 2009).

¹³⁸ Kirkpatrick and Sanger, “A Tunisian-Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History”; Preston, “While Facebook plays a star role in the revolts, its executives stay offstage”; “Facebook role in Egypt crisis: Author discusses how internet helped spark revolt.”

Twitter to share thoughts, organize meetings, and mobilize for protests. Whether photographs posted on the SNSs have further sparked revolts across these countries is yet to be studied. The revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia are a fulfillment of fears by governments of civil threats from societies equipped with SNSs.

Although much less transformative, other countries in different parts of the world have also experienced the impact of online and online-organized protests. In Indonesia, for example, the number of Facebook users is third largest of any country, over 21 million,¹³⁹ while the availability of relatively inexpensive smart phones with cameras enables access to such social networking sites. In early April 2010, over 56,000 people protested on Facebook against the placement of a statue representing a ten-year-old Barack Obama in a park in Jakarta, arguing that the honor should be reserved for an Indonesian.¹⁴⁰ The discontent expressed in the form of “online protest” initiated by a single person, Heri Nugroho, sparked enough offline controversy that city officials decided to remove the statue, which was later installed in a school that President Obama attended.

Such online-organized expressions of discontent have met with increasing state backlash in the form of infringement of speech and assembly. In Indonesia, many politicians see the increases in the number of SNS users as a direct threat to their authority and traditional values.¹⁴¹ As with recent events in South Korea, the Indonesian legislature proposed a bill that would require internet providers to filter online content. However, another angry online protest forced the government to shelve the bill.¹⁴² Broad laws nonetheless exist in Indonesia suppressing

¹³⁹ Norimitsu Onishi, “Debate on Internet’s Limits Grows in Indonesia,” *New York Times*, April 19, 2010.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* A generation gap is more than a cliché here because those politicians tend to be “old-style politicians and bureaucrats who do not have a Facebook or Twitter account.”

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

online freedom of speech, and these laws tend to punish such violations more harshly than their offline equivalents.¹⁴³

Among the thousands of posts and photographs uploaded each hour, many people use Facebook and other online networking sites for political activism. Although much smaller in scale and less risky compared to the candlelight vigils in South Korea, grass-roots, individual-initiated activism has also occurred in the U.S. On April 27, 2010, for instance, New Jersey experienced one of the state's largest grassroots movements, initiated by a single person and organized entirely online, in the city of Newark. The 18-year-old college student Michelle Ryan Lauto created a Facebook page in March calling for a demonstration against Governor Chris Christie's cuts to public education funding and the resulting reduction of staff and programs in many districts.¹⁴⁴ The call spread via Facebook contacts and on April 27 a group of mostly African American and Latina/o students staged mass classroom walk-outs and rallies. Thousands of high school students from all over Newark gathered in front of the City Hall with pickets and banners. This well-coordinated event is claimed as the offspring of Lauto's Facebook posting,¹⁴⁵ and although a number of the participants received detentions, and some doubt that the students truly understand the complex issues of state budgetary matters, this student-led, grass-roots activism shows the potential of social movements activated by SNSs.

Such changes reflect the transformation of the ways in which people experience social movements, as well as the potential power of these movements—as witnessed prominently during the “Arab Spring.” This transformation was also enabled by the changes in the practice of

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Winnie Hu, “In New Jersey, a Civics Lesson in the Internet Age”, April 27, 2010.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.; Kelly Heyboer, “N.J. student protests showcase Facebook's role in mobilizing social movements,” *New Jersey On-Line*, April 27, 2010, http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2010/04/facebook_student_protest_mobilize.html (Accessed April 27,2010). However, there was also a backlash against the online-initiated, grass-roots movement: a number of the students who participated in walk-outs and rallies received detentions from their schools.

photography in social movements. In South Korea, the 2008 candlelight vigils were conceived and practiced in a drastically different manner than the civic resistance of 1960 and 1987. While tens of thousands of people took to the streets of cities across the nation for more than three months consecutively, even more people experienced and participated in this social movement online sharing their opinions and information. The movement was less violent and more participatory, more fast-paced and quicker to adapt to new circumstances. While it lacks an iconic photograph symbolizing the experience, it also introduced the enormous potentiality of one-person media, where every individual has the power to create, select, publish, and disseminate images. Images no longer need to be hidden in an earthenware pot and buried underground, as Shin Bok-jin did after the May 18 Gwangju Democratic Uprising in 1980.

CHAPTER FIVE THE MILITARIZED NATION AND CAMPTOWN PHOTOGRAPHS

Militarism has been present in many aspects of Korean life since the early twentieth century: the drafting of Korean men for wars fought by Japan; the Korean War; the Vietnam War; and armed confrontations between South and North Korea are only few of the multifarious military conflicts involving Koreans. The continued mandatory military service for South Korean men and proliferation of U.S. base camps throughout the country echo the history of these military conflicts and reflect the pervasiveness of militarism in the nation. Much of this influence has been captured in photography, particularly during the Korean War.¹ However, a key facet of the militarization of the country—the numerous camptowns established by the United States Forces Korea (USFK) after the Korean War—scarcely register as photographic subjects. As with other issues, this is primarily due to the military domination of politics in Korea during the nation-building decades; the many problems in these camptowns, particularly of violence against camptown women, have been disguised and silenced by the military regime in conjunction with the interests of the U.S. Indeed, issues of militarism in South Korea involve not just the tension between the troops and civilians, foreign presence and citizens, but more fundamentally the “gendering” of the nation, its people, and its history through (the metaphor of) the female body to emasculate the nominally decolonized nation.

In this chapter, I investigate the ways in which the camptown photographs from different periods and photographers explore the issues of South Korean militarism, particularly the U.S. military presence and the gendered treatment of Koreans as citizens and as a nation. Photographs of camptowns were not viewed publicly until the 1990s due to both the censorship of the military

¹ Some information on Korean War photographs, for example the NARA and how many photographs are archived there, are discussed in Chapter Two.

regime and a lack of public discourse on the impact of the USFK camptowns and Korean life in general. This began to change after the end of the military regime, as news and photographs of the camptowns (and other places affected by the military) appeared more widely. The photographs of U.S. camptowns in South Korea taken by South Koreans in the 1960s through '70s depict the subject in ways that fulfill the framework of gendered nations. In this chapter I demonstrate how most of the photographs that “document” camptown sex workers and their clients helped consolidate the metaphor of the Korean nation as a “prostituted” woman and the U.S. as the patriarchal ally and savior. I examine works by both Korean and non-Korean photographers, such as Kang Yong Suk and René Burri, contending that through the genre of vernacular photographs such issues are brought much more intimately and effectively to the public without further marginalizing camptown sex workers.

To examine the issues of militarism and how photography has portrayed them, I begin the chapter by providing an overview of the history of militarism and the U.S. military presence in South Korea, and the state of the discourse of camptown prostitution. I then discuss the lack of camptown photographs seen by the wider public until the 1990s. This is followed by an assessment of the metaphors of gendered nations through examination of photographs of camptowns, including images of sex workers and GIs, by the Japanese photographer Kuwabara Shisei and the Italian René Burri. These works will be compared to the “commemorative” photographs of the GI and barmaid couples taken by Kang Yong Suk to analyze how the former inscribe the gendered metaphors while the latter complicate them. Analysis of Kang’s work continues with a discussion of his adoption of a vernacular genre and its significance. Examination of a photographic archive at the Alkek Library Special Collections at Texas University, *Boystown*, provides context for an examination of this genre. This is followed by a

discussion on the environment and economy of camptowns as articulated in works by Kang, Noh, Suntag, and Kim Sangdon. I conclude the chapter by considering the theory of subjectivity explored by Slavoj Žižek, including his critique of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of bodies without organs, as a way of engaging a series of photographs by Lee Yong Hoon depicting the Korean Reserve Army as well as by Kang, Noh, and Kim.

The Discourse and Silencing of Camptowns and Camptown Prostitution

The history of the U.S. military presence in South Korea begins with the end of Japanese colonization.² Immediately following Korea's liberation in August 1945, 72,000 U.S. soldiers were stationed in Korea, to "transfer power from the crumbled Japanese colonial empire."³ During its occupation of the southern half of the Korean peninsula from 1945 to 1948, the U.S. military established camptowns for both U.S. and Korean soldiers. Within those camps, the U.S. Army Military Government "developed the unofficial but consistent system of regulated prostitution"⁴ as a means for both entertainment and control of the male soldiers, as well as to control the spread of venereal disease.⁵ The succeeding Syngman Rhee government continued to regulate prostitution in camptowns, even as it publicly condemned and criminalized it. According to the sociologist Seungsook Moon, the system served Allied Forces and Korean soldiers by adopting the Japanese institution of "comfort stations,"⁶ allowing the government to

² As of 2010, U.S. troops are stationed in over 61 base complexes in 19 countries worldwide, the American military research and development budget being more than seven times that of second-place France. Also see You-me Park and Henry Schwarz, "Extending American Hegemony," *Interventions: The International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 7, no. 2 (July 2005): 155.

³ Seungsook Moon, "Regulating Desire, Managing the Empire: U.S. Military Prostitution in South Korea, 1945-1970," in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, ed. Maria Hörn and Seungsook Moon (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 41. The Twenty-Fourth Army Corps was led by the commanding general of the U.S. Armed Forces in Korea, Lieutenant-General John R. Hodge.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

claim that it would “protect respectable women and reward soldiers for their sacrifice.”⁷

Therefore, the systematic prostitution of Korean women after 1945 was a remnant of a colonial practice reinstitutionalized by the new occupying force and then maintained by the Korean government, in the name of the military and thus the nation’s good.

Upon the end of the Korean War, the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1953 established permanent U.S. military bases in South Korea.⁸ During the 1950s, camptowns developed rapidly to fulfill the sexual and other entertainment needs of the U.S. soldiers, regulated prostitution comprising a significant portion of the camptown economy. Prostitution however continued to be criminalized in formal law, even as Park Chung-hee “further consolidated camptown prostitution through the creation of 104 ‘special districts’ and the establishment of rules to support the camptown economy.”⁹ Camptown prostitution saw a steady and continuous decline after the end of the Park regime, and fell sharply in the 1990s and 2000s. Camptowns are referred to as *gijichon* (기지촌) in Korea, which literally means a village of a military camp. However, over the years, the term has come to specify the “red-light district” of the camptowns, especially when part of terms such as *gijichon yeoseong* (기지촌 여성, camptown women) referring to camptown sex workers.¹⁰

Throughout their existence, publication of camptown images, especially those depicting prostitution, was carefully eschewed to avoid public interest in the workings of the system; the Park regime’s Decree no.1 made it difficult for photographers to show their work to the public. This was largely the result of the aggressively pro-American military government; the Park

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Katharine H.S. Moon, “Resurrecting Prostitutes and Overturning Treatise: Gender Politics in the ‘Anti-American’ Movement in South Korea,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 1 (February 2007): 131.

⁹ Seungsook Moon, “Regulating Desire, Managing the Empire: U.S. Military Prostitution in South Korea, 1945-1970,” in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, 41.

¹⁰ Although the term refers to camptown sex workers, it literally means camptown women, which gives the effect of generalizing women in camptowns as sex workers. Such an effect further stereotypes camptowns.

regime condemned and suppressed “political expressions and activities criticizing the U.S. forces in Korea,” a position necessary to maintain the alliance and thus guard against the threat posed by North Korea.¹¹ Being critical of the U.S. or of the presence of the U.S. forces in South Korea was considered not only unpatriotic but also communist and pro-North Korean, a threat to the security of the nation.¹²

Despite the prominence of camptown prostitution in South Korea, the stories and images of the people involved were largely unavailable to the public until the 1990s.¹³ The rarity of images depicting camptowns in general and the public’s non-exposure to them in turn reveals the lack of open public discourse about the camptowns, particularly their systematized prostitution. By controlling what was reported about army bases and camptowns, and thus what the public knew of them, the military government silenced camptown residents, including the sex workers. Camptowns and their residents have been further marginalized and stereotyped through their supposition-based media portrayals, especially through movies such as *Silver Stallion* (*Eunmaneun ojianeunda*, 1991) representing camptowns as bleak, (to be) abandoned and dilapidated places populated by desperate sex workers.¹⁴ Furthermore, the relationship between

¹¹ Katharine H.S. Moon, “Resurrecting Prostitutes and Overturning Treatise: Gender Politics in the ‘Anti-American’ Movement in South Korea,” 137.

¹² Seong-tae Hong and Suntag Noh, *Banmiga Woemunjeinga* (반미가 왜 문제인가) (Seoul: Dangdae, 2004), 26.

¹³ I would argue that information on the institutionalization of camptown prostitution is still not truly available to the public. Most of the military records of the U.S. Armed Forces are archived at the National Archives and Records Administration in Silver Spring, Maryland. Furthermore, even though there were moments when the public became more aware of the conditions of camptown sex workers, when violent crimes against them were reported by mass media in the 1990s, there has not been a continuous public discussion regarding the issues. There have been, however, Korean and Korean American artists who have dealt with issues of the U.S. militarism in South Korea such as Park Bul-ddong and Yong Soon Min. Likewise, while the issues surrounding transnational marriages are now widely discussed in both popular media and academia, transnational prostitution in camptowns has not received attention in South Korea. Seungsook Moon’s recent study of transnational camptown women is a pioneering work in this field. See Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon, *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*.

¹⁴ Kim Hyun Sook provides an analysis of *Silver Stallion* and argues that the movie allegorizes camptown sex workers as symbols of the nation, sustaining and supporting “the Confucian patriarchal notions of femininity.” See Hyun Sook Kim, “Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation: The Representation of Working-Class Women in

the U.S. military presence in South Korea and camptown prostitution is rarely examined publicly outside the community of sociologists and Korean studies scholars in and outside South Korea. This is particularly striking in contrast with the discourse and public awareness of the issues regarding “comfort women” during the Japanese colonial rule. Although this discussion also was postponed until a civilian government was in place, the “comfort women” have been examined fairly thoroughly by various activists (and scholars); nonetheless, these same people object to representing the issues of camptown prostitution, seeking to dissociate camptown sex workers from “comfort women.”¹⁵ While it is necessary to delineate the historical and political differences between the two, the refusal to represent camptown issues starkly shows how even social activists consider camptown sex workers as “loose” women who chose to sell their bodies for money.¹⁶ As political scientist Katharine H. S. Moon states, writing a history of camptown prostitution is problematic as “[it] is a history that most Koreans do not want to see immortalized in books and taught in schools,” one that “both the Korean and U.S. governments would rather avoid or deny.”¹⁷

According to the sociologist Hyun Sook Kim, Korean nationalist activists have further silenced camptown residents by denying them a strong voice in the movement condemning the illegal activities of the USFK.¹⁸ In this way, activists treat the sex workers as helpless victims, and the camptowns themselves as merely tokens of U.S. oppression. Kim contends that, by doing

Popular and Radical Texts,” in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism* (New York & London: Routledge, 1998), 181–185.

¹⁵ Katharine H.S. Moon, *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9–10. In addition, a significant number of the scholars specializing in the issues of camptown prostitution in South Korea are based outside of the country. This reflects the political, and cultural, tactics of the Park regime that equated being critical of U.S. politics to anti-communism, and therefore pro-North Korean; this has influenced the absence of academic interest in camptowns until the 1990s. Many people in South Korea still believe that being critical about U.S. influences is essentially a leftist/communist declaration.

¹⁷ Katharine H.S. Moon, “Stars and Stripes and Sex: Nationalism and Globalization in the Gijichon,” in *Women’s History in Modern Korea* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2004), Repaginated.

¹⁸ Hyun Sook Kim, “Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation: The Representation of Working-Class Women in Popular and Radical Texts,” 191–192.

so, “any historical specificity of women’s locations in particular social and cultural power relations as subordinate, marginal, or powerful, is effectively erased.”¹⁹ These women have thus been disenfranchised and chastised by not only male nationalists but also by the wider public who despised them for their “shameful” activities. In this respect, the metaphorization of the gendered relationship between nations can be traced back to “the sexualized construct of the colonial relationship, [as] the discourse of anti-colonial nationalism demands moral purity,”²⁰ thereby positioning the female body as a site of blame and demanding subsequent “purification” of it. Furthermore, “since the focus of the decolonization effort is to recuperate an infantilized and emasculated nation, any power that threaten[s] male authority is suspected of undermining the national struggle. When that threat come[s] from women, these women are relegated to the statues of ‘whore.’”²¹ Their bodies are made a contested site of shame, purification, and resurrection²² by both the military government and the opposing activists.²³

The military government, in collaboration with the USFK, was largely in charge of manipulating the public consensus on camptowns and camptown prostitutions; for the sake of the alliance, sex workers were privately provided but publicly portrayed as immoral. Aside from the total absence of legal protection, the root of the social disenfranchisement of sex workers lies partly in the teachings of Confucianism imbedded in Korean culture. As in many other cultures, chastity and obedience are held as the most significant virtues for women, thus condemning

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Chungmoo Choi, “Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea,” in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism* (New York & London: Routledge, 1998), 24.

²¹ Ibid.

²² A Christian analogy is apparent in this process: Protestant church groups have joined NGOs against violent crimes against sex workers in camptowns. Katharine H.S. Moon, “South Korean Movements against Militarized Sexual Labor,” *Asian Survey* 39, no. 2 (April 1999): 316.

²³ The scholar of Korean colonial and post-colonial literature Kwon Myung-a examines the metaphor of female body as the nation to be purified in post-Korean War literature. See Myung-a Kwon, *Tangadeuleui jaseojeon: Gjokromanceeui angwabak (탕아들의 자서전: 가족로망스의 안과 밖, Prodigal Sons’ Autobiography: The Inside and Outside of Family Romance)* (Paju: Taehaksa, 2008), 40–55.

prostitution and prostitutes despite their ‘cultivation’ by the state as part of the nation-building efforts. Indeed, while sex workers’ voices are dismissed in society as a whole, camptown sex workers have been further disenfranchised due to their complicated place in the U.S.-South Korea relationship.

Although a few feminist scholars have discussed the public condemnation of camptown sex workers since the 1990s, very little has changed in terms of the protection of sex workers or camptown residents in general.²⁴ The Korean studies scholar Chungmoo Choi argues that there has been self-censorship among women due to the view of camptown prostitution as harmful to national integrity. According to Choi,

[t]he postcolonial Korean discourse of nationalism, compounded by the Confucian patriarchal ideology of chastity demands self-censorship from women not only because of the danger of real rape but because of the suspicion of conspiracy against the already disempowered Korean men. The women who come in close contact with the U.S. in the form of “American soldiers” are deemed dangerous to national integrity. These women are then relegated to the status of “prostitute.” They are not only considered defiled but also traitor to the patriarchally constructed nation and outcasts of the boundary of that nation.²⁵

Choi considers the gendered nature of “masculine nationalism,” and what it means to be a woman in postcolonial Korea. While criticizing the patriarchal ideology of chastity and its demand of self-censorship from women, Choi’s analysis also generalizes the state of all women in South Korea as “victimized, prostituted” bodies; this continues to resonate in the gendered relationship between South Korea and the U.S. beyond the dynamic present in the camptowns.

A crucial signifier to the relationship is evident in the unequal, undemocratic terms of the Status of the Forces Agreement (SOFA) regarding crimes committed against camptown residents

²⁴ Over the past decade, Korean sex workers in camptowns have been replaced by South East Asian women who have been trafficked into numerous camptowns in South Korea. For an assessment of the recent changes and problems of camptown prostitution, see Seungsook Moon, “Camptown Prostitution and the Imperial SOFA: Abuse and Violence against Transnational Camptown Women in South Korea,” in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, ed. Maria Hörn and Seungsook Moon (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 337-365.

²⁵ Chungmoo Choi, “Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea,” 24.

by U.S. GIs, abuses of which protect offenders from arrest and trial under Korean law. Violent crimes committed by GIs against camptown residents, especially against sex workers, “remained largely unacknowledged and unclaimed by the larger Korean society” between the 1950s and 1980s.²⁶ This is in large part the result of junta censorship aimed at stemming public discontent with the U.S. power over the Korean government and the government’s complicity in the arrangement. News of camptown abuses only began to surface during the Roh Tae-woo government, elected in 1987 by the first direct vote since the 1960s.²⁷

Photography has played a significant role in shaping the public reception of a shocking introduction to the violence present in camptowns. On October 28, 1992, Yun Geum-I (윤금이), a sex worker in Dongducheon, a camptown north of Seoul, was murdered by an American soldier named Kenneth Markle, a private in the U.S. Army [Appendix B]. Markle brutalized and desecrated Yun’s body by shoving a Coke bottle into her vagina and 27 centimeters of the trunk of an umbrella into her rectum,²⁸ placing matches in her mouth, and spreading detergent powder all over her body.²⁹ How the forensic photograph of Yun’s body, “found in a pool of blood in the small room that she rented in [a camptown],”³⁰ was initially made public is unclear. The photograph of the murder scene quickly spread through various channels, including weekly

²⁶ Katherine H.S. Moon, “Resurrecting Prostitutes and Overturning Treatise: Gender Politics in the ‘Anti-American’ Movement in South Korea,” 138.

²⁷ Violent crimes against sex workers in camptowns stirred the relevant communities prior to the 1990s. For instance, on July 16, 1971, a GI murdered a camptown sex worker near the city of Daejeon, which hosts Camp Ames. As with almost all other cases of crimes committed by GIs, the USFK was reluctant to turn the accused man over to the South Korean legal system. Organized by sex workers, protests broke out outside Camp Ames; a further series of protests broke out in other camptowns, such as Anjeong-ri in 1971. In response, the U.S.-Korea joint force and the Korean government declared a “Camptown Clean-up Campaign” in the summer of the same year, “as a direct response to the civil unrest and racial violence in Anjeongri.” One result was periodical quarantines of sex workers due to sexually transmitted diseases; they also had to carry ID cards indicating whether they were STD-positive. See Katharine H.S. Moon, “Prostitute Bodies and Gendered States in U.S.-Korea Relations,” in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism* (New York & London: Routledge, 1998), 161–163.

²⁸ Katharine H.S. Moon, “Resurrecting Prostitutes and Overturning Treatise: Gender Politics in the ‘Anti-American’ Movement in South Korea,” 129.

²⁹ Hyun Sook Kim, “Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation: The Representation of Working-Class Women in Popular and Radical Texts,” 181.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

journals and student papers.³¹ The degree of the brutality of the murder was obvious in the photograph of Yun's mutilated body explicitly documenting the details above.³²

While photographs of camptowns had been unavailable or of no interest to the wider public until the 1990s, many activists, especially college students, believed that this photograph portrayed the intrinsic injustices in camptown life. The photograph was reproduced in banners, fliers and publications, under the logic that it needed to be seen by as many people as possible to alert the public as to what was happening in camptowns. Whereas funerary portraits are usually displayed for the purpose of commemoration and activism in memorials, the use of Yun's forensic photograph was extreme; many women's activists have problematized the explicit portrayal of extraordinary violence against a woman as misogynistic sensationalism capitalizing less on the shock of the physical damage than on the sexualized content.³³

Indeed, as a young woman encountering the news, I was shocked by the graphic descriptions of Yun's mutilated body even before seeing the photograph. It is difficult to precisely recall how I or others around me felt about the news at the time; nonetheless, it was clear to me that the sensationalized news induced, aside from extreme anger, a mixed feeling of sympathy and shame. It is this sense of shame that so frequently comes to be associated with camptown prostitution, leading to the chastisement of sex workers rather than a scrutiny of the roots of the situation—that is, how camptown prostitution was systematized by the Korean government in 'service' to international superpowers.

Therefore, although photographs of camptown sex workers were taken during the junta, the photograph of Yun's stripped, mutilated body began to represent all camptown sex workers,

³¹ Eun-A, "고 윤금이 현장사진 아직도 사용되나- 선전효과 위해 '도구'로 써선 안돼," *여성주의 저널 일다*, August 1, 2005, http://www.ildaro.com/sub_read.html?uid=2510§ion=sc1 (Accessed June 21, 2011).

³² The photograph is easily obtainable by using an online search engine.

³³ Eun-A, "고 윤금이 현장사진 아직도 사용되나- 선전효과 위해 '도구'로 써선 안돼."

with both positive and problematic results. The brutality of Yun's murder, known through the horrific details captured in the photograph, became one of the first violent crimes against camptown sex workers escalating "anti-American sentiments among Koreans since the [G]wangju massacre of 1980."³⁴ However, as a symbol of the camptown sex workers as a whole, the photograph presented all such prostitutes as victims even as it warned them, and the general public, of what happens to immoral women. Such media sensationalism, heightened especially by the forensic photographs of Yun, played a significant role in this chastising of camptown sex workers even as victims of violent abuse and murder. The following section discusses how this and other photographs of camptown sex workers have thus fulfilled, sometimes unintentionally, specific metaphors created by the state.

Camptown Prostitution and the Narrative of the Emasculated Nation: Kuwabara, Burri & Kang

Park's military regime consolidated the system of camptown prostitution in the 1960s. During this period, "the military regime actively promoted the development of camptown prostitution through" political measures including the establishment of "special districts," cultivating the prostitution of Korean women to U.S. GIs.³⁵ Since it was a highly lucrative 'industry' that earned foreign currency (U.S. dollars), the Park regime "viewed camptown prostitution not only as necessary for American soldiers to continue protecting South Korea, but also as beneficial for economic development."³⁶ This institutionalization of camptown prostitution was one of the 'shadowy developments' of the Park regime, hidden behind the rapid industrialization and urbanization.

³⁴ Hyun Sook Kim, "Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation: The Representation of Working-Class Women in Popular and Radical Texts," 189.

³⁵ S. Seungsook Moon, "Regulating Desire, Managing the Empire: U.S. Military Prostitution in South Korea, 1945-1970," 58, 61.

³⁶ Ibid.

Photographers were rarely allowed to take pictures of camptowns and camptown prostitution, and they could not be published. The few photographs of camptowns and camptown sex workers reproduced in and outside South Korea were taken by non-Korean photographers. One of the most prominent of these was the Japanese photographer Kuwabara Shisei, whose documentary work in the years following Park's military coup received substantial attention in South Korea.³⁷ Kuwabara Shisei (b. 1936), having worked in Minamata photographing mercury victims in 1960-62, came to South Korea in 1964, shortly before the reestablishment of the diplomatic relationship between South Korea and Japan; Kuwabara made multiple trips to Korea, two to three trips annually.³⁸ Throughout the 1960s and '70s, Kuwabara photographed the lives of Koreans struggling to recuperate the war-stricken nation while also dealing with the rise of a military regime aimed at taking control of every aspect of civilian life. Many of the areas he photographed during this period were classified as prohibited, and the subjects of his photographs were considered ideologically ambiguous by the military government.³⁹ Nonetheless, he was able to photograph scenes inaccessible to most Koreans, in large part because he was not a Korean national.⁴⁰

As a freelance photojournalist, Kuwabara came to the bustling camptown of Dongducheon, and photographed the interactions between sex workers and GIs. One of Kuwabara's Dongducheon photographs shows GIs in uniform with Korean women, escorts,

³⁷ A retrospective of Kuwabara's documentary work of the lives of Korean people in the 1960s and 70s was held at Hanmi Museum of Photography in Seoul in November, 2008. An exhibition catalog of Kuwabara's work includes photographs of gijichon women. See Shisei, *Kuwabara Shisei: Naegabarabon gyukdonggeui Hanguk (구와바라 시세이: 내가 바라본 격동의 한국)*.

³⁸ Kuwabara, "이웃사촌: 구와바라 시세이." Despite widespread protest against the reestablishment of official foreign relations with Japan, the military government of Park Chung-hee signed the Treaty of Basic Relations between Japan and Republic of Korea on June 22, 1965. Kuwabara first came to South Korea before the treaty was signed, and recounts experiencing some difficulties in making the trip. See Kuwabara, *Chwalyounggeumji: Hanguk-gyeokdonggeui 4bansegi (촬영금지: 한국-격동의 4 반세기)*, 14-17.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

walking on the street [Figure 5.1]. The couple on the right holds hands, glancing toward their right as they walk. The GI on the left looks at the front of a parked car, smiling or talking. In front of him is a Korean woman touching her hairdo. Another couple stands behind the four people, their legs and heels visible behind the couples in the foreground. Another Kuwabara photograph depicts a group of GIs and a couple of escorts by the entrance of an establishment, possibly a brothel [Figure 5.2]. The GIs seem to be talking with someone inside the humble building, their backs turned from Kuwabara. An escort, well-dressed and beautiful, turns her head toward the camera; Kuwabara frames her with a metal structure resembling the horizontal bar used for exercise. To her right is another escort, looking much more lethargic.

Both photographs, taken outside and from a distance, allow reconstruction of the scene. Having seen the GIs and barmaids walking on the street, Kuwabara approached them, yet maintained a certain distance to avoid disturbing the couples, walking backward to photograph them frontally. Kuwabara tried to capture the “right” moment for exposure. Kuwabara’s representation of the interaction between the GIs and barmaids in his photographs maintains a certain distance between the photographer, subject, and viewer. The photographs depict the camptown sex workers and GIs, but, as is typical of a photojournalistic work, it is not an image captured through direct communication with or consent from the subject. This working style is present throughout the works made in Dongducheon. In another photograph, two GIs and two escorts walk side by side on the street [Figure 5.3]. While the soldiers appear to be undisturbed by Kuwabara’s presence, the women, wearing sunglasses, are trying to cover their faces: the woman on the right is about to cover her face with her hands and the one on the left holds up an object blocking her face and waves her hand to the right as if to tell Kuwabara to move to the side. The women’s gestures show that they do not want to be in this ‘intruder’s’ photographs,

potentially indicating their feelings about the nature of their interactions with the GIs. In this photograph, Kuwabara has also caught a couple embracing in the distance, behind the bush on the right; the couple is clearly unaware of being photographed.

Such ‘successful’ images of the interactions between American soldiers and their escorts in Dongducheon, while revealing what goes on in camptowns in the 1960s, carry the taint of this intrusiveness in Kuwabara’s work. As his photographs of camptowns are among the very few made at the time, they are nonetheless valuable records, frequently used in publications. Aside from photography books published in South Korea, these photographs have appeared in books and articles assessing the relationship between the hegemony of U.S. militarism and the role of the state in camptown prostitution, such as in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present*, written by Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon. This book includes several photographs by Kuwabara, such as Figure 5.1, all depicting interactions between GIs and sex workers. One shows a couple in front of the entrance of a GI club in Paju, a city adjacent to Dongducheon [Figure 5.4]. The GI holds the woman’s waist from behind. This image is reproduced in a chapter discussing the history and problems of camptown prostitution in South Korea. Although the caption indicates the author of the photograph, location, and date, the short description, “A couple outside a GI club in P’aju,” does not provide any information on how and for what purpose the photograph was taken, nor does it mention who Kuwabara Shisei was and why he was there in 1964. Consequently, the photograph becomes an index of the content of the chapter.

Likewise, the identity of the woman in the photograph automatically becomes “the camptown sex worker” discussed in the chapter, the “victim” taken advantage of by both the U.S. troops and the Korean government. As a result, the representational relation formed between the

text and the photograph nullifies any possibility for the camptown sex worker to form her own subjectivity. Similarly, without any information on the making of the photographs, the city of Dongducheon (and Paju) and Camp Casey, Camp Nimble, Camp Hovey, Camp Castle, and Camp Mobile, the U.S. military bases located in and around Dongducheon, come to represent the unspecified site of issues discussed in the chapter. There is not room for discussion of the issues arising from this specific photograph, including the vulnerability of the sex workers in the making of the photographs, in itself an abuse of power. Thus, even though the text is an important assessment of camptown prostitution and the photographs valuable documents, the relationship between text and image ironically inhibits the deconstruction of the myth of camptowns and “camptown women” by reaffirming the image of camptown sex workers as passive victims. Moreover, the “protagonists” of the text and photographs are not allowed to form their own subjectivities even in the text; as the sex workers in Dongducheon have been “represented” by a curious photographer from overseas, the chapter on camptown sex workers is “spoken for” by an academic in the U.S.⁴¹

A more significant effect of the indexical power of the photographs is their collective creation, or confirmation, of metaphors surrounding the U.S. and South Korea relationship. The interactions between U.S. GIs and sex workers came to represent relations between the U.S. and South Korea: the U.S. as the masculine, military presence of the GI, South Korea as the feminine, subservient sex worker. This metaphor was first created during the Korean War, stemming not from representations but from the actions of the military. Chungmoo Choi recounts how American soldiers used to indiscriminately call from passing military trucks to all passersby for

⁴¹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 70.

“saekssi (young women)” in the years following the Korean War.⁴² She argues that the call was not just “a public declaration of the soldier’s intention to violate Korean women,” but “an indiscreet threat of metaphorical rape of the nation, which was “a display of masculine domination over the women and men of Korea, constructing all Korean people as the sexualized feminine Other.”⁴³ With this metaphor, a semiotic reading of the female body as the Korean nation and the male body as the U.S. becomes readily available. For South Korean military authorities (i.e. Park and his successors’ military regimes), the feminized former colony had to be militarized “to recuperate its virility and join the ranks of the imperialistic order.”⁴⁴ Choi’s salient assessment of the gendered state of South Korea as a post-colonial nation becomes corporeal in images of sex workers and GIs when they are reproduced to illustrate text on camptown sex workers, even if that text is intended to revise the history of camptown prostitution in South Korea.

Thus, despite the good intentions in using the photographs, their indexical power may contribute to the silencing of the sex workers, as they are “spoken for” by the elite nationalist activists and international scholars, their identities defined by the combination of text and image. The real people in the photographs come to represent the U.S. as a patriarchal, virile figure and Korea as a helpless, poverty-stricken victim.⁴⁵ As a result, readers of *Over There* also begin to “read” the photographs of Kuwabara as indicative or representative of the U.S.-Korea relationship; this assumption is realized as well within the context of perpetual metaphorization of the East-West relationship in gendered terms. Katharine H.S. Moon’s problematization of the

⁴² Chungmoo Choi, “Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea,” 15.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁵ Kim Hyun Sook problematizes the subjectivity of the nationalist movement against violent crimes committed by GIs; the role of sex workers within the movement has been minimized by undermining their efforts and not letting them speak up about their experiences. Kim’s approach is immensely influenced by Gayatri Spivak’s important essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?”.

gendered/sexualized metaphors argues that “the perpetuation of static dichotomy, in which the women of weaker nations are always oppressed and exploited by men of stronger nations, blurs our foci of analysis and activism.”⁴⁶ Moon further argues,

[the] point here is that between legally sovereign states, the weaker is not merely a passive recipient of the actions of the stronger. Consequently, exploitation of the women of a weaker state is not automatic or constant. Strong and weak states alike make calculated choices regarding women’s roles and values in society at a given time. To attribute the exploitation and abuse of women to the weakness and passivity, or feminization, of a client state is to exempt that state from taking responsibility for its actions toward and regarding women. It strips the weaker state of agency and over-emphasizes the role of the stronger state.⁴⁷

Both Hyun Sook Kim and Moon carefully scrutinize the exploitation of sex workers and the dangers they are exposed to in their everyday life. Their contributions to the scholarship on militarism in South Korea have expanded beyond the binary of the strong and weak states—represented by the perpetrator and victim, and usually through male GIs and female sex workers—by problematizing the limit of such configurations. In this regard, the photographs of Kuwabara, and the use of his photographs in *Over There* and other publications, should also be problematized and examined; when used in these limited contexts, we do not see in the photographs the complicity of South Korea and the many other people of Dongducheon involved in this sexual “transaction.” The complicity of the military regime of South Korea as a problematizing factor is in fact a purposeful complication; the military governments propagated the metaphor of the U.S. as patriarchal figure protector of South Korea against the enemy state, which conforms to the gendered relationship between the two nations, to create a sense of emergency and thus solidify popular support.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ K. Katharine H.S. Moon, “Prostitute Bodies and Gendered States in U.S.-Korea Relations,” 142.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴⁸ Chungmoo Choi, “Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea,” 18.

Moon tackles this issue by asserting that scholarship on the topic has largely excluded the Korean government and military from the picture; she points out that, during Park Chung-hee's military regime, what had "historically grown out of the exigencies of war, Korean women as camp followers, became instituted as an economic and social system by governmental authorities, both U.S. and Korean."⁴⁹ Korean governmental authorities abused sex workers and their situations by institutionalizing the prostitution of "a segment of the Korean female population for the purpose of economic and military gains, and on the part of the U.S. military to assume that prostitution was a necessary evil and Korean women mere commodities, whose bodies and human dignity were disposable."⁵⁰ Therefore, any semiotic "reading" of the subjects' bodies in Kuwabara's photographs as representative of the two nations may become an act of succumbing to the age-old Orientalist imagination of the East, particularly of the East Asian and South East Asian region, as a "sexualized feminine Other."

Another rare collection of camptown photographs from the 1960s precedes Kuwabara's work. A Swiss photographer and filmmaker, René Burri (b. 1933), took his camera into the camptown establishment to photograph couples in "in action" in the newly militarized nation. As a Magnum photographer, he traveled extensively throughout Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Japan from 1956 to 1959.⁵¹ In 1961, the year of Park's military coup, Burri went to South Korea and photographed the recent political transitions. Burri's main subjects were the interactions between soldiers and civilians, whether Korean soldiers arresting a young man

⁴⁹ Katharine H.S. Moon, "Prostitute Bodies and Gendered States in U.S.-Korea Relations," 167.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Magnum, "René Burri-Biography," *Magnum Photos*, n.d., http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP=XSpecific_MAG.Biography_VPage&AID=2K7O3R14YE42 (Accessed May 19, 2011).

smoking American cigarettes, banned under the military junta, or U.S. soldiers courting Korean sex workers in a “special district” [Figure 5.5].⁵²

Burri photographed interior scenes in clubs in the special district of Taesong-dong. These photographs show the barmaids and GIs engaged in much more explicitly sexual actions than in Kuwabara’s photographs. In one of the photographs, a barmaid wearing a pearl necklace and a revealing dress is whispering in a GI’s ear [Figure 5.6].⁵³ The photograph is highly composed, with a clearly focused couple in the foreground and another couple in the blurry background. The viewer does not see the face of the GI, whose back is turned, but only that of the barmaid, with half-closed eyes and dark lipstick. In the out-of-focus background, another couple is kissing, sitting on a couch; because the focus is on the couple in the foreground, it is difficult to detect further details of the couple in the background, although the GI appears to be white. The woman in the foreground projects intense pleasure; the intensity of her facial expression makes the scene look almost dramatized. The women, both engaged in the physical work of pleasing the GIs, appear explicitly filling out a role/job in comparison to the escorts seen in Kuwabara’s photographs taken on the street.

Another photograph taken by Burri in South Korea shows a sex worker standing by the door of a brothel or bar with two GIs about to enter [Figure 5.5]. The woman facing Burri holds a fan close to her face to cover it. The viewer sees the GIs from behind. The pose reappears in a photograph of a woman who looks as if she is giving a lap dance to a GI [Figure 5.7]. She holds a fan close to her face while turning back to see what is going on behind her; her eyes barely peek above the fan. The GI, whose face is blocked by the woman’s body, holds the woman by

⁵² Seungsook Moon, “Regulating Desire, Managing the Empire: U.S. Military Prostitution in South Korea, 1945-1970,” 62.

⁵³ The photograph appears on the cover of Katharine H.S. Moon’s *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

her waist. Judging from the outfit and the painting of gold fish on the fan, the women in these two photographs, and possibly also the GI, are the same. If this is the case, Burri caught the moment when two GIs were being escorted by the women to the bar in daylight. As a white man, Burri could have gained access to the bar to take his photographs, as most of these places were not open to Korean nationals. Even so, it is clear that the woman did not wish to be photographed, as she continues to cover her face with a fan. This deliberate exposure of the sex workers' faces is in stark contrast to the generally unseen faces of the GIs.⁵⁴ The covering of the barmaid's face with her fan shows that she is aware of the vulnerability of her position, and of the threat photography poses for her should she be publicly identified as a *yanggonju*, commonly translated as 'Western princess' but referring to camptown sex workers who "serve Western men."

The hiding gesture signifies how these women were caught in the power dynamics between the "new occupier," the U.S. military, and the "once-again occupied" Korean men, who chose to ally themselves to this new occupier in order to recuperate—to remasculinize. In this environment of hyper-masculine competition between the U.S. military and decolonized Korean men, the art historian Kim Young-ok argues that an intense abhorrence toward women stems from the meeting between the ideology of patriarchy and the damaged masculinity of the post-colonial nation.⁵⁵ The emasculated Korean men please their ally, the hyper-masculine U.S. military, through the prostitution of the Korean women; while this allows them to recover their masculinity, they resent the women for not being chaste representatives of the nation.

⁵⁴ Only one of the six photographs by Burri that I have seen shows the face of a GI; it is blurry because he is turning his face.

⁵⁵ Young-ok Kim, "Gioekui Jeongchihak: Keutnajiianeun jeonjaenggwa gender (기억의 정치학: 끝나지 않은 전쟁과 젠더, Politik der Erinnerung: der noch nicht beendete Krieg und das Geschlecht)," *Hyeondaemisulsa Yeongu* (현대미술사 연구, *Journal of History of Modern Art*), no. 28 (December 2011): 321–322. "예를 들어 기지촌 클럽 여성들, 즉 '양공주'라는 기표의 상이한 기의들은 탈식민 한국 사회의 시공간에서 식민경험이 있는 한국 남성이 (신)신민지배자 남성(미군)과 식민지 (한국)여성을 사이에 두고 별인 초남성성의 경쟁을 잘 보여준다. 후기식민 한국의 근대화 역사 속에서 초남성성과 그에 따른 심각한 여성 혐오의 증상이 나타나게 되는 것 또한 이처럼 가부장제 이데올로기와 후기식민 국민국가의 손상된 남성의식이 맞물려 빚어낸 결과이다."

By following the GIs and sex workers from the street into their working establishments, Burri creates a narrative, constructing the story he wishes to tell the viewer. He chronicles their interactions from meeting to “service,” portraying the women as mysterious, seductive, provocative, and yet shy characters, especially in Figure 5.6. The effect of such narration has the viewer “reading” the erotic story from the GI’s, or at least the man’s, point of view. As the figures in Casper David Friedrich’s paintings turn their backs to allow the viewer to identify themselves with the figures, Burri’s deliberate hiding of the GIs’ faces in the photographs allows the (male) viewer to immerse himself completely in the story. This also puts Burri himself in the position of power over the sex workers; therefore, Burri’s photographs are products of both occupier and male desire, as much about fulfilling his own imagining of the fantasy of the “Western princess” as capturing its real manifestation.

Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin: “Commemorative” Photographs of Dongducheon

As these assessments of Kuwabara and Burri’s photographs make clear, critical issues arise from the ways in which photographs are used to represent camptowns and camptown sex workers. Although these images are rare—perhaps even because they are exceptions, depicting subjects avoided by Korean photographers—the photographs require scrutiny. Not all camptown photographs, however, are taken from the perspective of a photojournalist; a different mode of photography enables the viewer to ‘see’ the issues of camptown prostitution in other lights. This is the case with a series of photographs, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin (Dongducheon Commemorative Photographs)*, by the Korean photographer Kang Yong Suk (b. 1959). The work of Kang Yong Suk complicates the metaphors otherwise present in the discourse on camptown prostitution, raising different questions about the issues of a sex industry

institutionalized by the state.⁵⁶ The most striking distinction between the photographs of Kuwabara and Burri and Kang's *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, photographed in 1984, is that the latter confronts the subjects, the GIs and sex workers, much more directly, inviting them to participate in the image-making.

Since the 1980s, Kang has taken photographs that depict the lingering impact of the Korean War, especially in terms of the effects of militarism in the lives of the Korean people.⁵⁷ As a university student majoring in photography in Seoul, Kang ventured into Dongducheon with a sense of duty to record the marginalized lives in the city, despite the military government's strict censorship and surveillance of the activities of college students. Kang met an American photographer who took photographs inside clubs; as he grew ill, Kang took over the job, taking a leave of absence from Joongang University. Kang worked as a *chuljang sajinsa* (studio photographer on site) and stayed in Dongducheon for about a year.⁵⁸ Once a burgeoning city, Dongducheon faced a crumbling economy and political negligence since the end of the Park Chung-hee regime. This decline was in fact brought upon by the city's history of hosting foreign army bases since the colonial period. Almost a half of Dongducheon's territory is currently occupied by the camps, and the city has long been a synonym for "military camptown" among

⁵⁶ Katharine H.S. Moon, "Prostitute Bodies and Gendered States in U.S.-Korea Relations," 152. "From the Korean government's perspective, the women were instrumental to improving the daily life of U.S. soldiers stationed in Korea and meeting the demands of the USFK for increased camptown control. Then President Park Chung Hee made the U.S. soldiers' quality of life a priority in U.S.-Korea relations."

⁵⁷ Hyowon Kim, "'Hangukjeonjaeng Ginyeombi'jeon yeolgoitneun Sajinjakga Kang Yong Suk ('한국전쟁 기념비'전 열고 있는 사진작가 강용석)," *Art Museums (한국사립미술관협회)*, January 11, 2010, http://www.artmuseums.kr/admin/?corea=sub1_4&no=49. In the interview, Kang states that the underlying question throughout his oeuvre is "how to understand the state of Korean society since the Korean War." "제 작업의 주제는 한국전쟁 이후의 한국의 사회상황을 어떻게 이해해야 하는가,입니다."

⁵⁸ Seungwoo Chae, "한국전쟁 기념비 - 강용석 사진 - 채승우의 사진 pHOTO GAmE #2", July 28, 2010, <http://blog.chosun.com/blog.log.view.screen?blogId=1213&logId=4868359> (Accessed May 22, 2011).

Koreans,⁵⁹ reflecting the imagery produced by Kuwabara and Burri and reinforced by other media portrayals of camptowns.⁶⁰

Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin comprises scenes from a bar in Bosan-ri (Bosan district), Dongducheon, photographed in 1984. In the 1980s, commercial photographers were present inside clubs and bars to take *ginyeomsajin* (기념사진, translated as “professionally made ‘commemorative’ photographs”) for the clients who wanted them.⁶¹ Kang’s *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* (*Dongducheon Commemorative Photographs*) consists of “commemorative” photographs of young American soldiers and Korean barmaids inside “a small town bar, the door of which had a warning sign of ‘No Korean Citizens Allowed.’”⁶² Most of the fifteen photographs in the series depict intimate moments between the GIs and barmaids. The photographs of the couples resemble snapshots, casual portraits reflecting common vernacular photographic practices. Couples sit or stand close to each other with their arms locked [Figure 5.8] or holding hands [Figure 5.9]. Some sitters appear as if they do not care about posing for Kang, ignoring typical poses and manners such as smiling or looking directly at the camera lens [Figure 5.10]. As a result, while the photographs exist in the same context of camptown prostitution, Kang’s images of the GIs and barmaids differ significantly from the stereotypical image of camptown sex workers in Burri’s photographs.

Aside from the fact that images of American soldiers and sex workers had rarely been exposed to the public, and certainly not in the form of an art work, Kang’s photographs are

⁵⁹ Insa Art Space, *Dongducheon: A Walk to Remember, a Walk to Envision*, (Seoul: Insa Art Space, 2008), 2: 2.

⁶⁰ The themes of the Korean movies about camptowns have been limited to camptown prostitution or the life of marginalized mixed-race children born of camptown sex workers and GIs, as depicted in Kim Gi-duk’s movie, *Address Unknown* (수취인불명, 2001).

⁶¹ Seungwoo Chae, “한국전쟁 기념비 - 강용석 사진 - 채승우의 사진 pHOto GAmE #2.”

⁶² Yong Suk Kang, *Kang Yong Suk* (Yeongwol, Gangwon-do: Dong-gang Museum of Photography, 2010), 89.

shocking in respect to the “rawness” of the images.⁶³ All the photographs in his series exhibit the couples’ intimacy and closeness, and, most significantly, their comfort with the presence of the photographer. This is due to their genesis in the vernacular practice of taking snapshot portraits for personal enjoyment and memory. Just as the American photographer Diane Arbus, an outsider to a particular group of persons she photographed, had broken the safe, courteous distance between the photographer and sitter in the 1960s, Kang stepped into the private moments of his subjects. This was made possible because he chose to become a commercial photographer working inside bars and clubs in Dongducheon, not an artist “directing and aestheticizing” his subjects or a photojournalist exposing those subjects to the public.

Moreover, rather than posing for ideal shots, the soldiers and barmaids make gestures and expressions that do not necessarily allow viewers to make assumptions about the mood or relationship between them. The photographs “indifferently” illustrate what goes on inside the camptown clubs, as if to point out the difference between the seductive images projected by the camptown sex workers to their clients and the actual emotions of each party. For example, in most of the fifteen photographs of *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, the GIs—twelve African-American and three White soldiers—are mostly smiling, sometimes awkwardly [Figure 5.11]; however, the Korean women show a range of expressions and gestures: where one barmaid smiles, another might appear sad, and yet another stern [Figure 5.9]. The different expressions of the women in the photographs of *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* make it difficult for the viewer to generalize the women and their feelings about their jobs. Sometimes they convey subordination and reluctance; more often, however, the barmaids in the photographs appear confident, self-contained, and happy.

⁶³ Korean artist Goh Seung-wook’s video *Chimeul bureuneun norae* (*침을 부르는 노래*, 2008) also uses vernacular snapshot photographs of a camptown sex worker. In the video, however, Goh uses special effects to blur and darken the image so that the sitter’s features become mostly unrecognizable.

The women's style of dress and makeup vary as well: the stern woman of Figure 5.9 does not wear makeup, while other women wear colorful eye shadow and faux eyelashes as well as flashy accessories. Indeed, sex workers in camptowns 'adopted' different styles depending on who their client groups were. For instance, a woman with an African American partner wears an "afro" and heavy makeup with a pair of sunglasses [Figure 5.12], while a woman with a White soldier sitting in front of the bar wears a yellow shirt underneath a golden corduroy dress [Figure 5.13]. Another photograph shows a couple standing by a corner of the bar; the Black GI wears a dark suit that contrasts with the brightness of the barmaid's red dress and headdress [Figure 5.14]. According to S. Moon, camptown clubs were racially segregated, reflecting the unofficial (and technically illegal) segregation within the U.S. military in South Korea and elsewhere.⁶⁴ Camptown nightlife was "divided into a white entertainment area and a black entertainment area. Club women were also divided into those who served white GIs and those who served black GIs."⁶⁵

The varying gestures, expressions, and levels of ease articulated in the photographs indicate that Kang did not attempt to direct the sitters or create a narrative imagining of their relationships. Kang's depictions of the club scenes are frank, exhibiting neither erotic nor dramatic interactions between the GIs and barmaids. This may be due to the fact that the GIs and the barmaids chose to make photographic portraits to "commemorate" their time together, rather than being 'captured' by the lens without consent or as staged for someone else's narrative.⁶⁶ The photography critic Park Pyoung Jong states that there was "no intervention by the photographer" in the portraits since it was "the customers" who wished to be photographed; the

⁶⁴ See Seungsook Moon, "Regulating Desire, Managing the Empire: U.S. Military Prostitution in South Korea, 1945-1970," 52.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ It is tacitly understood that the sitters for the portraits did not know that their portraits were going to be part of an artwork by Kang.

subjects controlled how they would be depicted.⁶⁷ The *ginyeomsajin*, in other words, show the sitters in a way they wished to be shown. The settings of the photographs are personalized: five couples out of fifteen chose full-shot portraits, embracing while smiling at the camera [Figures 5.14-15]. In most photographs, Kang includes objects surrounding the sitters such as bar tables and chairs, wall mirrors, clocks, and paintings [Figure 5.17]. The glasses and other objects on the tables show the simplicity of the kind of entertainment that goes on in the bar. These are scenes of camptown entertainment kept secret from most Korean nationals, what the state would not allow the wider public to scrutinize lest they realize the ways in which camptown prostitution was systematized by the state.

As the fifteen photographs clearly show, the frankness of the photographs does not indicate explicit portrayals of prostitution in the series. The subtext of prostitution is present in these images, but none of the images Kang included in *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* reveals the kind of “service” evident in Burri’s photographs. While some of Kang’s photographs clearly convey the power dynamics between the GIs and barmaids, others are much more ambiguous, resisting recognition of the women as simply subservient.⁶⁸ In Figure 5.15, both the GI and the barmaid appear confident, loving, and comfortable with the situation of Kang’s portraiture; their unpretentious gestures make Kang’s photographs distinctive, raw, and powerful. Kang depicts a scene that was imaginary for the many Koreans who had been taught to believe that such conduct did not need to be viewed to exist in the mind. Without access to the camptowns, the imaginary scenes remained intact for the general public, reinforcing the victimized, submissive, shameful

⁶⁷ Pyeong Jong Park, “Multilateral View on Reality of Division: From Dongducheon Commemorative Photographs to Korean War Monuments (분단현실의 다각적 조망: <동두천 기념사진>에서 <한국전쟁 기념비>까지),” in *Kang Yong Suk (강용석)* (Harong-ri, Gangwon-do: Dong-gang Museum of Photography, 2010), 4.

⁶⁸ I use the term “service workers” here to point out that both the servicemen of the USFK and the sex workers of Dongducheon were serving the will/desire of others--the United States and Korean governments and the USFK, as well as the members of the USFK in the case of the latter.

stereotypes of the camptown sex workers.⁶⁹ By bringing the officially condemned and privately encouraged environment directly to viewers, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* challenged the officially sanctioned narratives of the camptowns.

The ambiguity of the power dynamics in the relationships portrayed through Kang's photographs of GIs and barmaids also complicates the metaphor of gendered nations. In Figure 5.10 a soldier is kissing a Korean barmaid with his right hand pressed on her chest and neck. The woman seems uninterested in Kang's making of the photograph; she looks away with an expression that is perhaps a mixture of sadness and remorse, while sitting on the man's lap. This careless expression and body language makes the scene daringly intimate, for the content of the photograph strikes the viewer as if s/he has caught a glimpse of something that was not supposed to be seen. This intimacy does not come from eroticism or a fulfillment of the viewer's voyeuristic desire; although the man is kissing the woman, there is hardly any sexual sentiment present in the scene. In another photograph, a Black GI and Korean barmaid sit at a table [Figure 5.9]; all the other tables in the photograph are empty. They hold hands, facing the camera directly. While the woman rests her head on the man's shoulder, looking straight into the camera, the man looks slightly more reserved. Although they are physically close to each other, their impassive facial expressions, especially the woman's, do not reflect close engagement or affection. It is difficult to see the woman as "serving" the man in this photograph, challenging the assumption of a coercive power dynamic between the pair.

⁶⁹ Businesses that provide prostitution outside camptowns are not difficult to find throughout cities across South Korea. They vary in "business types" from "room salons," where young women are employed to assist their male customers, to "massage parlors," and even to "noraebang," commonly known as karaoke in North America. While these businesses are not brothels, the titles such as bars and massage parlors create a tacit understanding that these places may offer sexual services. Sex workers in general are more stigmatized than the proprietors or their "clients," who are mostly men, but camptown sex workers have been even more stigmatized due to their service to foreign men.

To bring such intimacy to the photographs, Kang first established intimacy with his subjects. Kang frequented the bar at Bosan-ri as an openly commercial photographer, his position as a snapshot portrait photographer accepted by the proprietor, the customers (GIs), and employees (barmaids/sex workers). The GIs paid a small fee to Kang, and in turn, he made photographs for the couples who willingly posed for the portraits. These differences in purpose (documentary vs. vernacular), environment (streets vs. a bar), and participation (non-consensual vs. willing) between Kang's work and that of Kuwabara and Burri are conveyed through what is exposed, who exposes, and how they are exposed in the photographs. Kang's portraits do not stand in for an interracial/national relationship *in toto*; rather, each photograph in the series is an individualized portrayal of contempt, desire, violence, affection, and memory.

This vernacular aspect makes *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* a compelling counternarrative to the subject-erasing works of Kuwabara and Burri. *Ginyeomsajin* ("commemorative" photographs), after all, are about the sitters' desire to capture the moment, preserve the memory, by revisiting the moment through the photograph. The practice of *ginyeomsajin*, in this case, was primarily to meet the interest of the GIs, who would be eventually reassigned to a U.S. military base in a different country or return to the U.S. The desire to "commemorate" their relationships with Korean partners is writ in these photographs. That the *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* photographs were conceived and created as intimate, personal objects of memory, and not as reportage photographs, intensifies the complexity of the photographs and thus complicates their reception. Through the familiar practice of snapshot portraits taken during the GI's 'night out,' the work demands that the viewer look at the subjects—one cast as the subjugated Other—and at the same time face the history of the national practice of institutionalized prostitution, framing Korean civil society as one of the perpetrators.

Whereas the photographs of Kuwabara, Burri, and Kang discussed in this section have largely been contextualized to emphasize the factuality of what they portray, Kuwabara and Kang's work has also been exhibited and discussed in an artistic context.⁷⁰ The following section examines the aestheticization of vernacular photographs depicting sex workers; through comparative assessments of the archive of Mexican border town photographs at the Alkek Library in Texas and Kang's *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*.

Issues of Archiving and Reproduction of Camptown Sex Workers' Photographs

Photographs depicting sex workers are regularly found in contemporary art, embodying a wide range of ways in which artists/photographers approach their subjects, how the subjects are portrayed in their work, and how the work is received and contextualized in art criticism and history. One of the most well-known series is Nan Goldin's images of C, a transvestite dancer in Bangkok, photographed in 1992 [Figure 5.18]. In reference to these works, art critics tend to emphasize the relationship between Goldin and the subject, whom she befriended to allow for a sense of mutual participation in the act of photo-making.⁷¹ Goldin's approach, referred to as "quasi-documentary" by critics such as James Crump, breaches "the antipodal relationship of subject and object, to eradicate the perceived distance created by the camera."⁷² The viewer may feel a sense of intimacy when observing C "behind the scene," putting on makeup for a performance. As a result, Goldin's work accentuates her creation of it by inherently highlighting the effort she put into making the photographs—traveling halfway across the world, befriending

⁷⁰ Kang's *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* was included in the exhibition, *The Century of Korean Photography*, in Cologne in 2000; the retrospective exhibition of Kuwabara held in Hanmi Museum of Photography, Seoul, in 2008 included his photographs of Dongducheon.

⁷¹ See, for example, the six essays by critics, including Arthur C. Danto, about Nan Goldin's work in the special issue of *Parkett*, no. 57 (1999): 62-111.

⁷² James Crump, "Quasi-Documentary: Evolution of a Documentary Style," *New Art Examiner* 23 (June 1998): 25.

a stranger, immersing herself in the Thai sex industry; indeed, the viewer may learn more about Goldin than about C or the sex industry in Thailand. The photographs of C neither question the power dynamics of the Thai sex-tourism industry nor explore the capacity of the photographic medium to demystify the nature of C's work.

Jeff Wall's *No* (1983) [Figure 5.19] removes focus from the individual sex worker by making his true subject the fictitiousness of photography, creating a meticulously staged scene where a man walks by sex workers soliciting clients on the street. By presenting the image as a life-sized light box, Wall provides a sensationalistic photographic experience resembling a cinematic production, dramatically different from the experience of looking at standard paper prints. Moreover, the title's ambiguity twists the narrative of the scene by complicating who says it: it may be the man saying "no" to the sex worker, but it could also be the woman's response to the viewer's assumption regarding her profession. The title even invokes the photographer's own exclamation of "no" to the history of representation which demands certain ways of image-making and viewing. Such questions are apparently more pertinent for art critics than an examination of Wall's careful employment of the subject of prostitution to raise them.⁷³

As with Goldin's relationship with her subject, Wall's direction of the scene has been so central to the reception of the work that the issues of the individual sex workers in the images, and of their industry, are relatively unexplored.⁷⁴ Such issues are more present and easily examined in a body of work depicting female sex workers and their clients at the Alkek Library

⁷³ For example, in her analysis of *No*, Katrina Mitcheson eschews a discussion on the subject or subjectivity of the work and only focuses the issues of fiction in Wall's oeuvre while applying Roland Barthes's concept of punctum. See Katrina Mitcheson, "Allowing the Accidental; the Interplay between Intentionality and Realism in Photographic Art," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 8 (2010), <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=588>. (Accessed July 9, 2011); also see Thomas Crow, "Profane Illuminations: Social History and the Art of Jeff Wall," *Artforum International* 31 (February 1993): 62-69.

⁷⁴ There are more examples of photographs depicting sex workers, such as the recent portraits and testimonies of phone sex workers in the United States by photographer Philip Toledano. Nonetheless, the photographs share little with Kang's approach to the subject in both aesthetic and conceptual aspects. See Philip Toledano, "Philip Toledano: Phone Sex," *Aperture*, Winter 2008.

and its Special Collections division at Texas State University, an archive of vernacular photographs consisting largely of snapshots of people inside clubs, as well as portraits of sex workers, in a Mexico-U.S. border town that came to be known as Zona de Tolerancia (zone of permissiveness) or “Boystown.”⁷⁵ Since the early 1970s, brothels have been the main attraction for both Mexican and American men in Boystown and similar border towns. The photographs in the TSU archives were taken by photographers “who were self-consciously framing images to mark occasions; for most part, the people portrayed in these photographs are conscious of having their picture made and are self-consciously posing in attitudes that they consider to be appropriate to the nature of the occasion.”⁷⁶ These range from casual snapshots of Mexican barmaids sitting next to drunk Mexican and American customers to more explicit scenes in which men purposely engage in sexual acts to be photographed [Figure 5.20-21].

Bill Wittliff, a writer-producer of filmed Westerns, went to a Mexico-U.S. border town called Nuevo Laredo to scout a desirable location for a film he was writing in 1974.⁷⁷ Wittliff met several photographers working there and offered money to buy negatives of their photographs taken in clubs and brothels. At first, the Boystown photographers hesitated, as selling images that Mexican authorities did not want disseminated might be risky.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, Wittliff was able to purchase a number of negatives he then sent to Texas. In thirteen months, Wittliff accumulated over 7,000 single frames taken in Boystown.

In 2000, Aperture published *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia*, a catalog of selected Boystown photographs accompanied by three short essays, in conjunction with an exhibition held at the Wittliff Gallery of South Western & Mexican Photography at Southwest Texas State

⁷⁵ Christina Pacheco et al., *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia* (New York: Aperture, 2000).

⁷⁶ Dave Hickey, “Dirty Pictures,” in *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia* (New York: Aperture, 2000), 73.

⁷⁷ Bill Wittliff, “Afterword,” in *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia* (New York: Aperture, 2000), 106.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

University the following year. Once “anonymous” photographs of border town residents and visitors engaged in prostitution, created as personal memorabilia by a variety of photographers, the images are now part of a prominent U.S. photography collection as artworks. In the midst of this transformation, the identities of these photographers have therefore been erased completely; Wittliff has become the creator of the body of work, portrayed as a visionary collector.⁷⁹ Despite the explicitness of the sexual content conveyed in the vernacular form of snapshot photographs, the Boystown photographs from Mexico have now been archived, exhibited, studied, and written about in the U.S., even as similar images of Americans created in the U.S. are not likely to be treated with such documentary reverence. As a result, the Boystown Mexican sex workers, commodities once consumed by Mexican and American men, are now ‘culturally’ consumed by viewers in the U.S.

In contrast to the work of Goldin or Wall, prostitution as an industry has been central to critical assessment of the Boystown archive. In his catalog essay for the photographs, Dave Hickey writes:

In the setting of the whorehouse, these young women are commodities, objects of sexual desire. The eye of the camera, however, opens onto another world, a world of image, publicity, and sophistication. For them, the tiny portal of the camera’s aperture is a way out of the circumstances in which they find themselves. So they lift their chins and gaze unsmiling into the camera, as fashion models do in slick American magazines, while their bodies, forced into tiny, cheap dresses, gleaming and bulging like tight, bright sausages, speak the Fellini-esque dialect of Mediterranean voluptuousness.⁸⁰

Although Hickey points out that these women are commodities in Boystown, he argues that, through the act of the photo-making, they are enabled to imagine being part of a world of “sophistication.” For Hickey, the status of these sex workers has indeed been elevated, “sophisticated” enough to merit inclusion in a photography book and for the gallery goes to

⁷⁹ Pacheco et al., *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia*.

⁸⁰ Hickey, “Dirty Pictures,” 26.

encounter in an exhibition—and for a critic to examine. He believes that this is something the women desire, and achieve by emulating fashion models [Figure 5.22-23]. Their bodies, however, end up looking like “tight, bright sausages,” rather than sophisticated. Hickey makes a reference to the characters in the Italian film director Federico Fellini’s movies, yet these sex workers can only be a “dialect,” a ‘knockoff’ of the Italian master’s films.

In *National Camera: Photography and Mexico’s Image Environment*, the historian of photography Roberto Tejada states the Boystown photographs expose “the realism of many Mexico-US border towns.”⁸¹ Nonetheless, Tejada problematizes the anonymity of the subjects and photographers in this vernacular practice of photography, which exposes “US American exoticism, purchasing power, [and] visual power relations.”⁸² While the organizers of the publication and exhibition of Boystown photographs acknowledge that the female bodies in the archive circulate as commodities of exchange, the issue of copyright for these images has been avoided.

Tejada appropriately points out that the transference of the Boystown photographs to an archive, private property in the hands of a U.S. academic and cultural institution, dissolves the subjectivity of the photographers and subjects through their “institutionalization” and appropriation. He argues that the institutionalization of the Boystown photographs encourages viewers to treat them as timeless, truthful records of Boystown, failing to recognize the “distinctions between Nuevo Laredo of the mid-1970s and the archival reference that reads ‘Photographer Unknown, Boystown: Lasona de Tolerancia, 1974-75’.”⁸³ In viewing the images, it is crucial to understand that they are specific to Nuevo Laredo under the influence of border

⁸¹ Tejada, *National Camera: Photography and Mexico’s Image Environment*, 135–136.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 140.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 137.

town politics and U.S.-Mexico relations at a particular time. The work is presented as a mysterious encounter with a bacchanalia, but this reflects curatorial intention, not reality.

One can view the Boystown photographs as artworks in the same vein as other anonymous photographs that became part of artworks, such as Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* (1962-2006) and Christian Boltanski's *The Reserve of Dead Swiss* (1990). However, the emergence of the Boystown photographs as an archive, coinciding with a great rise of interest in the concept and practice of archives in art, conjures up a different kind of "zone of permissiveness," one involving appropriating images as art without the permission of either subject or original image-maker. This effectively erases the complex history of lives simplified down to "a bunch of [exotic] whores in whorehouses" across the border.⁸⁴

The appropriation of the Boystown photographs as 'art' offers a juncture for critics and audiences to start assessing what photographs can really tell them. To fully comprehend what the Boystown images capture we must examine the history of border towns and the political-economic significance of the U.S. in these towns. If this is ignored, the archive fails to become "a unique form of knowledge production that is able to acknowledge its own subjectivity."⁸⁵ Such was the case with the writers of the essays in the Boystown catalog, which circumvent the cultural and sociological significance of the images. Hickey states,

We could move immediately to the "cultural" and "sociological" implications of the images. We could consider their relevance as documents in the history of sexual commerce at the confluence of two nations in the western hemisphere—at the interface of Mediterranean and Northern European cultures in their New World incarnations. We could do this and we would not be wrong, but that would occlude the fact that, in these particular cultures, art is not made but selected. We tend to forget this. We forget that Raphael was a church decorator before we decided that his paintings were "art"—that,

⁸⁴ The authors of the essays in *Boystown: La Zona De Tolerancia*, continuously refer to sex workers as "whores" and the establishments they work in as "whorehouses." However, the use of the term ignores the economic and political aspects of the industry of transnational prostitution, allowing a colloquialism to overshadow the implications of the more accurately descriptive "sex worker."

⁸⁵ John Douglas Millar, "Watching v Looking," *Monthly Art*, no. 340 (October 2010): 10.

before we dubbed Titian's *Venus d'Urbino* at transcendent masterpiece, it was high-dollar, soft-core pornography whipped up to decorate the bedroom of a provincial big wig.⁸⁶

This indicates that Hickey believes a photographic work cannot both “move immediately to the ‘cultural’ and ‘sociological’ implications” of the image and be “selected” to become art. For him, art has always eschewed cultural and social implications, perhaps because “the move to the socio-cultural” necessitates an assessment of the subjective position of the collector, exhibition organizers, and audiences. Hickey thus opts to compare/identify these photographs with a European masterpiece of the sixteenth century, positing that, as Titian's *Venus of Urbino* was conceived and first viewed as “soft-core pornography,” Boystown photographs might also become “Art” in the future. Just as this famous painting was initially conceived and received quite differently, Hickey assumes that contemporary viewers of the Boystown photographs will focus on the appearance of the prostitutes, rather than the cultural and sociological implications of their images. Thus, for Hickey, those implications will be annulled in time by the transcendent power of art.

By attempting to contextualize the images in the history of European art, Hickey and the organizers of the *La Zona* exhibition bluntly refuse to look at the “content” of the images. In an essay on Edouard Manet's paintings of prostitutes and their reception, Carol Armstrong contends that “mentioning one part [form] and excising the other [content]” of Manet's paintings is an attempt to hold on to:

⁸⁶ Hickey, “Dirty Pictures,” 24. In his essay, Hickey continues to make more analogies between the Boystown residents and masterpieces of art. He calls upon Caravaggio and Velázquez, and claims that that “[w]hat we take away from the photographs is not the folly of such illusions and aspirations but some sense of their necessity in a fallen world—of working stiffs aspiring to the role of patron, of fraternity boys pretending to be outlaws, and of whores affecting the cool, affectless gaze of supermodels. The finest photograph in this selection speaks eloquently to this subject.[He] calls it ‘the Accordion Player,’ as Velázquez might have—since, in its content and composition, it could have just as easily been painted in 1605 as photographed in the early 1970s.” As discussed in Chapter One, such a “mix and match” comparisons of images of the exotic Other and the canon illustrate a troubling agenda behind it—to elevate the Boystown photographs as the status of fine art (but not equivalent to those masterpieces) and to completely ignore the ethical issues surrounding the provenance and consumption of the images. *Ibid.*, 27.

[...] Manet's place in the formalist history of modern art, as well as conserving the separation of content and form that is part of that history, contributing to the erasure of any content or any reading that banalize, vulgarize, kitschify, or otherwise diminish the high art distinction of a work by a modernist master, and promoting a commodified, exhibition-value definition of the image as a formal arrangement made for display, for aesthetic and economic consumption, for delectation and possession.⁸⁷

Assessing the lack of discussion of the content of Manet's paintings of prostitutes, Armstrong suggests that historians and critics of Manet believe that an examination of the cultural and sociological issues of the paintings should be eschewed because it will "banalize, vulgarize, and kitschify" them, and thus "devalue" his work. This critique is equally applicable to the ways in which critics such as Hickey have re-framed the Boystown photographs in order to aestheticize them. Such a "decontextulization" of the photographs appears as an attempt to free U.S. collectors, exhibition organizers, critics, and audiences from feeling obligated to share responsibility for the situation in places such as Boystown.

The transformation of the Boystown photographs from vernacular keepsakes to art objects is similar to what occurred to Kang's *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*. Both were conceived and created as vernacular photographs taken by 'commercial' photographers for their 'clients,' and only later exhibited and reproduced as photographic artwork. In the case of the Boystown photographs, the souvenir photographs-cum-artwork were made by "free-lance photographers in whorehouses along the border of Texas and Mexico, as potential souvenirs, to be sold or not sold to patrons and employees of these establishments,"⁸⁸ working at clubs "every night, shooting sharp, in-your-face souvenir pictures of girls[.]"⁸⁹ Likewise, the Dongducheon photographs are not just cached in soldiers' boxes of souvenirs from Korea, but have been incorporated into Kang's oeuvre.

⁸⁷ Carol Armstrong, "Facturing Femininity: Manet's 'Before the Mirror'," *October* 74 (Autumn 1995): 78.

⁸⁸ Hickey, "Dirty Pictures," 24.

⁸⁹ Wittliff, "Afterword," 106.

Nonetheless, the collections' respective curators had very different intents. Kang's work making "souvenir pictures" of sex workers and their clients as a commercial photographer came through his investigation of the legacy of the Korean War and militarism in camptowns that were hardly known to the general public.⁹⁰ The photographer himself titled the series to emphasize the "commemorative" aspect of the photographs, rather than their commercial or ceremonial functions, invoking the forgotten consequences of the occupation of Korea after decolonization and the ways in which the division of the nation has been enacted.

While this is in contrast to the erasure evident in the curatorial stage of compiling the Boystown archive, Kang's photographs of Dongducheon cannot avoid criticism as an aestheticization of personal objects of memory. More significantly, because the sex workers depicted in the photographs are disenfranchised in Korean society, the ethics of reproducing the photographs remains unresolved—even if Kang had obtained permission for reproduction from the subjects, that consent could be considered coerced. This is part of what makes viewing *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* "uneasy;" it puts upon the viewer the 'burden' of sharing responsibility for the institutionalization of camptown prostitution by the Korean government, and for the public's negligence on many issues related to the camptowns. Indeed, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* has not been reproduced or exhibited nearly as often as his other works. However, the viewer's encounter with *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, if contextualized appropriately, can become an opportunity to scrutinize these socio-political and cultural issues.

Under Chun Doo-hwan's pro-American military government and the censorship it practiced, going into a camptown as a college student to record the lives of its residents was a risky undertaking. For Kang, taking the job of an American commercial photographer was a

⁹⁰ Hyowon Kim, "'Hangukjeonjaeng Ginyeombi'jeon yeolgoitneun Sajinjakga Kang Yong Suk ('한국전쟁 기념비'전 열고 있는 사진작가 강용석)."

discursive strategy that enabled him to produce his work. Kang's process in both creating the work and drawing viewers to the ethical issues is related to Tirdad Zolghadr's discussion of the ethics of art representing a subject of "misfortune:"

The challenge is, in other words, not to summon selfless goodwill or progressive content, but to find intelligent forms of voyeurism—that is, mode of visual production that faces up to its own strategies of entertainment, infotainment and/or objectification. [There] is much to say for strategies that are blunt without being retrograde, and that elude simple notions of solidarity and empathy in favour of an analysis of our very fascination with the outlandish, be it touching or violent or both.⁹¹

Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin forgoes "selfless goodwill" and "progressive content" by turning the act of taking photographs into a service for the sitters, depicting the sex workers and GIs as they wished to present themselves for their own recollections, not for Kang or the viewers; however, these snapshot "commemorative" photographs, the "intelligent form of voyeurism," resonate with Kang's and the viewers' experiences of making photographic souvenirs—only to be complicated by the history of institutionalized prostitution, U.S.-Korea relations, and the disenfranchisement and violence sex workers face.

In *On Photography* (1977), Susan Sontag makes the famous analogy of photography as a passport in her critique of Diane Arbus's photographs of the disabled and marginalized: a "kind of passport that annihilates moral boundaries and social inhibitions, freeing the photographer from any responsibility toward the people photographed."⁹² While Kang's work also portrays a vulnerable group of people, and their relationship to another group of people with more power—specifically power over them—his work is closer to a "family album" than a "passport:" in the form of snapshot portraits, *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* invites the viewer to imagine a context and narrative as they might with any other snapshot. By becoming a camptown club

⁹¹ Tirdad Zolghadr, "Them and Us: More Than a Feeling," *Frieze*, February 2006, http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/them_and_us/, as referenced in Millar, "Watching v Looking," 7.

⁹² Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1977), 41.

photographer, Kang deliberately sought “to engage his subject so as to suggest a context, [implying] that the familial use [of photography] may be more widely applicable.”⁹³ Through this “familial use” of *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, viewers are “able to explore beyond the tired liberal mores of political correctness, pity and empathy in order to reframe and critique vital political and aesthetic questions.”⁹⁴

Moreover, while the critics and curators of the Boystown photographs focus on their potential place in the art historical canon, photography historians and critics, such as Park Pyeong Jong, who address Kang’s work have focused on the significance of Korea-U.S. relations since 1945 and the legacy of U.S. militarism in South Korea.⁹⁵ Therefore, the content of *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* has been treated as equally important as the “form” of the work, to employ Armstrong’s division between form and content.⁹⁶ Viewers can look beyond form vs. content, an age-old “European debate,” and begin to consider the work “as a social act, aesthetics as the possibility of a social act.”⁹⁷ The following section discusses a category of works carrying potential for such social activism: photographs by Kang, Noh Suntag, and Kim Sangdo depicting the ‘townscapes’ of camptowns.

⁹³ Neil Evernden, “Seeing and Being Seen: A Response to Susan Sontag’s Essays on Photography,” *Soundings* 68 (1985): 84–85, referenced in Sarah Parsons, “Sontag’s Lament: Emotion, Ethics, and Photography,” *Photography & Culture* 2, no. 3 (November 2009): 298.

⁹⁴ Millar, “Watching v Looking,” 10.

⁹⁵ Pyeong Jong Park, “Multilateral View on Reality of Division: From Dongducheon Commemorative Photographs to Korean War Monuments (분단현실의 다각적 조망: <동두천 기념사진>에서 <한국전쟁 기념비>까지),” 4. Also see the essays by Park Pyeong Jong and Park Ju Suk in Yong Suk Kang, *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong* (*매향리 풍경*, *The Landscape of Maehyang-ri*) (Seoul: Noonbit, 1999).

⁹⁶ Armstrong, “Facturing Femininity: Manet’s ‘Before the Mirror’,” 78.

⁹⁷ Leon de Kock, “Interview with Gayatri C. Spivak,” *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 23, no. 3 (July 1992): 38.

Camp-Townscapes

Kang Yong Suk's works explore the lingering consequences of the Korean War, from the casualties of military drills to the signification of the state's ideology in military memorials. Photographers and artists such as Noh Suntag and Kim Sangdon also scrutinize the impact of militarism on the lives of Koreans, especially those living in camptowns or nearby U.S. army bases. Kang, Noh, and Kim take different approaches to envision the diverse issues of the militarized nation; one tactic they share is a strategic use of the landscape genre. Their landscape photographs articulate the conflicts between the army bases and towns, and the complicity of the state in these conflicts. I refer to these works as "camp-townscapes" to capture their adaptation of the specific genre to their particular subjects.

Kang's work began to receive attention from critics and the public in the late 1990s with a series of photographs depicting Maehyang-ri, a fishing town in Gyeonggi Province [Appendix B]. A book collecting these photographs was published in 1999 as part of the *Portfolio* series curated by the Korean photography book publisher Noonbit. This work became a revelation of the damage done by U.S. Air Force activities to the small town, whose residents' livelihood depended almost entirely on earnings from the tidal marsh land.

Kang's *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong* (*매향리 풍경*), 'Maehyang-ri Landscape,' depicts the barren marsh land in Maehyang-ri during ebb tide. The landscapes show the aftermath of U.S. Air Force drills, in which this land was used for aerial bombing target practice. These drills occurred most nights for several decades from 1952 until 2005,⁹⁸ the result of the 1952 Korea-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty in which off-sea areas, including deserted islands and the marsh land adjacent to Maehyang-ri, were designated as a U.S. Air Force firing range. The Koon-ri

⁹⁸ Yong Suk Kang, *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong* (*매향리 풍경*, *The Landscape of Maehyang-ri*), 97.

Range was appropriated through confiscation of the lands and fishing areas of Maehyang-ri residents. The roaring of the bombs, and the misfires, threatened the town for many years, resulting in numerous cases of psychological damage manifesting as miscarriages, chronic ailments, and suicides.⁹⁹ For many years Maehyang-ri residents pleaded for termination of the drills; the government maintained that the drills were necessary to the national defense and peace.

One of Kang's photographs in the series depicts bomb shells stuck in the middle of the tidal marsh [Figure 5.24]. The black and white photograph, with minimized tonal intensity, subtly delineates the marsh, the sea water on the horizon, the buildings in the town of Maehyang-ri, and the sky. This otherwise serene landscape is disrupted by the bomb shells in the center of the photograph; the largest appears extremely corroded, as if it has been stuck in the marsh for a very long time. Next to it are smaller shells that could have been gathered by the residents of Maehyang-ri—other photographs show residents gathering or inspecting the shells left behind after the drills [Figure 5.25]. In Figure 5.26, a large shell is half-buried in a mound of soil overlooking the marsh, the Maehyang-ri residents at work visible in the upper right corner. A mound cratered by the shell's impact indicates the degree of its destructive force. The presence of a crumpled shell in the mounds below the crater reveals that this spot has been used as a target multiple times. Even as the delicate tonality of the photograph conveys the tranquility of the landscape, that very serenity soon serves to emphasize the bomb shells and metal scraps, conjuring the scenes and noise of the air raids.

Kang's photographs activated a collective campaign against the use of the Koon-ri Range. The investigative television program *Shisa Journal 2580* broadcast the plight of the Maehyang-ri

⁹⁹ Through 1999, 29 Maehyang-ri residents attempted suicide; 26 died. The father of Chun Man-gyu, the Chair of the Maehyang-ri Residents' Committee, also killed himself; Chun argues that his father did not have a clear reason for suicide and it was induced by the psychological damage done by the years of the bombing raids. Chang-kyung Park, Chan-kyung Park, "Leviathan--Maehyang-ri (리바이어던-매향리)," in *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong* (Seoul: Noonbit, 1999), 8.

residents, as well as the uncooperative attitude of the U.S. Air Force and the Korean government's complicity and incompetence in dealing with the problem. Less than a year after the publication of *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong*, student activists and citizens began to hold protests and meetings in the town alongside the Maehyang-ri Residents' Committee. As a result, in 2004, the U.S. Air Force in South Korea announced plans to terminate aerial drills at the Koon-ri Range; in 2005, Maehyang-ri was finally free of aerial bombings.¹⁰⁰

Through the civil movement to stop the drills at Koon-ri Range, Kang's *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong* became "a social act, aesthetics [that opens up] the possibility of a social act." Kang states that he tried to employ contrasting elements from his *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin* to help create this aesthetic: while Kang accentuated colors and the details of individuals' expressions in *Dongducheon Ginyeomsajin*, in *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong* he tried to "reveal [his] intention by articulating how the topography of Maehyang-ri and the air that surrounds the landscape transforms through the gray tone of the photographs."¹⁰¹ In doing so, the emptiness in Maehyang-ri after an aerial bombing drill dissipates becomes ironically corporeal through the 'muted' gray-tone photographs, leaving the sensation of a bitter after-taste.¹⁰² Kang's subtle landscape photographs thus capture and echo the scathing sounds of the aerial bombing and the thundering silence they leave in their wake.

¹⁰⁰ Although the aerial drills have been terminated, issues of environmental pollution and damage have yet to be addressed by the U.S. Air Force and the Korean government. Until concrete plans for amending the environmental damages are provided, the Maehyang-ri Residents' Committee remains active.

¹⁰¹ Yong Suk Kang, *Maehyang-ri Punggyeong* (매향리 풍경, *The Landscape of Maehyang-ri*), 98. "매향리 풍경 사진에서는 지형과 풍경을 감싸는 공기, 그리고 그것이 사진의 그레이 톤 (gray tone)으로의 변환되는 것을 통해서 개인적인 의도를 드러내려 했다."

¹⁰² Ibid. Kang states that he intended to convey the under-recognized politico-historical significance of this small village and his "cool" approach to the subject by employing subtle gray tones rather than color. "...그것이 빛의 투영을 통해 사진의 그레이 톤으로 환원된 데는 두 가지 의미를 부여할 수 있겠다. 첫번째는 매향리라는 서해안 작은 마을이 갖는 정치적·역사적 의미, 두번째는 그레이 톤이 갖는 사진적 의미, 즉 감정으로부터의 유리 및 냉정한 접근, 이 두가지로 나누어 그 의미를 파악해 보았다."

Soon after the aerial drills stopped in Maehyang-ri, another small rural town became a target of military expansion. The farming village of Daechu-ri in the region of Pyeongtaek in the Gyeonggi Province [Appendix B] was appropriated by the U.S. military base Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek under the extensive rights granted by the Korea-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty. The U.S. military “ordered” the annexation of land in Daechu-ri up to 27 square kilometers, resulting in the confiscation of houses and farmland of 1,372 residents.¹⁰³ In 2006, Noh Suntag went to Daechu-ri, where the town’s residents were protesting after their petitions had been repeatedly declined by both U.S. and Korean officials, whose rejoinders were physical threats and pressure to relinquish the land. The tension escalated between the residents and the Korean police forces ordered to disband and remove the residents from the fields in which they were protesting, another incidence of the galling flunkeyism of the Korean government: in Daechu-ri, the Korean government does not represent the rights of Korean citizens but the interests of the USFK.

Noh’s photographs of the confrontation in Daechu-ri make up a major segment of the series *State of Emergency*, consisting of photographs with varying subjects and styles. The Daechu-ri photographs articulate the Korean government’s ‘mediation’ between the U.S. camp bases and Korean civilians: the ‘confiscation’ of the rights of civilians becomes “the national state of emergency: the arbitrary abrogation of civilian law governing property on the basis of the disavowed nation state South Korea” in Noh's work.¹⁰⁴ In one of the few color photographs in the mostly black and white photograph series, Noh depicts this confrontation by juxtaposing a mass of young policemen and Daechu-ri residents [Figure 5.27]. A middle-aged woman turns her back to the soldiers, firmly planting herself on the spot, resting her hand on an umbrella. Unlike the softness in Maehyang-ri photographs, the scenes depicted in Noh’s color photograph appear

¹⁰³ Christ and Dressler, *Noh Suntag: Ausnahmezustand, State of Emergency*, *비상국가*, 70.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

crisp and clear, accentuating the contrast between the black-clad mass of young men and the middle-aged woman in everyday clothing. While her attire displays “the existential bareness of civilian life,”¹⁰⁵ her firm stance articulates her abiding will to sustain her land—her life—in the face of a challenge by her own government.

Noh chronicled the struggle of the Daechu-ri residents from 2005 to 2006, moving his family to the village to better engage in the community’s struggle. The series therefore includes numerous photographs of physical confrontations between the police force and residents, for example Figure 5.28, showing the police force threatening to bulldoze the resident protesters. Noh also depicts the passive [Figure 5.29] and active [Figure 5.30] presence of the “contract mob,” ‘employed’ by the contractor of the camp’s expansion (and oddly overlooked by the police) for the purpose of threatening and attacking the residents. One of the last photographs in the series includes an image of the police force in front of a small building in Daechu-ri where two residents are folding banners on the roof: a banner hung on the building reads, “1943, Expelled by the Japanese; 1952, Expelled by U.S. Army; 2006, By the Korean Government for the Expansion of the U.S. Army Base Camp...” [Figure 5.31]. A photograph depicting the dome of the Korean National Assembly visually echoes the helmet of a riot-control policeman sitting on top of a police bus [Figure 5.32]. Noh’s images thus offer stark symbolic equivalences: the state is not *in* a state of emergency but *is* the *State of Emergency*.

While Noh’s *State of Emergency* depicts the clash between the farmers and police in the face of U.S. military expansion into civilian residential and farming areas, Kim Sangdon explored various neighborhoods in the city of Dongducheon, filming and photographing sites of hybridized cultures and of the once bustling, now abandoned parts of the city. The impact of militarism, especially that synonymous with the U.S. military presence in South Korea, on

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

spatial and collective identities, is central to Kim Sangdon's recent projects. In 2007, as part of the Museum as Hub project organized by the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and the Insa Art Space in Seoul, Kim explored the townscapes of Dongducheon.¹⁰⁶ Through research-based, community-oriented projects combined with on-site interviews, Kim penetrates into the silence and alienation among different social segments of Dongducheon, encompassing local residents, neighborhoods, and businesses [Figure 5.33].

Dongducheon, previously introduced in this chapter through the works of Kang Yong Suk, Kuwabara Shisei, and René Burri, is a palimpsest of “the complex and contradictory national characteristics of modern Korea.”¹⁰⁷ The rise and fall of the city reflects the modern history of the nation, from the colonial experience, Korean War, and military dictatorship to the country's compressed economic growth in the 1970s and '80s. Surrounded by a wall of mountains with a stream running through the middle, the geographical characteristics of Dongducheon made it a crucial military base for the Japanese imperial army in the early twentieth century.¹⁰⁸ Following the Japanese occupation, the city has served as an important base for the U.S. military forces. The city's infrastructure and zoning reflect “the fundamental frame of its formation [which] depended on the U.S. military bases from the [19]60s.”¹⁰⁹

Kim's photographic series *Little Chicago* (2008) shows the palimpsest of the city's identity. For this work, Kim collected names and terms referring to the landscapes and topology of Dongducheon that reflect the interactions between foreigners and Koreans.¹¹⁰ The photographs depict neighborhoods named after well-known American cities—a common GI trope—and the anglicized names of Korean cities, where different cultures amalgamate or clash.

¹⁰⁶ Insa Art Space, *Dongducheon: A Walk to Remember, a Walk to Envision*, (Seoul: Insa Art Space, 2008), 2:2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:6.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 8.

Kim then inscribed the names of the locations, such as New Chicago, Manhattan, and Soul (a pun on Seoul), in the photographs [Figures 5.34-36]. In Figure 5.36, “Soul” is inscribed just above the banister of a stair case which has been restructured to create space for another room in a cramped multi-family house in the section of the city known by the term. This bizarre use of a staircase reflects the desperate economic situation in the city, while Kim’s inscription alludes to how U.S. militarism and its host country create a second identity for the city through a failed partnership with its residents.

In this respect, Kim Sangdon’s project visualizes the presence of U.S. military forces through the pain and regret of the residents of Dongducheon. The ghostly structures of abandoned commercial buildings and apartments [Figure 5.37] recall the city once bustling with incoming foreigners and Korean businesses that catered to them. Following the Korean War, with a bitter enemy on the other half of the peninsula, many Koreans believed that they’d be utterly without allies should they lose the presence and protection of the U.S. military bases. However, the fate of Dongducheon, once defined by the presence of the Japanese and U.S. military forces, forces a reconsideration of that reliance as the cause of the city’s rapid economic downfall.

An assessment of the state of Dongducheon and the USFK through a theory of subjectivity provides an interesting interpretation of what the work of Kim Sangdon, as well as that of Kang Yong Suk and Noh Suntag, can convey to viewers. In this theory of subjectivity, what is outside of, and therefore transcends, Being is the Other. The Other is part of what defines, or even constitutes, the Self, that represents the Being and imbues its existence with meaning. The Other is also the mediator sublimating the Being into a system of signs. Kim Sangdon’s photographs of Dongducheon question the Self’s creation of this Other; in this case the U.S.

military force is required to give meaning to Dongducheon and its residents. When such meanings are no longer applicable, the Other, the USFK, becomes a hollow 'shell' perversely attached to the Self, Dongducheon, through vestiges of its presence—for instance, in names like New Chicago, a neighborhood in the city.

According to Gilles Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* (1969), and *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), coauthored with Felix Guattari, the Being does not require the Other to become fully realized. Instead, subjectivity is formed in large part by the flow of the body without organs (the head)—the Other, the transcendental. In this way, while every Being carries a set of objective characteristics, each also carries a "virtual" set of traits, one that exists within its potential for being—what Deleuze calls the BwO, or "body without organs." Becoming the BwO means activating the potential traits, tapping into the virtual and making it real; this is largely done through "becomings," interactions taking place with other BwOs. For Deleuze, the Other is the daddy-mommy of *Anti-Oedipus* (as in the daddy-mommy-me structure of *Oedipus*); to become realized as *Anti-Oedipus*, he must become an orphan. Likewise, to become the body without organs, the Other-defined Self should do away with that Other. For South Korea to fully realize its identity, the U.S. military forces should be withdrawn and the colluding government toppled. But what would this do for a Korean subject? Kim Sangdon's photographs of Dongducheon make clear that a fully formed Korea does not emerge as soon as the military government is succeeded by a civilian president or the U.S. military headquarters in Seoul relocates. The June Democratization Movement of 1987 in South Korea brought an end to the military junta, yet this did not mean a sudden transition to a democratic state, or the end of labor oppression and censorship. The Other, the vestiges of occupation and militarization, are still attached to the Self,

even if now replaced by, for example, a family-owned mega-conglomerate like Samsung, or by the anti-communist National Security Law.

In his book *Organs without Bodies*, Slavoj Žižek inverts the Deleuzian notion of the BwO, which is the Being without the Other.¹¹¹ Žižek argues that the Other is necessary for the continual motion of the Being toward its “virtual” potentials; the Other cannot be cut off without castrating the Self. For Žižek, via Hegel, the Other exists not as an external attachment to Being, but as an internal negation; the Self fully realizes its existence through its own negation, which may manifest as, for example, militarism. The works of Kim Sangdon, Noh Suntag, and Kang Yong Suk are alert to this intertwined state of existence, prodding the viewer to critically assess the true nature of the relationship between the Being and the Other, whether as parasitic and subsuming, or possibly as codependent; they do not force a simple ‘military v. civilian’ or ‘occupier v. occupied’ narrative so much as focus on the fallout from their coexistence.

The military junta ended because the protesters refused an entity that claimed power beyond the people. Accordingly, in parliamentary democracy, it is crucial for individuals to realize that they are not subjects to be governed, but citizens governing themselves through their representatives. The work of these photographers follows this line of thought, moving beyond the investigation of the legacy of militarism in South Korea to suggest different ways to think about the nation’s relationship with those military entities that have defined it in the past.

Spring in the Reserve Army

While the photographs of Kang Yong Suk, Noh Suntag, and Kim Sangdon provide opportunities to scrutinize the impact of militarism in specific places and on particular groups of people, whether the sex workers in Dongducheon or the residents of Daechu-ri, the impact of

¹¹¹ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences* (New York & London: Routledge, 2004).

militarism has pervaded the everyday life of Koreans throughout the second half of the twentieth century. During the junta from 1961 to 1988, the military government solidified the notion, through political campaigns and propaganda, that the government not only represents the nation but *is* the nation.¹¹² The nation, via the government, was further identified with the people, creating a trinity of self-identification. This belief that the government is the nation made it possible for people to believe that, if the military government came down, the sovereignty of the nation would be threatened, and thus the nation would perish.¹¹³ Here, the government plays the role of the transcendental, a necessary element in the formation of subjectivity, giving existential meaning to the Being represented by the people—a multitude of organs. A Korean national is a being whose existence is secured by the government (and, through alliance and collusion, the presence of the USFK) and whose *raison d'être* should be characterized by his/her service to the nation. Even though the formation of such subjectivity appears oppressive, it forms a stable structure as far as Hegelian subjectivity is concerned, as this Self is a being-in-itself (*an sich*), for it is self-contained and fully-realized through mediation by an entity external to it. This identity based on an Oedipal trinity (daddy-mommy-me), where the nation equals the government which in turn equals the people, has been the platform on which militarism has constructed its legitimacy, and the government in turn has used that militarism as a tool for control. The successful application of this psychologically compound identity allows for the subjugation of the people on the basis that their survival rests on the survival of the government.

Militarism became most influential in, and disruptive to, daily life as a Korean through the institution of mandatory military service. Most male citizens of South Korea are required to

¹¹² Seong-tae Hong and Noh, *Banmiga Woemunjeinga* (반미가 왜 문채인가).

¹¹³ I am indebted to Han Bo-hee whose application of the theory of subjectivity to historical events in South Korea has encouraged me to examine photography and the modern-contemporary history of Korea through a theory of subjectivity. Han Bo-hee, online streaming lecture, “The Theory of Antonio Negri and the Criticism of Slavoj Žižek,” accessed June 15, 2010.

serve military duty for 20 to 26 months, and after they are discharged from duty soldiers are enlisted in the Korea Reserve Army, which requires annual training and drills for up to eight years. Thus, despite changes in the government and the U.S. military presence, militarization remains very much a part of the present Korean identity.

Lee Young Hoon's photographic series *Paradise* (2008) focuses on the annual drills of the Korea Reserve Army. The uniformed men in the photographs have gathered to spend a day of post-military service training at a base with staged streets and neighborhoods constructed for the drills [Figure 5.38]. Lee, required to participate in an annual drill, was able to sneak in an Agfa Isolette 120, a medium-format folding camera. In his photographs, the soldiers of the Reserve Army are much more casual compared to those in active service. In some photographs, the soldiers stand in relaxed poses with cigarettes in their hands, conversing with their fellow soldiers [Figure 5.39-40]. The photographs are out of focus, giving a fog-like effect, perhaps to obscure the identities of the subjects so casually captured. In Figure 5.41, a soldier has wandered into an area surrounded by trees and reaches out to touch some flowers that have just started blossoming on the bushes; spring has arrived at this military base. The soldier's apathetic attitude to the drills, the foggy atmosphere, and the ironic title *Paradise* reflect the melancholy of this banal military assignment. In another photograph, a man away from groups of fellow Reserve Army soldiers looks at a fully-blossomed magnolia tree [Figure 5.42]. The petals have fallen on the ground where he stands, asking whether this is a moment in *Paradise* or whether it appears only in the fleeting moments of everyday life.

Lee's photographs reveal the non-militarized attitudes of the Korea Reserve Army members. Soldiers wander in the military base to smell the flowers, to watch the petals of a magnolia fall, to sense the foggy spring day despite their presence at a mandatory military

function. The drills do not capture Lee's imagination, or the reservists' attention; both the training and the spring are passing events, moments that do not define the soldiers but that they merely experience. The soldiers of the Korea Reserve Army in *Paradise* cannot sever the militarization of the country from their lives, even as the militarism cannot define the people's identities. They are not necessarily reliant on each other, but they remain coexistent. The military or government Other has become necessary in the formation of the people's subjectivity, not through transcendence but as internal negation. This places the nation in a constant state of struggle to maintain this negation, to acknowledge the fissure between Being and the Other, and to live for the realization of potentials.

As *Paradise* articulates, militarism has continued to be a pervasive component in Korean life. Recent armed confrontations between South and North Korea have alarmed the South Korean public as well as neighboring countries. The confrontation was heightened in 2010, commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Korean War. On March 26, 2010, the Cheonan-ho, a South Korean naval ship, was allegedly attacked by a North Korean torpedo, taking the lives of 46 sailors,¹¹⁴ while on November 23, North Korea shelled Yeonpyeong Island, off the South Korean coast. To the inhabitants of the divided peninsula, it was a stark reminder that this small tract of land, once a strategic battlefield for the world's superpowers, remained mired in Cold War-era battles long after the superpowers fomenting the conflicts had finished with them. In this militarized nation, photography has continued to investigate, and challenge, the ways in which militarism has constructed and taken advantage of the people, whether through camptown

¹¹⁴ The Ministry of National Defense created their official website on the sinking of the Cheonan. The website publicizes the Ministry's account of the event to help resolve the initial skepticism of the public regarding the official announcement made by the Ministry and the Republic of Korea Navy. Nonetheless, this public skepticism seems to have subsided after the North Korean attack on the Yeonpyeong Island on November 23, 2010. See "Cheonanham Story: Cheonanham pigyeoksajgeoneui yoyak (친안함 Story: 친안함 피격사건의 요약, The Story of Cheonanham: The summary of the Attack on Cheonanham)", n.d., <http://www.cheonan46.go.kr/118> (Accessed May 20, 2011).

prostitution, the gendered metaphors of nations, or the subjectivity of the tripartite identity.

Through continued efforts to bring these photographic works into the discourse of militarism, one can better understand and appreciate “aesthetics as the possibility of a social act.”

CONCLUSION

Korea's history since 1945—a history of liberation, civil and eventually transnational war, nation building, rapid economic development, and democratization in the face of authoritarian militarism—parallels the development of photography and its practices within Korean culture. The relationship between Korean photography and nation building and between photography and democratization is ontological: not merely a re-presentation but itself a part of Korean life. Korean photography thus entails the complex weaving of society, culture, and politics that drove the country during its era of rapid modernization and globalization. This dissertation has sought to dynamically engage these facets of the medium through theoretical analyses of the social, political, and cultural meanings of photography. It has examined photography in relation to postcolonial Korea-in-the-making by approaching it as both a product and producer of that history.

The history of photography in Korea since 1945 is thus the history of the struggles and trials of a society functioning under ideological conflict, state control, and a culture emerging from normalized militarism. As demonstrated in the preceding chapters, the photographic practices that have developed since independence are fundamentally about the relationship between the state and the people, from Korean War photographs to family and baby portraits and ranging across both photojournalism and art photography. An understanding of this relationship, and how photography articulates it, is dependent on understanding the socio-political progress of the nation and how these photographic practices have become specifically Korean.

The early development of photography in Korea is associated with the nation's colonial history; since independence, however, the medium's development as part of Korean culture has been closely tied to the political and social fallout of an abrupt de-colonization, in particular the

establishment of the country as a primary front of the Cold War. As the ideological hotbed of the East Asian region, caught between the United States and the Soviet Union superpowers, South Korea's ideological conflicts, and the persecution and stigmatization of socialists and communists, is also echoed in the relationship between photography and the Korean War. While many wars have been remembered through iconic photographs, none collectively conjure up memory or postmemory of the Korean War;¹ the absence of a grounding image unifying the public imagination mirrors the unstable identity of the peninsula as it became a perpetual war zone. As this absence reverberates globally—the abundant photographs taken of the Korean War housed in photography archives such as the U.S. National Archive and Records Administrations remain relatively unknown—interested parties, particularly media companies overseen by the military regime, have constructed ideologically driven narratives of the war to mold that uncertain identity to their own purposes. Thus even potentially disinterested photographic documents have been manipulated to serve the interests of a particular power. This silent 'battle' over the construction of the collective memory of the Korean War continues with the annual appearance of so-called "never-before-exposed" photographs.

The aftereffects of the Korean War on photography were equally influential through the 1960s, as many Korean photographers responded to their experience of the war by seeking to distance themselves from so-called "salon photography." The *Saenghwaljuui* Realists, led by Limb Eung Sik, were intent on exposing the struggles of people dealing with life after war. Nonetheless, even this artistic decision was modulated by the need to maintain a certain narrative under the strict censorship of the military government. The political machinations unfolding since independence were therefore central to the ways in which photographic movements were conceived and developed in South Korea. A similar ideological dynamic governed the

¹ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*.

development of vernacular photographic practices as well. To take one example, the emergence of family and baby portrait photographs reflected and practiced the ideology of family as part of the nation-building effort and as a strategic continuation of the patriarchal structure resonating with the positioning of the government as a patriarchal protector of the people.

During the colonial period, intellectuals such as Lee Gwang-su emphasized the importance of children as independent individuals in the family. The stylistic and formal changes in family photographic portraiture articulate the changes in the family: in family portrait photographs from the first few decades of the twentieth century, children have become the central figures in the picture, centered and elevated to the height of the adults. This desire to ‘modernize’ the family largely constructed and cultivated during the colonial period by the Korean elites continued with the development of a set of family photo portrait ‘types’ to celebrate and commemorate rites of passage. The practices of the *baeg-il sajin* and *dol sajin* in particular evince the ways in which photographic practices emerge from and return to strengthen the desire to become the affluent, sophisticated family, the family that will eventually be the nucleus of a ‘desirable’ nation that is competitive in the global market. Once again, the power structure already in place molded this development: from the gender-differentiated practice of *baeg-il sajin* to the elaborate *dol* banquet, the vernacular practices of baby and family portraiture exhibit how the desire to form a certain ‘type’ of family is closely linked to what the military government desired the population to be, often expressed through the government’s trinitarian rhetoric conflating the nation, government, and the people. Nonetheless, the practices are not at all exclusive to government interests, as evidenced by the engagement of post-junta artists with what these familial desires continue to mean in Korean society in the twenty-first century.

While the practice of family portraits developed concurrently with the military regime's intense control of the populace, and was in part a manifestation of that control, further progress in Korean photography embodies the beginnings of civilian resistance to military governance. The declaration of Martial Law in May 1961, enabling the government to send intelligence agents to newspaper companies to oversee publication materials, initiated a strict system of censorship; however, as with all such regimes, the forced suppression of expression and rights ultimately bred popular resentment of the power structure. Thus photographs from this era, while maintaining the surface interests of the military, nonetheless fed into the gradually developing democratization movement against the regime.

In this vein, the photograph of Kim Ju-yeol taken by Heo Jong has been considered the single most important catalyst of the 4.19 Revolution of 1960. Likewise, 26 years later, another photograph of a martyred student activist—Chung Tae-won's photograph of the collapsing Lee Han-yeol after being hit by a teargas grenade—revitalized the legacy of civic resistance. Despite military censorship, the publication of the photographs resulted in the promise of coming democratic elections—and, indeed, an 'official' end to the censorship. Korean photography has continued to both reflect and contribute to such social progress. As citizens have struggled with the 'side effects' of compressed industrialization, public discontent has been expressed in the form of peaceful, cross-generational candlelight vigils in the 2000s. The efficacy of these vigils relies heavily on modern technology and interaction, conceived and organized in a truly grass-roots process through the internet. Likewise, the photography surrounding the vigil movement depends on new methods of recording and reportage. Vigils were photographed and filmed by individual participants, and broadcasted via Afreeca.com, an online video-sharing community. The event signaled the start of an era of *il-in* media (one-person media)—events photographed,

filmed, scripted, edited, broadcasted, and reported by a “netizen.”² While this practice results in an absence of iconic photographs comparable to those of Kim and Lee, the individual participants’ acts of photography-making embody the democratization of photographic practices in general.

Korean photography has also propelled civic resistance to the state through numerous ‘genres’ of photography. In witnessing photographs of camptowns and camptown sex workers and GIs, the viewer’s scrutiny of the legacy of militarism becomes a form of such resistance. This willingness to use the medium to reflect on the past is a manifestation of a shared interest on the part of both artists and viewers to treat photographic images as a part of their shared social identity. Photography, depending on the photographer’s strategy as to what to show and how to show, can engender a sense of responsibility. It can, for example, highlight the subject-viewer dynamic created by the act of seeing and thereby acknowledge ethical issues presented by the photograph. Willfully neglecting the manifold contexts and differences articulated in such photographs in favor of formal aesthetic concerns, as with those taken in Nuevo Laredo, is in turn symptomatic of how difficult it is to study these varying contexts and differences. Issues of subjectivity in knowledge production—such as how to discuss photographs while being constantly mindful of the power structures created in the act of ‘seeing’ the subject of difference—become another burden for anyone conducting such studies. The post-military Korean photographic culture seems intent on engaging with its own history and background, rather than treating the undesirable elements as footnotes to a purely aesthetic object. Thus that culture can truly reflect on and create the identity of the society in which it flourishes. In this way, Korean

² “Netizen” is a portmanteau of the English words internet and citizen, coined by Michael Hauben. While the term is rarely used by internet users in the U.S., it has been commonly used in South Korea since the late 1990s.

photography is a national product, embracing and shaping the history and identity of an entire society, rather than merely documenting its progress.

With the sharp increase in interest in such “national photography” since the turn of the millennium, issues of subjectivity have become even more apparent. Publications over the last decade on, for example, Egyptian, Mexican, Chinese and Indonesian *photographies*, provide clear evidence that, despite the difficulties in assessing cultures and politics that are not familiar to the majority of academics in Europe and North America, scholarship is successfully pushing the limits of what can be ‘accepted’ as the subject of art historical study. Embracing the importance of interdisciplinary methodologies and emphasizing issues of subjectivity and power dynamics as part of the produced knowledge can turn art history into an epistemological, even a political, mode of inquiry. This dissertation has been an attempt to address these issues by contextualizing Korean photographic practices within the historical significance of nation building, civic resistance, and democratization.

APPENDIX

Appendix A. Map of Korea

Appendix B. Map of Gyeonggi-do, South Korea

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